

NOTHING IMPOSSIBLE FOR GOD

- A. Introduction: We are talking about how to have peace of mind in the midst of life’s hardships as part of a larger series on how to deal with troubles in a way that keeps us from being moved from a place of faith and confidence in God. John 16:33; John 14:27; I Cor 15:58
1. Peace comes to us primarily through the Word of God because it gives us real life examples of how God works in the midst of life’s troubles on behalf of His people. This information gives us peace of mind.
 - a. One of the best examples is the story of Joseph. This account shows us how God can take serious trials and bring great good out of them as He sustains and then delivers His people. Gen 37-50
 - b. The New Testament gives us a short summary statement about what happened to Joseph. Acts 7:9-10 tells us that Joseph encountered a huge trial, but God was with him and delivered him. Note that this passage sums up everything God did for Joseph in four words: God was with Joseph.
 - c. We can have peace of mind as we face life’s trials because God is with us. We don’t have to fear because nothing can come against us that is bigger than God who is with us. Isa 41:10; Isa 43:1-2
 2. The statement that nothing can come against us that is bigger than God is another way of saying nothing is too hard for God and nothing is impossible for Him. The Bible makes both these statements about God in a number of places. We considered two examples in the last lesson.
 - a. Gen 18:14—When Abraham and Sarah were too old to have children, God told them that they would have a son. They were childless when they were young, and now, in their old age, God promised them something that was impossible.
 1. When Sarah laughed to herself, (“How can a worn-out woman like me have a baby? And my husband is also so old”, v12, NLT), the Lord asked the question: Is anything too hard for Me?
 2. She did indeed have a baby the following year. Heb 11:11 says that Sarah received strength (or supernatural power from God) to do something impossible: conceive and bear a child when she was too old.
 - b. Jer 32:17; Jer 32:27—When the prophet Jeremiah was facing the complete destruction of life as he knew it (Jerusalem and the Temple were about to be destroyed and his people forcibly removed from their land by the Babylonian Empire), God told him to buy land in Israel because his people would one day live in the land again.
 1. Jeremiah obeyed the Lord and bought the land. The prophet acknowledged that although it seemed impossible that there was a future for his people, nothing is too hard for God.
 2. God answered Jeremiah back: That’s right. There’s nothing too hard for Me. (We’ll say more about Jeremiah’s situation and mindset later on.)
 3. In this lesson we’re going to look at another place where the Bible says that nothing is too difficult for God—the Book of Job.
 - a. The Bible reports that a man named Job experienced great calamity and loss in his life. Job lost his wealth (oxen, donkeys, sheep, camels, servants, shepherds, and farmhands) to thieves and a natural disaster. He lost his sons and daughters when the house they were dining in collapsed during a windstorm. And, he lost his health to a severe skin disease. Job 1:13-19; Job 2:7
 - b. But God, Who is bigger than anything that comes our way, delivered Job and restored to him what he lost showing us that nothing is impossible for God—even seemingly irreversible situations.
- B. People have a lot of misunderstandings about what happened to Job that rob them of the encouragement the book is meant to convey. We aren’t going to do a detailed study of Job in this lesson, but we need to clear up a few erroneous ideas before we get to our main point. (For a more in depth study of Job’s story read Chapter 6 in my book *God Is Good and Good Means Good*).
1. People wrongly believe that Job’s story reveals that God sometimes allows the devil to afflict His servants for sovereign reasons known only to the Lord and we must simply trust His purposes.

