

## ***“How To Pray With Audacity”***

Sun Stand Still- Part 2

Joshua 10:7-14

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### **Introduction:**

*Let God define your moments.* We're talking these two weeks about making the sun stand still. We're talking about having the faith necessary to put ourselves right in the center of a move of God. We don't want to just survive life...we don't want to just get to the weekend... We're not just working at life so we can retire to leisure... *what we're talking about this series is praying in a way that makes our lives count for God's glory. By praying prayers that are in line with God's power...prayers that in their scope and vision show respect for God's unlimited resources- we let God define the moments of our lives into ones that are significant for His purposes.*

I want my life to count- and you do too. I'm going to turn 40 tomorrow. I don't care about growing older. But, I do care about where I'm at in life. *I've been asking myself recently- am I maximizing my impact for God?* As I've gone through a hard season of life in the last year- I've found that I'm dreaming less. I'm settling for ordinary. I'm more afraid of risk than I've been before in my life. Trials have a way of blunting faith.

I don't want that life. I want to be in the middle of a move of God. I want to be so in line with God's will that I'm praying God's prayers for my life and the lives of those around me. I want to lead a church where we see God's power manifested in changed lives. *I want to be praying sun stand still prayers* that trust God for great things that only He can do- and I want Him to be brought great glory as He does His thing.

And, I'm not getting any younger. Time is moving forward. It won't be long until I'm the man in the video we watched. According to a little girl on the bus this week- I'm really close. One kid said it was his birthday this week. I said- "Wow, mine is next week." This little girl asked- "How old will you be?" Foolishly, I said, "How old do you think I will be?" Guess what she said- "80"!

So, I'd better make life count. I'd better let God define my moments. I'd better let Him define my moments based on His great power and His great goodness. *How do we pray with audacity? How do we put ourselves right in the middle of a move of God?"*

We've been looking to the life of Joshua for answers. Last week we looked at some background. Joshua had been called by God to lead God's people- the Israelites- after their great leader, Moses, had died. Joshua had been in the background for a long time- over 40 years. Now, God was calling Him up to the major leagues.

But, when God gave Joshua the biggest assignment of His life- God also gave Him some great promises. God promised to be with him. God promised to fight for him. God promised to give him victory in battles and ultimately God promised that Joshua would lead God's people into the land He had given them.

Joshua embraced God's call and stepped into the challenge. Last week we said that do put ourselves in the middle of a move of God, we must...

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

Key Question:

*Am I available for God's mission?*

Joshua accepted God's challenge to lead- even though it meant war and leading a group of unruly people.

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

Key Question:

*Am I living through God's promises?*

Joshua trusted God's promises. God has also given us promises to live by. These promises were anchors for Joshua when he faced obstacles and they gave him hope when he couldn't see God's promised outcome and had to forge ahead anyway.

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

Key Questions:

***What seems impossible to you today? What will be your "Sun Stand Still" prayer?***

As Joshua obeyed and trusted God...God did miracles. He threw the opposing armies into a panic and made them more susceptible to a surprise attack. Joshua and his army began to route the opponent and God threw down large hail stones and killed even more of them than Joshua's men killed. God was fighting for Israel and doing amazing things. Joshua was right there in the middle of a move of God.

Yet... he went further. He didn't settle. See, even though the battle was going well for the Israelites, the day is only so long. The sun began to set. But, Joshua...thinking on God's promises- knew that God had promised to give him complete victory. Joshua was passionate that God's promise would be fulfilled...so he prayed a bold, audacious, out-of-the-box, beyond-what-he-could-see, prayer that could only be filled because he was praying to a God he knew could do anything.

To live life to the fullest, to embrace faith, to live out God's promises... we've got to learn to pray the same way. Today I want to talk about four traits (there are others- READ THE BOOK- Sun Stand Still) of audacious prayers:

#### 4. PRAY...(vv.12-14)

<sup>12</sup> 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.”

<sup>13</sup> 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 Jashar*<sup>[b]</sup>? The sun stayed in the middle of the sky, and it did not set as on a normal day.<sup>[c]</sup> <sup>14</sup> 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!

