

“IS ANYTHING TOO HARD FOR GOD?”

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Scripture Texts: Psalm 33:6-11; Jeremiah 32:17, 26-27

Introduction.

Two weeks ago I mentioned a false sense of omnipresence that our technological tower of Babel has created by enabling us to be anywhere on our planet and being able to be present to every unfolding event. Of course, it is a fake omnipresence, we really can't be everywhere.

But this fake omnipresence also creates a false sense of omnipotence. We humans are getting the idea that we have great power. Power to control the climate, power to tame viruses, power to dictate our destinies, power to make life better if we just get the right leaders.

This outlook creates an oppressive sense of responsibility and a lot of hand wringing and then massively expensive efforts to play God or be God. We deceive ourselves with the idea we have any kind of truly world-controlling or life-altering power or authority. And God watches and laughs.

Every time we start to feel proud, start to boast, start to think we have the world by the tail, God humbles us. 2020 has to go down as one of the most humanity humbling years in history.

Covid, economic crisis, hurricanes, fires, protests, on top of a thousand personal losses and personal crises. We are completely at the mercy of things outside of us and outside of our control.

What is man before an almighty and holy and completely other God. A God who does whatever He pleases to do and everything in creation obeys Him completely. We need to know this God who has revealed Himself to us as omnipotent.

How powerful is God?

Phama and I spent some time encountering the will of a two-year-old. It is a formidable power. When we try to grasp the idea of great power, the best we can do is consider the power that we experience or see or know about in the world.

Omnipotence means that God is in total control of Himself and His creation. The power of God is infinitely greater than all the power in the known universe.

How powerful is God? The rhetorical question is asked in Scripture, “Is anything too hard for God?” and the reply comes back, “Nothing is too hard for God” (Jeremiah 32:26-27; 17).

One of the most frequent designations or titles for God is Lord God Almighty (used over fifty times in Scripture and only of God). Almighty just means all powerful and the Latin word for that is omnipotent. Almighty is might to the superlative degree. God isn't just strong, He is most strong, the strongest.

You have heard the complaint of a person in a job who has responsibility but no power. You know the frustration. But God knows no such frustration, He has all authority and all power.

He has all the power to do whatever He decides to do, whatever He wills to do. And if He doesn't do something, it isn't because He can't. With God nothing is impossible (Luke 1:37) and all things are possible (Matthew 19:26).

Certain branches of the military like to boast that the difficult they can do immediately; the impossible will take a little longer. For God hard, difficult and impossible are all the same, instantly easy. He can do anything as easily as anything else.

It takes God the same time and effort and energy to create a galaxy and a daisy. God's power is effortless, He never breaks a sweat to do everything He does.

And here we have to make a quick clarification, yes, there are some things God can't do. That's why I said God's omnipotence is His ability to do whatever He wills to do. God cannot will or do anything that is contrary to His nature or His other attributes.

God can't sin or be tempted (James 1:13), God can't lie (Hebrews 6:17), God can't contradict Himself or deny Himself (II Timothy 2:13), God can't cease to exist, God can't celebrate His birthday, and God can't do something illogical or irrational like make a rock so large He can't lift it.

The statement is nonsense. God can't make a round square or a four-sided triangle or a house that is larger on the inside than on the outside. Those are non-realities, they are nothing. To say God can't do these things doesn't negate that God can do whatever He wills to do.

The power of God in Scripture is seen and described in many ways. Let me focus our attention on just four ways.

First, God shows His sovereign power in creation.

To make something takes power. Any of you who have ever made anything know the power and energy needed, the tools and instruments, whether we are talking about making a house or an engine or a lasagna or an afghan.

God's power in creating is infinite, He needs no tools or instruments, He doesn't even need any materials or supplies. He creates matter out of nothing, and He works on that matter without tools and without labor or effort.

In creation we see God's power in divine fiat or divine command. He spoke and it was accomplished. How many times do we have to speak to accomplish something, get someone to obey or follow through?

