

## What Saith the Scripture?

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# Be Not Discouraged In Prayer... Even For the Impossible!

by Amanda Collin

with excerpt by Dr. Andrew Murray (1828-1917)

"And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible" (Mark 10:27). No one understood this better than Andrew Murray. His life was filled with the impossible. In the space of 59 years he wrote approximately 240 books-- some of which have been translated into as many as 15 languages. He labored tirelessly to benefit you and me-- members of the Body of Christ. He wrote to teach us, to comfort us, to exhort us, and to encourage us. And when it comes to praying for the impossible, we need all the encouragement we can get.

Nothing on this earthly sphere is as beautiful as a heart that is pliable and sensitive to the Spirit of God. "O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before Him, all the Earth" (Psalm 96:9). However, nothing is as hard and unbending as a heart that refuses to surrender to the Living God that created it. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings" (Jeremiah 17:9-10).

Discouragement in prayer comes in many forms. For those of us who have family members who profess Christ and do not bear the fruit of a Christian life, it is not a hard thing to be discouraged that they will ever repent of their backslidings. Sometimes, this seems an impossible prayer. "I am so helpless," you think, "I've said all I know how to say to them. I was even in tears, pleading with them to see the truth and to repent before it's too late. It's impossible!"

Here's what Andrew Murray had to say on this subject (excerpt from his book, "State of the Church"):

"Do we not know that throughout Scripture a chief element of faith in God is a sense of powerlessness and utter helplessness? I want to speak here on the place faith must have if we are to obtain that deep, intense, living vitality which we are longing for. If we are to appropriate the words, 'Fear not, only believe,' as really spoken by our Lord to ourselves, we must note well the attitude of the man to whom they were first given.

Jairus was in great trouble. His little daughter was at the point of death. He fell at Christ's feet and begged Him to come and lay His hand on her. Jesus went with him. But all at once there was an interruption by a woman who touched the hem of Christ's garment. Jairus began to fear that they might arrive too late. His worst fears were realized. A messenger met them, saying, 'Your daughter is dead; why trouble the Master any further?' It was to such a man in his deep distress, now brought to utter hopelessness, that Christ spoke the words: 'Fear not, only believe.' The soil had been broken deeply; the heart was prepared to believe. Christ's precious words entered in and took possession. If we are bearing the burden of a dead or a dying church, if we are going to take part in the work of rousing her and lifting her up into abundant life in Christ, we need a word like this. It will bring us the joyous assurance, day by day, that Christ is with us, that He will work through us, and that we can count upon Him to give the blessing.

But we must take the place that Jairus did, falling at Jesus' feet, pleading with Him intensely, graciously, and mightily to do something. Even when the word comes, 'There is no hope, death reigns, all our efforts are in vain,' we are still to be of good cheer and hold on to His word. 'Fear not, only believe' must be our watchword. But only, I say it once again, only to the man who waits at Christ's feet in prayer and looks to Him alone. There we shall learn that throughout all Scripture it is faith, in the midst of seeming impossibility, that waits and claims the fulfillment of the promise.

Think of Abraham, 'who waxed strong through faith, giving glory to God, being fully assured that what He had promised, He was able also to perform.' It is as we persevere in prayer and take hold of definite promises, and beseech Him greatly to fulfill them, that we shall, in spite of every obstacle, hold fast our confidence to the end. We may find that as time goes on, as the insight into the deadly state of the Church grows deeper, and as experience teaches us how very hard it is to rouse Christians to the full meaning of, and full surrender to, the claims of Christ, our hearts will often fail us for fear and grow faint. But if we have made our covenant with Christ that we dare not go back, and are determined to hold on, we shall find that just one word from our Lord hidden in the heart, and lived on day by day, will give strength in time of greatest darkness.

