

**16 Sunday after Pentecost  
8 September, 2024**

## **Nothing Is Impossible for Faith**

Exodus 4.10-17

Psalm 124

Ephesians 6.10-18

Mark 9.14-29

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. On this 16th Sunday after Pentecost, we gather to explore a theme that is foundational to our Christian walk: faith. The Bible repeatedly emphasizes the power and importance of faith, reminding us that nothing is impossible for those who believe. Today, we will delve into this truth through the lens of Scripture, focusing on Exodus 4:10-17, Psalm 124, Ephesians 6:10-18, and Mark 9:14-29. We will consider the theology of faith and how it empowers us to overcome obstacles, face challenges, and trust in God's promises, no matter how impossible they may seem.

### **1. The Struggles of Faith (Exodus 4:10-17)**

In Exodus 4:10-17, we encounter Moses, a man chosen by God to lead His people out of slavery in Egypt. Despite this divine calling, Moses struggles with doubt and insecurity. He protests to God, saying, "O my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue" (Exodus 4:10). Moses' hesitation reflects a common struggle many of us face - doubt in our own abilities and a lack of faith in God's power to work through us. God's response to Moses is both reassuring and empowering. He reminds Moses that He is the Creator of all things, including human ability: "Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak" (Exodus 4:11-12). God's answer highlights a crucial aspect of faith: it is not about our abilities but about trusting in God's power. When God calls us to a task, He also equips us for it. Faith requires us to move beyond our insecurities and trust that God will provide what we need. Moses' eventual obedience, despite his initial reluctance, shows that faith is not the absence of doubt but the willingness to act despite it. This passage teaches us that when we trust in God's strength rather than our own, nothing is impossible.

### **2. The Assurance of God's Protection (Psalm 124)**

Psalm 124 is a song of thanksgiving for God's protection and deliverance. The psalmist declares, "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side - let Israel now say - if it had not been the Lord who was on our side when people rose up against us, then they would have swallowed us up alive" (Psalm 124:1-3). This psalm reflects the confidence that

comes from knowing that God is our protector, a confidence that is rooted in faith. The psalmist's words remind us that faith is not just about believing in God's existence but about trusting in His active involvement in our lives. Faith assures us that God is on our side, fighting our battles, and shielding us from harm. This trust in God's protection is crucial, especially when we face situations that seem overwhelming or impossible. The imagery in Psalm 124 paints a picture of desperate circumstances - being swallowed alive, engulfed by floods, and caught in a trap. Yet, in each scenario, God intervenes and delivers His people. This psalm encourages us to have faith in God's protection, knowing that He is always with us, even in the most perilous situations. When we trust in His protective care, we can face any challenge with confidence, believing that nothing is impossible with God.

### **3. The Power of Faith in Spiritual Warfare (Ephesians 6:10-18)**

In Ephesians 6:10-18, the Apostle Paul exhorts believers to "be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might" (Ephesians 6:10). He goes on to describe the armour of God, a metaphor for the spiritual resources available to us as we engage in spiritual warfare. Central to this armour is the "shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one" (Ephesians 6:16). Paul's depiction of faith as a shield emphasizes its protective power. Faith is not passive; it is an active defence against the attacks of the enemy. When we hold up the shield of faith, we are essentially saying, "I trust in God's promises more than the lies of the enemy. I believe in God's power more than the threats I face." This kind of faith makes us resilient in the face of spiritual challenges.

The theology of faith as presented in this passage is profound. It teaches us that faith is not just a belief but a stance, a way of living that consistently trusts in God's power and promises. This faith enables us to stand firm, no matter what spiritual battles we face. When we are clothed in the armour of God, empowered by faith, we can confidently declare that nothing is impossible for those who believe.

### **4. The Miraculous Power of Faith (Mark 9:14-29)**

The story in Mark 9:14-29 is a vivid demonstration of the miraculous power of faith. A father brings his demon-possessed son to Jesus after the disciples fail to cast out the spirit. The father, desperate and at his wit's end, pleads with Jesus, saying, "If you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us" (Mark 9:22). Jesus' response is pivotal: "If you can! All things are possible for one who believes" (Mark 9:23). The father's immediate reply, "I believe; help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24), resonates with many of us. It reflects the tension between faith and doubt that we often experience. But Jesus' response shows that even imperfect faith - faith mixed with doubt - is powerful enough to bring about miraculous change. Jesus commands the unclean spirit to leave the boy, and he is healed. This passage teaches us that the power of faith lies not in its perfection but in its presence. Even a mustard seed of faith, as Jesus teaches elsewhere, can move mountains (Matthew 17:20). The father's cry, "I believe; help my unbelief," is a prayer that many of us need to pray. It acknowledges that our faith may not be perfect, but it is

sufficient when placed in the hands of Jesus. When we exercise faith, even in the midst of doubt, we open the door for God's miraculous power to work in our lives.