He spoke once (Psalm 62:11) and there was a created universe. He spoke and there was life. He can make the sun stand still or even move backwards ten degrees. He can seal up the mouths of lions, make a fire that doesn't burn and make heavy metal float (II Kings 6:1-7). He can make water pile up and stand in a heap (the Red Sea and the Jordan River). He can frustrate the plans of kings, wipe out whole armies with a word, bring down a nation with a glance (Exodus 14:24).

He spoke and a legion of demons fled. He spoke once and a lifetime of disease or disability was healed. He spoke once and the storm fell silent.

Furthermore, at this very moment in time God is actively and purposefully continually sustaining every single action of every galaxy and every molecule, of every whale and every ant, of every dust particle and every hair on every head.

Colossians 1:16-17 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, ... and *in him all things hold together*.

As God upholds and preserves and sustains the physical universe so He also actively, continually and personally upholds our lives, physical and spiritual.

Acts 17:28 In him we live and move and have our being.

The heart of a king like a stream of water He directs wherever He will. Every heartbeat, every breathe we take is by God and apart from Him we would not continue to breath. The food on your table at every meal is from Him. The energy and strength you have to work, and play is from Him. The number of your days is from Him.

We are that completely dependent on God's power.

Second, God shows His sovereign power in salvation.

God has power and authority over the spiritual realm as well as the physical.

The same power that created the universe also raised Christ from the dead. And that same power is at work in us to bring us to salvation (Ephesians 1:19-21).

Now, which is greater, creating the universe or saving souls? Which is a greater reflection of God's infinite power? If I said saving souls, would you be surprised? Why is salvation a greater display of power than creation?

When God made the world He faced no opposition, there were no hindrances. When God sets out to save a soul He meets the fierce opposition of Satan and the resistance of the human heart which is inclined to darkness and evil. Salvation is accomplished in a battle, against principalities and powers and weapons of cosmic proportions.

Satan had to be subdued, death had to be conquered, sin had to be dealt with. Creation was accomplished with a word, salvation is the work of countless miracles, making the blind to see and the deaf to ear and the dead to rise.

It is the most miraculous mystery of all how God's mighty power saves a soul, forms a new creation and delivers one from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God. What a sweet violence God works in a human will to bring us to humility and submission turning us from children of wrath into children of light. Again, He makes something out of nothing.

God doesn't just save us, He sustains us in our salvation, He keeps and preserves us to the end.

Third, God shows His sovereign power over Satan, sin, evil and all suffering.

God is utterly and completely sovereign over Satan and everything Satan tries to do. Satan can do absolutely nothing without the permission of God, and without God using it to further and accomplish His good and perfect purposes. God is sovereign over whatever Satan has been up to in 2020. This year is no more out of control than any other year in history.

Jesus drove out demons with a single word, and forgave sin with a single word, and overcame temptation by the Word of God. Most of all Jesus conquered sin and death.

Hebrews 2:14–15 Through death he [destroyed] the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver[ed] all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

God is powerful over all the hard providences of life because He is the author of them all. He brings good out of evil.

Lamentations 3:37-38 Who has spoken and it came to pass, unless the Lord has commanded it?
38 Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that good and bad come?

Amos 3:6 Does disaster come to a city, unless the Lord has done it?

Sin and evil and suffering in our world are horrible realities, far worse than we like to reflect on. But none of them have the last word, God always has the last word. Only God is ultimate, only God is sovereign, only God is all powerful.

Fourth, God shows His sovereign power over all nations and all rulers.

On earth we think of power residing in nations and rulers. But their power is derived, it comes from a greater source. God decides what rulers will rule and when and where and for how long. He decides whether the purposes of any ruler will stand or be frustrated or fall (Psalm 33:10-11).

I happen to have insider knowledge about the outcome of our November election. Jesus is going to be King of kings and Lord of lords. All earthly elections of leaders are temporary and only serve to advance the Lord's purposes. All earthly power is submitted to God's sovereign power.

