

Ministry of the Impossible

by John Edmiston

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All spiritual ministry is impossible to the natural man. It seems quite obvious that the natural man cannot cast out demons, prophesy, heal the sick or cleanse a leper. But the problem lies much deeper than that because the natural man is fundamentally unable even to understand the Scriptures or to discern spiritual things:

1 Corinthians 2:14 MKJV *(14) But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

Some aspects of the natural man persist in us after conversion. We live in a skeptical, unbelieving world, and at times this strongly influences us. Our minds need to be renewed so they believe all that they should believe! The effect of this is that until our faith matures many aspects of spiritual ministry are going to seem foolish, frightening or impossible. This is normal and it should be overcome with prayer, bible study and godly determination.

However if we give in to our hesitation, and flee from attempting the 'impossible' then the results are spiritually disastrous. We will see difficult people as 'impossible to convert' so we give up on evangelism, or 'impossible to heal' so we give up praying for the sick, or 'impossible to change' so we cease speaking prophetic truth when morally required to do so.

If we continue on in this process of giving way to our hesitations and unbelief then we end up with an entirely man-made religion which seeks to replace the risk of dependence on the Holy Spirit with the safety of institutions, committees, rules, laws and programs. Man-made religion ends up converting people to itself and not to God:

Matthew 23:15 MKJV *Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you compass sea and the dry land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, you make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.*

The cure for this man-made religion is an aggressive faith in the God who does the impossible. Christian faith is alive, dynamic and trusts God to turn up and minister in His Name. Christian faith actively attempts what seems impossible to man. It is not intimidated by the heavenly calling but rather gladly enters in. True Christian faith is gracious and freeing and needs no bureaucracy to justify it. It is justified by its deeds, done in the power of God alone.

Such faith tells us that what is impossible with man, is still possible with God:

Matthew 19:26 MKJV *But Jesus looked on them and said to them, With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.*

In other verses Jesus makes it plain that he expected His disciples to succeed in things that other people considered impossible:

Matthew 17:20 MKJV*For truly I say to you, If you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, Move from here to there. And it shall move. And nothing shall be impossible to you.*

Mark 9:23 MKJV *Jesus said to him, If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.*

Mark 11:23-24 MKJV *For truly I say to you that whoever shall say to this mountain, Be moved and be cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what he said shall occur, he shall have whatever he said. (24) Therefore I say to you, All things, whatever you ask, praying, believe that you shall receive them, and it will be to you.*

Often when Jesus gave His disciples a task it was unachievable by natural human means. Some examples: feeding the 5000; asking Peter to walk on water; commanding twelve men to make disciples of all nations; and sending out the 70 to heal the sick, cast out demons and proclaim the gospel.

God thinks big thoughts. And if you want to be used by God then you will have to join Him in thinking big! This is an absolute. No person who was guarded, cautious, or small-minded made it into the Hebrews 11 Hall of Fame! In fact millions of those kind of people 'fell in the Wilderness'. Only two made it through – Joshua and Caleb, and they were the ones who believed in doing the impossible (with God's help)!

In fact all real ministry involves attempting the impossible! Even bible teaching! Even successful preaching! Because people are so stubborn that no life can be deeply changed by mere words alone or mere philosophy alone. You cannot change a single life, even your own life, unless the Holy Spirit comes alongside to help you.

Now in ministry we continually hit a psychological wall whereby we think "I'd like to do that good thing, maybe even God is calling me to do that good thing, but I simply cannot do it because...." (fill in the blanks with whatever you feel that you are lacking – time, money, people, resources, energy, wisdom, skill, support from others, human permission to get started etc.)

However, God's calling is God's enabling. It is up to you to believe and up to God to supply. God's work, done in God's way, will never lack God's supply.

You do not need an office before you can start ministering – start at home. You do not need permission from a church or a pastor to teach the Word – just start teaching online. You do not need to hire a stadium before you can evangelize, just start witnessing to those whom the Lord brings your way. Once you start out on doing the impossible then you will find the people and resources and wisdom will come to you from all sorts of different directions.

Have big dreams but be content to start small at first. That is what the parable of the mustard-seed is all about:

Luke 13:18-19 MKJV *And He said, What is the kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it? (19) It is like a grain of mustard seed which a man took and threw into his garden. And it grew and became a great tree, and the birds of the air lodged in its branches.*

This ministry of the impossible is a ministry of great boldness, for faith results in boldness of speech and of lifestyle:

Acts 4:31 MKJV *And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the Word of God with boldness.*

Ephesians 6:19-20 MKJV *And pray for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, (20) for which I am an ambassador in bonds; so that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.*

Indeed God has not called us to timidity:

2 Timothy 1:7 GNB *For the Spirit that God has given us does not make us timid; instead, his Spirit fills us with power, love, and self-control.*

The ministry of the impossible requires that we put aside our timid reservations and instead become bold, powerful, believers who step out in faith to do the great works that God, in His large-mindedness, has prepared beforehand for us to do (Ephesians 2:10). In the words of a business guru you should have a BHAG (a Big, Hairy, Audacious Goal). You should have a 'conquering Canaan' mentality. You should be a Joshua or a Caleb.

If you are called to be a bible-teacher, decide to teach the nations and start working towards the biggest possible teaching goal that you can ever imagine.

If you are called to be a pastor, think about how many churches you will plant. Not just one or two, but perhaps hundreds. Think of how to reach your whole community and not just 200 or 500 or even 10,000 members of it.

If you have a healing ministry think of healing crusades, of having a healing center, of training others in healing ministry and so on.

If you are an evangelist think of using every means at your disposal – Internet evangelism, testimonies on YouTube, radio, local cable TV, personal witnessing, tracts, crusades, showing the Jesus film and so on...

Without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 1:6). And true Abraham-like faith attempts things that the world considers "impossible" (Romans 4:17-22).

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