**Calvary Fellowship 10.23.2021 Matthew 17:14-18:4 “If You Need Assistance”**

* **So I got a call from my sister-in-law 1 Friday b/c her car wouldn’t start**
* My brother-in-law was out of town b/c he was w/ our youth at Rock the Universe in Orlando - so she called my wife & Carey said, “Bob is on his way.”
* I didn’t own jumper cables, so I stopped at Target & got a set on the way
* I get to her house & plug them in & the cables catch on fire - so I get an oven mitt & take them off & we call a tow truck
* Rebecca, my sister-in-law, sees the fire & says, “No offense, but are U sure U put them on correctly?” - I say, “I am a man. Of course I put them correctly.”
* So I call my wife to give her an update & let her know I’ll be late coming home & I tell her what happened & she says, “Did U put the cables on correctly?”
* I say, “Of course I put the cables on correctly.”
* So then Rebecca calls my brother-in-law to let him know what’s going on & puts him on speaker phone & tells him the story of the cables & the fire
* Then Jim says, “But do U think Bob put the cables on correctly?”
* Then she said, “Oh, by the way, you’re on speaker phone.”
* He says, “Oh. Sorry Bob. Hey, do U think U put the cables on correctly?”
* I say, “What is the deal, people? Of course I put the cables on correctly.”
* **Truth be told, home repairs is not my strong suit - a while back, I had to fix Mia’s blinds in her room & I tried to move the ladder while I was on ladder**
* Turns out, that’s frowned upon by most of the ladder community
* So when the ladder toppled over & I landed flat on my back after a loud scream that my daughter Mia said sounded, “Kind of Girly” - I realized maybe people asking whether I hooked up the cables correctly might not be unfounded
* **Here’s the problem - this is not how we like to present ourselves to the world - we all seek to present ourselves in the best light possible**
* When things are going well, we talk about the great decisions we’ve made
* When things aren’t going well, we blame the devil b/c it certainly can’t be our fault - you’d be amazed at how many blame the devil for them being in debt
* Like listen - Satan didn’t go to Best Buy, U did
* Satan didn’t make U buy that car - well, let me ease up on the car stuff b/c there some people at those dealerships that are on his team
* Anyone who charges an origination fee isn’t serving humanity - story
* But human nature is to want to look younger, trimmer, smarter, & more successful than we actually are - And the Bible has a word for that - pride
* Here’s the thing that wise people know - we know what we can do & what’s totally out of our control & the sooner we get that, the better off we’ll be
* B/c in our part of the story today, Jesus is going to confront His disciples w/ things they can’t do - and that’s not Jesus mocking them & taunting them
* Instead, it’s showing His disciples how much they need Him & that is so important for us - we need to be well aware of how much we need God
* If we don’t, we’ll start making decisions w/o asking for any counsel
* We’ll more forward w/o prayer & seeking God’s wisdom from the Scriptures
* And most importantly, we’ll have a view of ourselves that is totally warped b/c we’ll think we’re wiser, stronger, & more capable than we actually are
* But if we’ll stay in step w/ what God wants to do in our lives, we will accomplish more, have more joy, have greater provision, & see God work in our lives more than we thought possible…