The lot is cast but it is God who determines the outcome. The vote is cast but it is God who decides the winner.

Practical implications and Application.

If considering this truth this morning doesn't change us then we have not yet thought deeply enough about this and we have not yet fruitfully applied this. Our knowledge of the vast and infinite power of God should bear practical fruit in our hearts, and homes and lives.

We should use it to combat fear. If God is God and if God is in control, then what should I fear? Our Father's power is our security.

This was how Jesus could sleep through a storm. He had absolute and total trust in His heavenly Father. Don't you want the kind of peace in your life? Don't you want that kind of confidence in the midst of your storms? In the midst of Covid, fires, protests and elections?

Matthew 6:26, 31-32 Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

31 Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.

Matthew 10:29-31 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. 30 But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

Use this truth in your daily life to combat the enemies attempts to get us to be afraid, to be worried or nervous. Use this truth to calm your heart, to rest in God's power and goodness, to know that He controls the future, the destiny and outcome of all our lives, of our children's lives and grandchildren's lives, of our nation.

Think of something in your life right now that has a hook in you or has you wrapped around the axle or has you lying awake at night or is making you anxious. How would this truth about God change the way you think about that?

There is no safer place in the universe than in the presence, in the arms of the supreme sovereign omnipotent ruler of the universe. In Him we need never tremble or shake or fear.

Remember, God is in His holy temple and we must remain confident in the rule and reign of our Lord Jesus Christ and in the power of the Gospel that shines the brightest in the darkest places and at the darkest times.

Use this truth to strengthen your faith and help you walk in faithfulness and righteousness.

A Christian accountant was told by his boss to falsify company records. Being afraid of losing his job we complied and then ended up in jail without a job. He didn't trust the power of God; he didn't give God an opportunity to show His power if he had taken a step of faith. Learn the lesson of King Asa who because he relied on foreign armies rather than God lost the war.

There is great power in righteousness and holiness. We are given power by God's grace to overcome sin, continually relying on His power.

The omnipotence of God is a source of ***great comfort and hope for the believer***. Do you ever find yourself thinking you don't have enough strength or power to face or handle a situation?

Philippians 4:13, 19 I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

19 And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

If God can create and sustain and control the whole universe, if God can raise the dead and save a sinner like me, then He is big enough to handle whatever comes my way. He is worthy of our confidence and trust. Knowing this has sustained countless Christians to endure the greatest suffering.

Do you find comfort in knowing God is in control? What about when everything seems out of control? What about when the very worst happens? (Our niece Jenna).

This knowledge of God should awaken in you the strongest faith and the greatest confidence and the deepest comfort and the sweetest peace.

If you don't know this God of the Bible, then you are not prepared to cope with the suffering that will come to us individually and to us as a nation. 2020 may only be the beginning.

Use this truth to empower your prayers. We are praying to the sovereign powerful almighty God who is creator and sustainer of the universe. He can do more than we ask or imagine. All the good things around us are from Him.

“No prayer is too hard for Him to answer, no need too great for Him to supply; no temptation too powerful for Him to deliver from, no misery too deep for Him to relieve” (Pink).

When we pray and ask for power/strength, we are saying help me and support me with the same strength and power that is in heaven, the same strength and power that raise Jesus from the dead, the same strength and power that formed the universe out of nothing.

The omnipotence of God is cause for love and adoration and worship.

Exodus 15:11 “Who is like you, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?”

Job's encounter with Satan and God's sovereignty over Satan awakened in him profound worship.

We know and love and worship the God who possesses absolute power, for whom nothing is too difficult or even impossible. He can do whatever He wills to do.

Our Father in heaven is strong to save and strong to deliver, and if He is for us who can be against us. Our heavenly Father's power is our security and peace and hope and confidence.

The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is ours. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is at work on our behalf, accomplishing our salvation, accomplishing good for us.

Psalms 16:9–11 My heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure. For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption. You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.