

Sun Stand Still- Part 1
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Introduction:

Today we're going to read an extraordinary story about a leader who prayed an audacious prayer. He asked God to stop the sun and extend the day. God defied nature and accomplished a miracle.

I want to say something right up front. We're not here to just read a great story from the Old Testament. *We're here, studying this passage, because God intends the type of story told in Joshua 10 to be repeated in your life. We're here today because every Christ follower should be praying "sun stand still" prayers. We're here today because you and I, any Christ follower, should be experiencing the supernatural work of God.*

I read this section from "Sun Stand Still" (pg. 7) to you last week...but I think it is so moving, I want to read it again.

...If you ever encounter a theology that doesn't directly connect the greatness of God with your potential to do great things on His behalf, it's not biblical theology. File it under heresy.

I'll take it further: If you're not daring to believe God for the impossible, you're sleeping through some of the best parts of your Christian life.

And further still: if the size of your vision for your life isn't intimidating to you, there's a good chance it's insulting to God.

Through Jesus, God has saved you. He's done a miracle in your heart. Then, He placed His Holy Spirit in you. **You have a connection to the current of the unlimited power of God living right inside of you.** God has prepared in advance good things for you to do. Our lives should be filled with faithful obedience to God as we discover His plans, work in obedience, and see His power accomplishing supernatural results.

What we're going to look at today is the opposite of "just trying to survive the day". What we're going to look at today is the opposite of trying to live life and solve our problems in our own way. What we're going to look at today is the opposite of giving up because we are hurt, tired, disappointed, frustrated, or facing obstacles.

This week I was riding a long with another driver in a school bus. I like to use this time to try and connect relationally and spiritually with my fellow bus drivers. I started out with a simple, "How are you doing today?". The other driver responded, "I'm hanging in there. That's all I can ask, right?". Well- she asked- so I said, "No...that's not all you can ask for...God wants a lot more for you than surviving!"

What we're going to look at today is how ordinary people, like you and me, can do great things because God is working His perfect plan out through His unlimited power in our lives.

Before we go any farther: *What is a need or goal in your life that seems impossible right now?*

I want to inspire you today to believe that God can do anything. I want to blow wind in your spiritual sails to where you believe God for the impossible. I want us to learn "sun stand still" faith- *where we believe God for the impossible as an ordinary way of life.*

Joshua 10:7-14

⁷ So Joshua and his entire army, including his best warriors, left Gilgal and set out for Gibeon. ⁸ "Do not be afraid of them," the LORD said to Joshua, "for I have given you victory over them. Not a single one of them will be able to stand up to you."

⁹ Joshua traveled all night from Gilgal and took the Amorite armies by surprise. ¹⁰ The LORD threw them into a panic, and the Israelites slaughtered great numbers of them at Gibeon. Then the Israelites chased the enemy along the road to Beth-horon, killing them all along the way to Azekah and Makkedah. ¹¹ As the Amorites retreated down the road from Beth-horon, the LORD destroyed them with a terrible hailstorm from heaven that continued until they reached Azekah. The hail killed more of the enemy than the Israelites killed with the sword.

¹² On the day the LORD gave the Israelites victory over the Amorites, Joshua prayed to the LORD in front of all the people of Israel. He said,

"Let the sun stand still over Gibeon,
and the moon over the valley of Aijalon."

¹³ So the sun stood still and the moon stayed in place until the nation of Israel had defeated its enemies.

Is this event not recorded in *The Book of Jasher*^[b]? The sun stayed in the middle of the sky, and it did not set as on a normal day.^[c] ¹⁴ There has never been a day like this one before or since, when the LORD answered such a prayer. Surely the LORD fought for Israel that day!

God can do anything. What does He want to do through me today? Discover what He wants. Pray that the sun will stand still. Move forward in faith.

1. BE AVAILABLE FOR GOD'S MISSION. (vs.7)

Joshua 1:1-11

¹ After the death of Moses the LORD's servant, the LORD spoke to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' assistant. He said, ² "Moses my servant is dead. Therefore, the time has come for you to lead these people, the Israelites, across the Jordan River into the land I am giving them. ³ I promise you what I promised Moses: 'Wherever you set foot, you will be on land I have given you—⁴ from the Negev wilderness in the south to the Lebanon mountains in the north, from the Euphrates River in the east to the Mediterranean Sea^[a] in the west, including all the land of the Hittites.' ⁵ No one will be able to stand

against you as long as you live. For I will be with you as I was with Moses. I will not fail you or abandon you.