**———(v. 14-21)———**

**#1 - Spiritual Problems Require Spiritual Solutions**

* **So let’s set the scene - if U were w/ us last time, Jesus was at the top of the mountain w/ 3 of His disciples (Peter James, & John)**
* They saw Jesus transfigured - that is, they saw a glimpse of Jesus’ glory
* But when they got down from the mountain, they saw this scene that we just read - a father trying to get help for his son & the other 9 disciples couldn’t help
* So let’s think this through - is it reasonable for anyone to expect the disciples to be able to cast out this evil spirit that was tormenting this boy?
* I believe so b/c back in Matthew 10, Jesus sent out His disciples & empowered them to cast out unclean spirits & heal people of diseases & illnesses
* “And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease.” (Matthew 10:1 NKJV)
* **So if they were given the power, why couldn’t they help this boy? Jesus says it’s b/c of their unbelief - they weren’t spiritually prepared**
* Now, this idea of unbelief & having faith gets into an important topic that get very confused in Christian circles
* That is, where the power is when it comes to faith - The power is not in me
* And the power is not in the power of my faith or having faith in faith
* the power is always in what I put my faith in - that is, the object of my faith
* **Here’s the thing about faith - not all faith is created equal b/c it’s the object of our faith that determines whether our faith makes sense or not**
* **I was at a wedding a couple of years ago & it was very nice - But, they rented these really nice white chairs for the lawn in front our church**
* And as I went to sit down in a chair I had this thought, “I hope this chair can hold me” - I’m not a small guy & I was a little nervous to put my full weight on it
* So I sat down - but have U ever sat down but held back - like you’re not putting your full weight on the chair? - it’s basically a squat
* Then I saw a guy who I knew weighed way more than me sit in the chair - and he didn’t just sit, U kind of threw himself onto the chair
* But then my faith was kindled & I knew I cold trust the chair & put all of my weight on it - that’s what faith is - putting all of your weight on something that U believe can hold U
* The object of my faith was worthy of my faith & I could fully trust it
* **So why does Jesus mention moving a mountain? Herein lies the key to understanding this teaching of Jesus**
* Herod the Great built 11 fortresses during his reign - he was an incredible builder - He was also a short, maniacal, completely paranoid man
* 2 of them was called Herodium (pic) - Well, Herodium is built like a mountain
* He essentially turned the mountain into a fortress & was eventually buried there
* Herodium was built in this little town south of Jerusalem called Bethlehem
* The land was rich w/ biblical history - it’s where Jacob buried his wife Rachel, Ruth gleaned in Boaz's fields, & Samuel anointed David as king of Israel - & it was there in the shadow of Herodium that Jesus was born
* Herod built it b/c he believed Cleopatra of Egypt was going to invade Israel
* He built the Herodion as one of several fortress-palaces lining the escape route to Moab, Herod's home country
* In case of attack, he could flee Jerusalem & head to one of his fortress retreats
* So when Jesus tarts talking about moving a mountain, they knew what it looked like for someone to move a mountain - it has been hollowed out for a fortress
* But Jesus says, “If U have faith like a mustard seed, U can move a mountain too.” - But there’s another thing U need to know that’s important to know
* Why did Jesus pick a mustard seed? Why not pick dirt, or dust or sand?
* B/c dirt, dust, or sand doesn’t grow - a mustard seed is incredibly small, but it grows into a tree that’s 20 feet tall
* **The point is that faith grows into something bigger when it is exercised**
* So here’s what Jesus is saying - Do U see what the height of power, money, & innovation that create? Well, the smallest amount of faith can topple all of that
* That the tiniest stepping out in faith & obedience to God is more powerful than any human structure, power, or plan - and that seed of faith keeps growing
* I hear christians praying for a mustard seed of faith - listen, if you’re a Christian, you’ve already got that - now it’s time to grow that mustard seed into a tree
* And the way that it grows is by stepping out in faith & trusting God
* That’s the only way that faith grows - it’s doesn’t grow when you’re idle - it grows when you’re actively trusting God in your life
* So whether that’s your relationships, finances, career, your future - faith only grows when we act on the truths of God that we know
* So if U want to grow your faith - grow your understanding of God’s truths & then put those truths into practice & you’ll be a giant of faith
* That’s why every person who is revered for faith in the Bible is a person who trusted God & acted on the truths of God that they knew
* And if U want to be revered for your faith, it’s not about having faith in faith
* Instead, it’s about putting your full weight on Jesus who can carry U

**———(v. 22-27)———**

**#2 - Spiritual Provision Requires Spiritual Obedience**

* **So this tax was not a tax that was imposed by Rome - it’s a tax that was commanded by Moses in the law for everyone 20 years old & older**
* It was the maintenance of the tabernacle & later, the temple
* The 1st question is, why was it that only Jesus & Peter had to pay the tax & not the other disciples? That’s b/c they were the only 2 who were over 20
* But then Jesus asks Peter if King’s sons should pay taxes that their father institute - Peter said that sons are exempt
* It’s kind of like how the White House & Congress exempt themselves from many of the laws they pass - doesn’t that make U love the government more?
* Well, Jesus tells Peter to go cast a hook & catch a fish & sure enough, Peter catch 1 & it has the exact amount they needed to pay the temple tax
* **By the way, this is the only miracle that Jesus does in relation to money**
* That’s significant b/c most of the miracles that we ask for usually involve money
* There’s a couple of things that are important to note: first, Jesus tells Peter to do something that is w/in his normal gifting
* That is, he was a fisherman & so Jesus tells Peter to go fishing
* Second, Peter had to be involved in the miracle - Jesus didn’t command the fish to jump out of the water & land in his packet
* Peter had to be engaged & this is important b/c too often, we pray for God to provide & then sit on our hands waiting for God to provide
* Listen, when we ask God for money, God usually responds w/ a job
* But then there are moments where God blesses beyond what we could have done on our own & that usually comes after we’ve been obedient
* This is why I’ve said over & over again, if U want God to show up in your financial world, U better invite Him into your financial world
* When U tithe, that is giving the 1st 10% of our income to Him
* When you take the step & trust God w/ that 1st 10%, He is able to bless the 90% & make that go farther than the 100% could ever go
* “Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this,” says the Lord of hosts, “If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.” (Malachi 3:10 NKJV)
* God has resources U know nothing of & He wants to bless U if you’ll trust Him
* But this is what we do - we don’t give & for some of us, we’ve heard messages on giving before - but there’s a fear & lack of trust we haven’t gotten over
* Listen, this is not a message on giving - when I do a message on giving, trust me, you’ll know - this is a message on trusting God in every are of our lives
* B/c God wants to do things in your life that are amazing
* **Some of U know the story of when we had no sound system when we started Calvary - we borrowed 1 for 3 weeks & we had to give it back**
* What I don’t tell U if that I was so upset that they wanted it back - I found that sound system in a closet - they didn’t even know they had it until I asked to use it - but I gave it back on a Tue. & I had no idea what we are going do on Sun.
* On Thursday afternoon, I got a call from a friend at another church that 4 big boxes had arrived for me - I had no idea what it was
* **Here’s what U need to know - about 6 months earlier I spoke at a Men’s conference w/ this pastor from CA who heard I was starting a church**
* That guy went back to CA & spoke to a friend of his & said, “I met this guy named Bob in FL who’s starting a church” - that guy owned an AV company
* God put it in his heart that we might need a sound system & he mailed us 1
* I’ve never spoken w/ this man…Ever - He’s never visited our church, but he was walking by faith & his faith was helping us walk by faith
* I love this story b/c it was 1 of my 1st moments as a pastor & it’s 1 I’ll never forget - I have 100’s of these stories - some I share w/ U & some are so personal, they’re impossible to share - But do U know what’s amazing to me?
* Those boxes where in the mail when I got the call to return the sound system
* Those boxes were already en route when I was upset at these guys for asking for there sound system back - God has already made a way for us
* **And here’s the thing that I now realize being a little olde & wiser**
* It was God’s will to have them call me & ask for the sound system back
* B/c if they hadn’t, I would have not have known that God was the 1 who was leading us & proving for us & directing us as we started Calvary
* Listen, if U trust God w/ your finances, He’s goin to provide the fish w/ the coin in it & show up in a 100 other ways as U trust Him