- a. But that can't be the case because this is contrary to what Jesus showed us about God while on earth. Jesus declared: If you've seen Me, you've seen the Father because I only do what I see the Father do. I speak His words and do His works by His power in Me. John 5:19; John 14:9-10
- b. When we read the Gospels we find that Jesus never afflicted anyone Himself nor did He work with the devil to afflict anyone. Jesus made it clear: God is good and the devil is bad. John 10:10
 1. God and the devil aren't working together. The Bible never calls the devil God's co-worker, teaching tool, or purifying instrument. The devil is called an adversary. The name Satan means adversary. Jesus always treated Satan as an enemy. Matt 4:10; Matt 12:26; Matt 16:23
 2. Jesus came to earth to destroy the works of the devil, not work with the devil to afflict the people of God. I John 3:8
2. People mistakenly believe that the Book of Job explains why there is so much undeserved suffering in the world (i.e., the sovereign God allows His choicest servants to be afflicted for reasons known only to Him). But the book wasn't written for that purpose. Job asked *why* at least twenty times and no answer was given to him.
 - a. Three of Job's friends, who came to commiserate with him in his troubles, attributed his suffering to some sin he must have committed. But all the men were rebuked by God for their conclusions about why suffering came to Job
 1. The book doesn't address *why* beyond the general information that Satan was the source of Job's suffering. As the first rebel in the universe, Satan is ultimately responsible for the hell and heartache in this world. Why did these tragedies happen to Job? Here's the short answer: Because that's life in a sin cursed earth.
 2. Due to the effects of Adam's sin on humanity, wicked men with fallen natures rob and steal (Rom 5:19; Matt 6:19). Due of the effect of Adam's sin on creation, natural disasters and killer storms do damage to lives and property (Gen 3:17-19; Rom 8:20). Due of the effect of Adam's sin on our bodies, they are subject to sickness and death (Rom 5:12).
 - b. The Bible is progressive revelation. God has gradually revealed Himself and His plan of redemption through the pages of Scripture until the full light of God's revelation was given in Jesus (Heb 1:1-3). Therefore, the Old Testament must be understood in terms of what Jesus shows us about God. That means it must be read in the light of the New Testament because it has the greater light or revelation given through Jesus (lessons for another day).
 1. James 5:11, the only New Testament comment about Job, commends his endurance. He remained faithful to God despite his circumstances. And, the passage draws our attention to the end of Job's story. "You have heard of Job's patient endurance and how the Lord dealt with him in the end, and therefore you have seen that the Lord is merciful and full of understanding pity. (J.B. Phillips)
 2. We read Job and ask, "Why did it happen?" but the Holy Spirit, through James, directs us to how Job's story turned out. When we read the end of the story we see that the Lord turned Job's captivity and gave him twice as much as he had before. James 42:10
 - c. Job is the earliest (or oldest) book of the Bible. It was written by Moses during the forty years that he lived in the deserts of Midian (Ex 2:15-22). Midian was adjacent to the land of Uz where Job lived. The events recorded in the book took place much earlier than Moses' lifetime, during the time of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (the patriarchs).
 1. Moses heard Job's story and, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, transcribed it. It was meant to inspire Israel when they were enslaved in Egypt with no seeming way out.
 2. It was meant to show them that nothing is bigger than God. Nothing is too hard for God. Nothing is impossible for God. He delivers those who are suffering under afflictive bondage.
- C. Now, let's examine the statement that nothing is too big for God, nothing is impossible for Him. Job 42:2
 1. First, let's get the context. Most of the book is a dialogue between Job and his friends as they tried to

figure out why all these bad things happened to him, while Job maintained that he hadn't done anything to deserve what happened to him.

- a. Because Job wrongly believed that God was behind his troubles, he felt that God was mishandling things and if he could talk to the Lord, he would set him straight. (Job 23:1-10; Job 24:1-25). Finally, God answered Job from a whirlwind (Job 38-41).
 - b. At the conclusion of the Lord's response to Job, Job made the statement that nothing is too big for God. Note these various translations of Job 42:2—I admit thou canst do anything, that nothing is too hard for thee (Moffatt); You are all-powerful; what you conceive, you can perform (Jerusalem); Thou canst do all things, And that no purpose of thine can be restrained (ASV).
 1. Whatever God revealed to Job about Himself, it caused Job to proclaim: Nothing is too difficult for you! You can do anything!! When we read God's answer to Job we find that the Lord talked about His bigness—His might, His power as revealed through His creation.
 - A. He asked Job a series of rhetorical questions: Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Who holds it all together now? Can you control the movement of the stars or the clouds? Can you feed the creatures of earth? What do you know about mountain goats and wild donkeys? Who gives the horse its strength or the hawk its flight? Can you control the most powerful beasts of earth—the behemoth and the leviathan?
 - B. There's much in God's answer we aren't going to address now, but note the point for our discussion. In the face of a great trial from which Job needed deliverance, God gave Job a revelation of His bigness. And Job saw it
 2. That's the same revelation God gave to Abraham when the Lord promised Abraham something that was impossible. The Lord revealed Himself to Abraham as the Almighty God. Gen 17:1
 - A. This name is El Shaddai in the original Hebrew language. El means the strong or powerful one. Shaddai means mighty and emphasizes God's power. The idea is that there is no one or no thing that is more powerful than God who is Shaddai.
 - B. God is called the Almighty or Shaddai thirty-one times in the Book of Job, more than all the other times it's used in the Old Testament combined.
 - c. God's answer to Job's questions about the randomness of undeserved suffering in this world is not that I do bad to people for sovereign reasons known only to Me. His answer was and is: No matter what comes your way in a fallen, sin cursed world—I'm bigger and I will deliver you.
 1. Note that when Jeremiah prayed his prayer to God after he bought land in a country that was about to be destroyed, he recounted the bigness of God and then concluded that nothing is too big for Him. Jer 37:16-25
 2. Note that when Jesus told His followers not to worry about where life's provisions will come from, He told us to look at God's care of the birds and flowers. Matt 6:25-33
2. Job 42:10—The Lord turned the captivity of Job and restored to him over and above what he lost. Almighty God conquered all the evil that came against Job. The devil's biggest guns which are all part of life in a sin cursed earth—theft, destruction, sickness, and death—were reversed by God's power.
 - a. Job is actually a mini story of redemption. It is the first place in the Bible where the name Redeemer is mentioned. Job 19:25-26
 1. Remember, that's what this is all about. That's the big picture. God is gathering a family of sons and daughters. God redeems or delivers all who come to Him through Jesus from bondage to sin, corruption, and death.
 2. Job is the story of a man who was redeemed from troubles by God in this life. But it also pictures the coming redemption that Jesus will accomplish through the Cross of Christ. That's a lesson for another night, but note one point.
 - A. Job's reference to his Redeemer was made in the light of the fact that he knew he would one day die, but that wouldn't be the end of his story. Because of the work of his Redeemer (Jesus), Job knew he would one day stand on the earth again in his body restored