⁶ “Be strong and courageous, for you are the one who will lead these people to possess all the land I swore to their ancestors I would give them. ⁷ Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the instructions Moses gave you. Do not deviate from them, turning either to the right or to the left. Then you will be successful in everything you do. ⁸ Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do. ⁹ This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”

Joshua’s Charge to the Israelites

¹⁰ Joshua then commanded the officers of Israel, ¹¹ “Go through the camp and tell the people to get their provisions ready. In three days you will cross the Jordan River and take possession of the land the LORD your God is giving you.”

In this passage of Scripture, the Lord called Joshua and moved him from apprentice to leader. He moved him from a position of safety—standing behind Moses who was taking the risks and dealing with the difficult people—to a position of key leadership—where Joshua would have to make hard decisions, deal with whiners, fight battles where his troops would be outmanned, step into God’s vision that had not yet materialized, trust God for what he could not yet see, and risk his own safety and security.

God called Joshua to lead, to move forward in His promises, and to go forward with confidence in God’s strength, presence, and trustworthiness.

What was Joshua’s response in vv. 10-11? *Joshua then commanded the officers of Israel to get the people ready to take possession of the land the LORD your God is giving you.*

Joshua was ready for God’s mission. He was willing to obey. He was willing to take risks. He was willing to trust God for what He could not yet see. He was willing to face adversity because He knew that God was with him. We see the same truths in Joshua 10- an obedient servant carrying out God’s commission.

Are you available for God’s mission? I mean, seriously, don’t just answer quickly. I want you to think about this. We’re talking in these two weeks about believing God for the impossible. We’re going to be talking about looking at God’s promises, seeking God for a vision for your life, and then asking God to do the impossible. Before we even get to that—I just want to ask you, *Are you willing to be obedient to God’s call?*

- What if it is a relationship God wants to heal? *Are you willing to take on the role of peacemaker?*

- What if it is debt or financial obedience God wants to lead you into? *Are you willing to curtail your lifestyle in order to start giving to God's work and/or get out of debt?*
- What if God is asking you to spend more time serving Him. What if He asked you to get another job so you'd be more available for His work? *Are you willing to respond to His call on your life?*

I mean, let's be honest, we've got to start here. Before God can use us...we have to be available... to listen to His call on our hearts, to make His agenda first before other stuff that takes our time and resources, to risk safety or security or ease...*we've got to be like Joshua and be available for God's mission.*

2. BELIEVE GOD'S PROMISES. (vv.8-9)

⁸ *"Do not be afraid of them," the LORD said to Joshua, "for I have given you victory over them. Not a single one of them will be able to stand up to you."*

Joshua acted on what he believed. He took God at his word and this propelled him to move forward in faith. God multiplied Joshua's effectiveness and changed the world through a man because Joshua believed God and acted in obedience.

God said- do not be afraid... *for I have given you victory.* So, what did Joshua do?

⁹ *Joshua traveled all night from Gilgal and took the Amorite armies by surprise.*

You don't travel all night to face an army bigger than you if you are living in your own strength or trusting in your own ability. The only way to do great things is to trust God and act out of His power.

Joshua believed God. Look at the promises we see from God to Joshua- just in the Joshua 1 passage we read and this one:

- God promised victory: Joshua 1:3: ³ *I promise you what I promised Moses: 'Wherever you set foot, you will be on land I have given you*
- God promised His strength: Joshua 1:5: ⁵ *No one will be able to stand against you as long as you live*
- God promises His presence: *For I will be with you as I was with Moses. I will not fail you or abandon you.*
- Joshua 1:9: *Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."*
- God promised blessings from obedience: Joshua 1:7: ⁷ *Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the instructions Moses gave you. Do not deviate from them, turning either to the right or to the left. Then you will be successful in everything you do.*

Joshua listened to God. He took these words to heart, factored in what He knew of God- God was trustworthy—and he acted because he took God at His word.

I can't help but be moved by the fact that God has given us promises to live by as well!

- **He loves us-** Romans 8:35-38:

³⁵ Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? ³⁶ (As the Scriptures say, "For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep."^[a]) ³⁷ No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.

³⁸ And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love.