##### A. WITH RIGHT THEOLOGY

Before we get into the nuts and bolts of Joshua’s prayer, we have to discuss the underlying view of how Joshua viewed God. See, Joshua had a perspective of God that guided his prayers. His theology provided a framework by which he formed the convictions that informed how he prayed and what he prayed about. Joshua believed two things about God. And, to pray audacious prayers...**We must believe:**

- **God is great**
- **God is good**

Remember the prayer we used to pray as kids? *God is great...God is good...let us thank Him for our food...Amen.* I got so tired of this prayer growing up...it was so overused that after 10 years, I didn’t pay any attention to the words. They lost their meaning. We would pray this prayer whenever we gathered as an extended family. I always felt it was because no adult had the courage to pray an original prayer out loud in front of everyone else...so we used the default family prayer. But, whether you use this all the time or feel it is overused... ***look at the truth in this prayer!*** **It includes what is most necessary to believe about God. It really summarizes the Bible’s central teaching on Who God is and What God is capable of.**

**Psalm 62:11-12:** <sup>11</sup> God has spoken plainly, and I have heard it many times: Power, O God, belongs to you; <sup>12</sup> unfailing love, O Lord, is yours.

- **We must believe that God is GREAT.**

If we’re going to pray big prayers, we’ve got to believe God has the potential to carry them out. In fact, it is because of God’s greatness that we should be praying audacious prayers.

Our vision for our prayers and what God wants to do in and through our life must not be limited by what we can see, feel, or experience. We must make a covenant with ourselves to never allow our vision, dreams, or prayers be diminished, darkened or limited by trials, obstacles, and hurts. **Instead- our prayers and dreams must be formed with respect for *Who we believe God is and what we believe God is capable of.***

A.W. Tozer once wrote: *What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us...Were we able to extract from any man a complete answer to the question, 'What comes into your mind when you think about God?' we might predict with certainty the spiritual future of that man."*

**What you think about...first...when you think about God is so important.**

To impact our world for eternity, we've got to have visions that are the size of God...and we can't allow these dreams to be limited by who we think we are or what we think we can do on our own.

To pray audacious prayers and see God make the sun stand still in our own lives...we've got to believe that God is GREAT. We could spend a lot of time looking at Scripture and what we see of God there. When we pray audacious prayers, we must remember: We are praying to the CREATOR. We are praying to the God Who orchestrated the Virgin Birth. We are praying to the God Who pulled off Jesus' resurrection. We could go through the Bible and list miracle after miracle, including the one in Joshua 10. We see the heart of believing that God is GREAT in Psalm 89:

*<sup>6</sup> For who in all of heaven can compare with the LORD?*

*What mightiest angel is anything like the LORD?*

*<sup>7</sup> The highest angelic powers stand in awe of God.*

*He is far more awesome than all who surround his throne.*

*<sup>8</sup> O LORD God of Heaven's Armies!*

*Where is there anyone as mighty as you, O LORD?*

*You are entirely faithful.*

Praying prayers with a perspective for God's greatness expands our prayers to requests that reach beyond what we can see. When we pray prayers in tune with God's unlimited power and resources and sovereignty we pray prayers that only God can accomplish. And, praying these sorts of prayers has the potential to change your life, your church, the lives of those around you, and possibly the world.

God wants to do something so big in your life. If the size of your vision for your life doesn't seem big to you- there is a good chance it is insulting to God. If there is nothing you are believing God for in your life that is bigger than you... there is a good chance that the God of this universe is insulted. See, what you ask God for is a direct result of what you believe his capabilities are...his nature is...his capacity is.

What is the impossible thing God wants to do through your life? This is just the right size need to pray about. Will you be bold enough to pray it?

- **We must believe that God is GOOD.**

Not only is God all-powerful, but He is also good by His very nature. He loves you more than you can grasp. He has your best in mind. He is working out a perfect plan for your life.

We talked last week about God's promises that are true for us. Praying with right theology means praying with these in mind.

Here's the truth:

- Some of us have things we want to pray...but we doubt if God wants to do that for us...
- Some of us have dreams we want to pray for...but we think- *Well, I've prayed that way before and it didn't work out...God must not want me to succeed...*

Satan is real effective at getting in our heads and convincing us that *God doesn't want to do that for you. You aren't that significant...even if you pray for that...you could never pull that off. Greatness is for other people...you just stay where your comfortable. You know, you tried praying faith-filled prayers before and God didn't come through...why would you do that again?*

In times of doubt, in times of struggle, we've got to come back to good theology. We've got to come back to our God and seek Him out because we know He loves us. We know He is working out His perfect plan. We trust He has our best in mind. We pray, knowing that He has called us to significant work- expanding His Kingdom.

