

“But God”

by Darcy Pearson



Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” (Matt. 19:26)

Impossibles come in all containers, all forms, and all intensities. It could be a medical condition that chips away at your joy, a financial crisis that is terrorizing your peace, a relationship that is falling apart that you can't fix, a child who has turned his back on all you taught him in the Lord, a job that you hate and feel trapped in, rejection by someone you deeply love, unsaved loved ones that you have faithfully prayed for years for with no change, an addictive habit you can't stop, or a secret sin that you feel tremendous guilt or shame over. Impossibles also have attached unwanted companions that daily accompany them such as anxiety, fear, worry, stress, loneliness, anger, jealousy, or desperation. It feels hopeless and overwhelming. It feels impossible!

“But with God!”

Let us look at the story in Matthew 19:16-26 where this verse is contained. It highlights an incident with the rich young ruler that led to Jesus giving an important message to his disciples. This young, wealthy man with many possessions makes his way through the crowd to ask Jesus, “What good deed must I do to inherit eternal life (16)? Jesus walks him through the Law's requirements. Self-contentedly the man replies, “all these I

have kept” (20). So, Jesus takes it directly to his specific sinful, selfish ruling wrong desire and states; “sell what you possess, give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; come follow me” (21). The rich man upon hearing those words shows us what his impossible was. He could not imagine a life beyond the one he was living in luxury and status. To the man, it was impossible to leave all that behind and find a greater purpose, joy, and peace in a life following Christ. He chose to walk away sorrowful (22). He chose treasure on earth.

Jesus uses this as a teaching lesson when he commented to his disciples that it is difficult for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven (23). In fact, He said “it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle” (24). Since the rich man had placed his trust in his wealth and not in Jesus to save him, he could no more enter the kingdom than a camel could go through “the eye of a needle.” The word for needle in Greek is “*rhaphidos*”. It refers to a sewing needle, which has an extremely small opening. In contrast, the camel was probably the largest known animal to the disciples. So, it follows that the astonished disciples would incredulously ask, “Who then can be saved” (25)? Think about the context in this passage. Because of the Pharisees’ influence on them, they wrongly believed that God bestows wealth on those He loves.¹ They mistakenly reasoned; if a rich person who clearly has God’s favor, because he is wealthy, cannot make it into the kingdom, then no one can! Jesus answered with his main point. Salvation is solely a work of God (26). It is impossible for the wealthy to shift their allegiance from materialism to the Lord Jesus without supernatural intervention. A transfer of what a person treasures must take place, in the inner man, in the heart, by faith. And that is God’s domain.

“But with God!”

What appears to be impossible, and is impossible for men to accomplish, is what God

¹ 1 Louis A. Barbieri, Jr., “Matthew,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 65.

delights to do.² He delights to save sinners. He delights to do the impossible. Earlier in Matthew 17:20 Jesus said, “Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like the grain of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.” Moving a mountain was a metaphor common in Jewish literature for doing what is impossible (Isa.40:4; 49:11; 54:10; Matt. 21:21-22). Jesus is teaching us that faith is required. And saving faith God gifts to us who are regenerated. Certainly, wealth makes it difficult to walk by faith. Our impossibles make it difficult to walk by faith! We are asked to stretch beyond what we see. Will I see only my impossible or will I see God’s possible? This is what brings all the glory to the one accomplishing the impossibility and removes it from the one who likes to be the glory stealer, namely me and you.

“But with God!”

What if impossibles are placed intentionally into your life and mine, in order that the glory of the Lord might be displayed in us and in our circumstances?³ This passage teaches us that God gives us two important tools to exchange our impossibles into his possible; surrender your treasure, will and agenda (die to self) and then completely depend upon Him in faith. The transfer of trust, transfer of treasure, must take place in the inner man.

At the beginning I listed many examples of impossibles. That list of impossibles is actually my own personal list. Some are past, some are current, and I am promised there will be more in the future (Jn. 16:33).

What is your impossible? Will you trust the Lord, with the faith of a mustard seed, to bring good to you and glory to Himself through your circumstances? Will you allow God

² Louis A. Barbieri, Jr., “Matthew,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 65.

³ For a bible study on this topic please see; Casandra Martin, *Women Opening the Word Impossible* (Nashville, TN: Crossway, 2013).

to use your impossible as a tool for His glory? Will you see God as The God of the Possible amidst our puny lives of impossibles? Will you die to yourself daily pick up your cross and follow Him (Matt. 16:24)? Will you exchange what you treasure on earth for treasure in heaven? It is impossible unless you believe: **“But with God.”**