Just think of the Words of Christ in a situation that appeared to man, to be impossible. He had said of the young ruler, 'How hard it is for the rich to enter heaven.' The disciples had said, 'Who then can be saved?' Christ's answer was, 'With men it is impossible,' but, He added, 'with God all things are possible.' And elsewhere He said, 'All things are possible to him that believes.' These words are a threefold cord that cannot be broken.

First, 'With men it is impossible.' It seems easy to say, and yet how difficult to realize it and act it out. What is it that hinders the Church in this day from falling on its knees and beseeching God by His Holy Spirit to give revival? It is this: Men do not consider that the work they need to do is impossible with man. They consult and organize and labor, oh so diligently, and yet the members decline by the thousands. They cannot see that the work of winning men to become members of Christ and His Church is a work that God alone

can do through men who have yielded themselves to the Holy Spirit. What a day that would be if the Church were to fall down before God and bow in the dust with the Cry: 'Oh God, it is impossible with man.' We should then be prepared for the second lesson, 'But not with God - all things are possible with God.' At first sight this word also appears easy to accept. We are so sure there is nothing impossible with such a God. And yet, when we ask whether God's servants really believe it, and in the joyful confidence that He is going to do it wait upon Him and expect His working, we soon find out that it is not so. God is so little of a reality to us. How few men take time with God and secure His holy presence to fill their hearts and strengthen them in their work.

Oh, all you who are beginning to take the state of the Church to heart and to bear it as a burden before the Lord, do not be surprised if you have found it a hard thing. Fully grasp the truth, 'With God all things are possible.' Learn the lesson of bringing that truth into your daily prayer and your daily work. Let its light shine into your heart, on your sphere of labor, on the Church around you, on the weakest and most hopeless part of the Church, until all your thoughts have this as their keynote: 'But not with God - all things are possible with God.' He is fully able and willing to rouse the Church out of her apathy and lift Christians into the abundant life.

But now, comes the third and most difficult lesson: 'All things are possible to him that believes.' It is something great to really believe that all things are possible with God. Yet we may be anxious as to how and when it may come to pass. This word of Christ throws the responsibility on us. It is to him who believes that God makes all things possible. When Christ spoke that word to the father of the epileptic, the man felt his responsibility so deeply, and feared that he might not qualify, that he cried out, 'Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.' And Christ heard that prayer. He is still waiting, even when our hearts shrink back from the thought, 'Is it going to depend upon me whether this mighty God will do the impossible thing? I do not dare bear the heavy burden of such a responsibility.' He who helped the father of the epileptic boy, He who said to Peter, 'I have prayed for you, that your faith will not fail,' Jesus Christ, who became man to bring us into fellowship with the omnipotent God, He will give us the confidence to believe that it is God's will, 'If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, then you shall ask what you will.' Let us live in fellowship with Christ who spoke these words. He will enable us to receive them until they become the joy and the strength of our heart.

If I have not succeeded in giving a deep impression of the sore need of the Holy Spirit and His power that the state of the Church demands, I should feel that I had failed in my purpose. But I should be still more disappointed if I were to part with the reader without having helped him to the confident assurance that God is able and willing, in answer to prayer, to work revival. He is also willing to fill the hearts of many of His children with a measure of the Holy Spirit such as they have never known. As we look out upon a Church so weak and faithless, do let us listen to the voice of Jesus as He says. 'Fear not, only believe.'

What I have already said, I say again: The Church around you may be in a dying state,

with no possibility of being reached by human effort. I beseech you, Look up to God. Wait before Him in prayer until stronger desire is stirred in you and your faith rises to link itself to His omnipotence. Believe in the power of our Lord Jesus, and in His tender relationship to you, watching over your faith. Believe in the power of the Holy Spirit, the promise of the Father, the birthright of the Church. He surrounds you on every side and longs to get possession of you and those for whom you are praying. So let the study of the state of the Church give you a knowledge of God and a trust in Him beyond what you have ever known or thought." --*Andrew Murray*

"Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, ALL things are possible to him that believeth" (Mark 9:23).

**The End**