**———(v. 1-4)———**

**#3 - Spiritual Wisdom Requires Spiritual Humility**

* **Here’s what you’re going to find as U read the Gospels - this is a common conversation that the disciples**
* Except what you’ll learn from the other places where this conversation arises is that they were saying who’s the greatest among themselves
* So they weren’t saying, “OK. Who do U think would win a fight, David or Elisha. If U had Solomon & Moses, who would win on Jeopardy?”
* No - they were saying, “We know we’re better than any other OT figure b/c we’re following Jesus. But who’s the best between us?”
* They are so idiotic, they bring Jesus into this conversation & Jesus being so amazing doesn’t smack them all in the head - He uses it as a teaching moment
* He tells them, ‘U aren’t even getting into the kingdom if U don’t become like a little child. And the greatest in the kingdom is the person who humble himself like a child.” - what does that mean?
* Kids are many wonderful things, but among them is that they are simple
* There’s no subtext w/ kids - they just tell the truth
* Kids are also helpless - they have a natural dependence on their parents
* **I remember when Mia was really little - about 18 months old, Carey went out & I was watching her - so I said, “Let’s go wash the car together”**
* She was very excited about that - it’s water, soap, & bubbles - what could possibly go wrong - here’s a picture of Mia from that day (pic)
* As we’re washing the car, Mia goes over to the recycling bin & opens a mostly empty bottle of water & starts drinking it - I say, “Mia, stop that. That’s gross”
* A few minutes later, Mia goes back to the recycling bin & grabs a can of Coke w/ a little bit of soda left in it & starts drinking it
* I say, “Mia, you’re too young to drink soda. Plus, this stuff is old.”
* Then we go back to washing the car & Carey comes home
* And Mia says hi to her mom & then grabs another bottle of water from the recycling bin & I say, “Carey, she’s been doing for this for the last 1/2 hour.”
* Carey says, “Bob, she’s thirsty. Did U offer her anything to drink?” - no
* So Carey takes her inside to get something to drink & I was outside feeling like the worst dad in America b/c I figure out what my daughter needed
* But there’s no subtext w/ kids - she wasn’t getting a bottle out of the recycling bin to teach me a lesson or send me some hidden message
* What it was, is that she was totally dependent on me & I missed it
* Heres what’s interesting about what Jesus is saying - we spend our whole lives getting away from the 2 things that Jesus says we need to be
* We want to speak in subtext - we want to be deep & mysterious
* And we want to be completely independent & not need anyone
* And Jesus is saying, “You’ve got to come to God & tell the truth - that you’re messed up. That U don’t have it all together & that U need Him.”
* And Jesus says, “If U do that, that’s the beginning of greatness.”
* **And communion is the place where we are reminded that humility is the beginning of knowing God**
* What we celebrate as Communion is 1 part of the Passover meal that’s celebrated w/ unleavened bread
* That’s bread that hasn’t risen - Exodus teaches us the reason the people had to use unleavened bread at the Passover was more than they didn’t have time for the bread to rise when they left Egypt
* Bu the rabbis teach that this is a lesson in humility - b/c we by nature want to puff ourselves up & make ourselves seem like more than we are
* We want to seem like we’ve got it under control & we’re self sufficient
* But communion reminds us of who we really are - the unleavened bread reminds us that we are broken people who need a Savior
* We’re people who don't have it all together & that’s ok - God is still working on me & in me & communion is our reminder that He’s going to complete what He has started…