- **He offers salvation:**

- **He offers hope for eternity:** Titus 3:

⁴ But—"When God our Savior revealed his kindness and love, ⁵ **he saved us**, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit.^[a] ⁶ He generously poured out the Spirit upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior. ⁷ Because of his grace he declared us righteous and **gave us confidence that we will inherit eternal life.**" ⁸ This is a trustworthy saying, and I want you to insist on these teachings so that all who trust in God will devote themselves to doing good. **These teachings are good and beneficial for everyone.**

- **Our present trials are short-term:**

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸ So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

James 1:2-3

² Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters,^[a] whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.

- **He offers help:**

Psalm 46

¹ God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

- **He has given us unlimited strength:**

Ephesians 1:19

- **He has given us purpose:**
Ephesians 2:10
¹⁰ For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.
- **He has a perfect plan:**
Jeremiah 29:11
¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.
- **He is working all things toward good:**
Romans 8:28
²⁸ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who^a have been called according to his purpose.
- **He comforts us:**
2 Corinthians 1:3-5
³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. ⁵ For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ.

My gosh- we are so blessed. God's promises are so rich. They cover every area of life. He loves us- gives us incredible value. He helps us- we're not alone. He's got the future all figured out- no need to worry or be scared. He has a perfect plan- one which we play a vital role in—there is purpose and meaning to life. We have so much to be thankful for...so much to take joy in.

But, here's the truth. Here's what happens in my life: *Something happens to get in the way of my goals and I get frustrated. Someone says something hurtful and I get discouraged. The day gets busy and I let work draw my attention away from Jesus. Bills come in too quickly and I jump down into the deep pit of anxiety. Bottom line: **I let circumstances draw my attention away from God's promises.***

Joshua didn't do that. Here's an interesting fact. In Joshua 10: Joshua was going up against a coalition of 5 kings. He was outnumbered. He had to travel all night to get to the battle field. He could have looked at the opposing forces and asked God if he could come back another time. He could have disobeyed God and refused to move forward.

But, he didn't. He didn't let circumstances draw his attention away from God's promises. Instead of giving up...Joshua trusted what God said.

Even though, circumstantially- he was outnumbered- it didn't seem like a good decision to attack...**God's promises trumped what he could see.** Even though victory was still in the future—Joshua trusted God for what he could not yet see.

How about you? Do you believe God's promises? Are you living through them?

To live through God's promises:

- You have to know them. The only way I know to know God's promises is to study God's word...to chew on it...to meditate on it...

Psalm 1

*¹ Blessed is the one
who does not walk in step with the wicked
or stand in the way that sinners take
or sit in the company of mockers,
² but whose delight is in the law of the LORD,
and who meditates on his law day and night.
³ That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither—
whatever they do prospers.*

Joshua 1:8

⁸ Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

3. FOLLOW GOD INTO THE IMPOSSIBLE. (vv.10-11)

*¹⁰ **The LORD threw them into a panic**, and the Israelites slaughtered great numbers of them at Gibeon. Then the Israelites chased the enemy along the road to Beth-horon, killing them all along the way to Azekah and Makkedah.*

*¹¹ As the Amorites retreated down the road from Beth-horon, **the LORD destroyed them with a terrible hailstorm from heaven** that continued until they reached Azekah. The hail killed more of the enemy than the Israelites killed with the sword.*

Here's the principle we want to leave with today. *God wants to work in our lives just like Joshua's.* It may not be that we lead a nation to war and then see God win a decisive battle for us...*but if you will put your heart in a state of being ready to obey God whatever He asks...and if you will know and believe and live through God's promises...**God will do the impossible through you.***

Remember- this is who God is. This is what God is about! Again, from Steven Furtick:

...If you ever encounter a theology that doesn't directly connect the greatness of God with your potential to do great things on His behalf, it's not biblical theology. File it under heresy.

This is who God is and how God works!

Mark 10:27

²⁷ Jesus looked at them intently and said, “Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But not with God. Everything is possible with God.”

Luke 1:37

³⁷ For nothing is impossible with God.^[a]”

Luke 18:27

²⁷ He replied, “What is impossible for people is possible with God.”

Examples of how we have seen God work:

- Never missed a paycheck in 5 years of church planting. God promised to care for our resources... He has.
- SpringFest—two years of planning at event for 5,000 people- looked at in the community as one of our best run events.
- Personally: Seth- prayed for a child for three years. Seemed impossible.
- Trish- thyroid cancer...
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What seems impossible to you today? What will be your “Sun Stand Still” prayer? If you factored out what you can see or how you view your circumstances—if impossible—was out of your vocabulary—what would you do for God?

I want you... I want us... going into our “Family Meeting” on the 25th to go into that with this in mind: ***God can do anything. Nothing is impossible for Him.***