to life with his Redeemer.

B. Job 42:12-13; Job 1:2-3--Note that when God delivered Job He gave him double what he lost. But he only had ten more children in this life. How is that double? Job had ten more children in addition to the ones temporarily lost to him, but not lost forever.

- b. To fully appreciate the bigness of God and the restoration He provides we must have an eternal perspective. To live without fear, to live with peace of mind, we must know that there is more to life than just this life. Some restoration comes in this life and some in the life to come.
 - 1. No loss is bigger than God. This fact gives us hope in the midst of loss and it mitigates the fear we all deal with because, no matter how big what we're facing is, it's not bigger than God. Even irreversible, unfixable circumstances are reversible and fixable in the life to come in the hands of Almighty God.
 - 2. Remember Jeremiah? How could he have peace of mind when life as he knew it was about to be destroyed and he himself was going to die in a few short years?
 - A. Although he was not killed in the destruction of Jerusalem, Jeremiah died a few years later in Egypt where he had been taken against his will by rebels trying to fight against Babylon.
 - B. He knew that there is more to life than just this life and that even death isn't bigger than God. It's only a temporary separation. Jeremiah will one day live in his land restored.
- 3. We make two key mistakes in the face of life's trials, both of which rob us of peace and increase our fear.
 - a. We focus on trying to figure out why it happened and what we (and/or God) are doing wrong. Why does bad stuff happen? Because that's life in a sin cursed earth. Remember God's answer to Job was: Look at Me! I'm bigger!!
 - b. We try to find a quick fix, a technique that will solve our problem. We miss the message of Job—that God is able to set captives free because nothing can come against us that is bigger than Him—because we're too busy trying to figure out how what Job did wrong or right so that we can do or not do what he did.
 - 1. We say that Job was a worrier who was in fear and his hedge of protection was down so the devil got to him (Job 1:5; Job 1:10; Job 3:25). Or we say that he got his deliverance because he prayed for his friends (Job 42:10).
 - 2. I'm not saying that there are or aren't things we should and shouldn't do to handle our lives more effectively and avoid certain troubles. But trials come to us all because that's life in a fallen world. John 16:33
 - A. The problem is that we focus on how others get their deliverance and try to replicate it. But that's not how it works. We are acting, not out of faith and trust in Almighty God, but as an imitator who is trying to replicate someone else's experience.
 - B. Look at God through His Word. Let His bigness inspire your faith as He makes a way for YOU where there doesn't seem to be a way of escape or deliverance.
 - C. Remember Sarah? She received supernatural strength to conceive and give birth to a child (an impossibility) because she judged God Who had promised to be faithful. Heb 11:11
 - 3. When we examine the Bible record, we find that how God's deliverance and provision comes to us looks different for everybody because He deals with us as individuals.

D. Conclusion: We haven't said all there is to say, but consider this thought as we close. In the face of life's trials, we tend to magnify the problem. When you magnify something you make it bigger in your eyes. We need to magnify God by talking about His bigness and His power.

- 1. I realize that it is easier to focus on what you see and feel in the moment. But, if you want peace of mind, you have to choose to focus your attention on God and His bigness.
- 2. This is reality as it truly is: Nothing can come against us that is bigger than God Who is with us. Nothing is impossible for Him. And He will get us through until He gets us out. There is nothing to

fear. More next week!