Here are some examples from the Bible that demonstrate how faith made the impossible possible:

### **1. Abraham and Sarah's Faith for a Child (Genesis 17:15-21; 21:1-7)**

Abraham and Sarah were well beyond the age of childbearing when God promised them a son. Sarah was 90 years old, and Abraham was 100. Despite their advanced age and Sarah's barrenness, they held onto God's promise. Their faith made what seemed impossible - a child in their old age - a reality. Isaac was born, and through him, God fulfilled His promise to make Abraham the father of many nations.

### **2. The Crossing of the Red Sea (Exodus 14:21-31)**

When the Israelites were fleeing Egypt, they found themselves trapped between Pharaoh's advancing army and the Red Sea. It seemed like an impossible situation, but Moses exercised faith, trusting in God's power to save them. God commanded Moses to stretch out his hand over the sea, and the waters parted, allowing the Israelites to walk through on dry ground. The sea then closed over the pursuing Egyptians, securing Israel's escape. Faith turned an impossible situation into a miraculous deliverance.

### **3. The Walls of Jericho (Joshua 6:1-20)**

The Israelites faced the fortified city of Jericho as they entered the Promised Land. The city's walls seemed impenetrable, and from a human perspective, it was impossible to conquer. However, Joshua and the Israelites obeyed God's unusual instructions to march around the city for seven days, blowing trumpets and shouting on the seventh day. Their faith in God's plan brought the walls down, leading to the city's capture.

### **4. David's Victory over Goliath (1 Samuel 17:32-50)**

David, a young shepherd, faced Goliath, a giant warrior who terrified the Israelite army. Goliath seemed invincible, and no one dared to fight him. However, David's faith in God gave him the courage to confront Goliath. He declared, "The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine" (1 Samuel 17:37). With just a sling and a stone, David defeated Goliath, proving that faith in God can overcome even the greatest obstacles.

### **5. Elijah and the Widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17:8-16)**

During a severe drought, God sent Elijah to a widow in Zarephath. The widow was preparing to use the last of her flour and oil to make a final meal for herself and her son before they died of starvation. Elijah asked her to make him a small cake first, promising that her supplies would not run out until the drought ended. Despite the apparent

impossibility, the widow obeyed in faith, and her flour and oil miraculously lasted throughout the drought, providing for her, her son, and Elijah.

### **6. Jesus Heals the Centurion's Servant (Matthew 8:5-13)**

A Roman centurion came to Jesus, asking for healing for his paralyzed servant. The centurion expressed his faith by saying that Jesus only needed to speak the word, and his servant would be healed. Jesus marvelled at the centurion's faith, declaring, "Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith" (Matthew 8:10). Jesus then spoke the word, and the servant was healed at that very moment. The centurion's faith made the impossible possible.

### **7. The Raising of Lazarus (John 11:1-44)**

Lazarus, a close friend of Jesus, had been dead for four days when Jesus arrived in Bethany. His sisters, Martha and Mary, were grief-stricken and thought it was too late for a miracle. However, Jesus told Martha, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" (John 11:40). Despite the impossibility of raising someone from the dead, Jesus called Lazarus out of the tomb, and Lazarus came forth alive. This miracle was a profound demonstration of the power of faith in Jesus.

### **8. Peter Walks on Water (Matthew 14:22-33)**

When Jesus walked on water toward His disciples in a boat, Peter asked to come to Him on the water. Jesus invited him, and Peter, in faith, stepped out of the boat and walked on water toward Jesus. As long as Peter kept his eyes on Jesus, he did the impossible. However, when he became distracted by the wind and waves, he began to sink. Jesus immediately reached out and saved him, saying, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" (Matthew 14:31). This story illustrates that faith allows us to accomplish the impossible, but doubt can cause us to falter.

These examples can be woven into your sermon to illustrate the power of faith and how it has repeatedly turned impossible situations into testimonies of God's greatness. They serve as powerful reminders that when we trust in God, no obstacle is too great, and no situation is beyond His ability to redeem.

## **Conclusion**

As we reflect on the theme "Nothing is impossible for faith," we see that faith is not merely a belief but a powerful force that can transform our lives. Through the examples of Moses, the psalmist, Paul, and the father in Mark's Gospel, we learn that faith enables us to overcome doubt, trust in God's protection, stand firm in spiritual warfare, and experience the miraculous. Faith is the key to unlocking the impossible. It moves us beyond our limitations and connects us to the limitless power of God. While our faith may not always be perfect, it is enough when we place it in God's hands. Let us, therefore, cultivate a

faith that trusts in God's promises, leans on His strength, and expects the impossible. In doing so, we will see God's power at work in ways that exceed our imagination.

### **Prayer**

Heavenly Father, we thank You for the gift of faith. We are grateful that through faith, we can experience Your power and presence in our lives. Help us to trust in You fully, even when we face doubts and challenges. Strengthen our faith so that we may stand firm in the face of trials and believe in the impossible. May our lives be a testament to the truth that nothing is impossible for those who believe. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.