It's one thing to believe the sun can stand still for Joshua or for the writer of this book who is the pastor of some large church... but what we have to get down to is *can God make the sun stand still for me while I raise my kids...pay bills...develop a good marriage...?*

You know, if you think about it, all lame prayers start with poor theology. They are either based in thinking too small of God or thinking too small of yourself (not viewing ourselves as God does). We need to learn to pray prayers that factor in God's incredible power and God's perfect plan for our lives.

God loves it when His people pray prayers that only He can answer! He is not insulted by our big requests. He is insulted by our small ones. Sometimes we pray dumb prayers:

- Sometimes our prayers are so sterile...

- *God, just be with me today. **God says:** “Is that all?” “I wasn’t aware that we planned to be separated today. Because last time I checked- I fill all time and space. I am the creator of heaven and earth... I wasn’t aware that I needed your permission to join you today as you inhabit my planet.”*
- *God, I need you to heal this area of my life...God I need you to provide. If it be thy will... It as if we think God needs an “out” clause in the midst of the prayer... It is like we give God the option to get out of answering the prayer.*
- *God, help me today. I think God says- I’ve already promised that. I promised to be with you and not forsake you. I’ve sent my Holy Spirit to live inside of you...I’ve given you access to my unlimited power...**now what else do you want?***
- *Here’s what I’ve learned about God: If the size of your need is too big for you...it is just the right size for God. If your need in life is something that only God can do...you are right where God wants you.*

Sun Stand Still happened one time.. **but God wants believers to pray and live in such a way that there is no doubt that God is fighting for that person.** My hope is that God would do such great things through you that people will look at your life and say... *“Surely, God is fighting for Martin... or Abbott”...*

What is your “sun stand still” prayer today? What could you beg God for that lines up squarely with His power and goodness?

## **B. WITH YOUR HEART ALIGNED WITH GOD’S**

Here’s a key truth. We must consider this and learn to factor this truth into all of our praying. This is a challenge and a wonderful promise from God. *God promises that when our heart...our will...is aligned with His...and we pray...He will answer that prayer.* A key to great praying...a key to a powerful Christian life...a key to seeing the sun stand still in your life is to find God’s will and then pray it. *What does God want you to do? Find that and pray about it. You’re on your way to seeing God do great things.*

**1 John 5:14-15:** <sup>14</sup> *And we are confident that he hears us whenever we ask for anything that pleases him.* <sup>15</sup> *And since we know he hears us when we make our requests, we also know that he will give us what we ask for.*

Notice- Joshua didn’t pray a simplistic, sterile prayer like “Be with me today.” Joshua was so aware of God’s words and so in tune with God’s promises that he prayed a bold prayer of faith. *“God, according to your promise that you made me when you called me to lead these people...here is what I need you to do for me...”*

*Shouldn't we get to the point in our Christian life that God can't help but answer our prayers because our prayers are so in step with God's will? God- I know your promises... I know you said...so, God, I need you to do something right now that only you can do to fulfill your promises. This isn't some wild, feel-good, prosperity type magic formula. God answers prayers that are in accordance with His will.*

This is where you check your heart. We said you have to check your head and pray with good theology. But, here you evaluate your heart. *What are your motives for your Sun Stand Still prayer?*

- *God, help me loose weight.* Well...why are you praying that? God's not necessarily interested in you having a bikini ready body. He doesn't care about your six-pack abs. I don't think He's real concerned about us looking great so we can impress people. *But, He does want us to take care of the body He's given us so we can be primed and ready to carry out His good works.*
- *God, help me succeed at work.* Why? To make more money...to get that promotion. Why- Perhaps some of us would say that we want to use that money so we can give back more to God and finance His global mission work. I think God could get behind that prayer.

**What is that need in your life that is so in line with God's will...that you can not do on your own... and are you willing to risk it all and ask God to do something amazing?**

*Will you finally be bold enough today to surface that real need in your heart and pray a Sun Stand Still prayer to God?*

### **C. READY TO WORK**

**James 2:17 (NIV):** *In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.*

**James 2:17 (NLT):** *So you see, faith by itself isn't enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless.*

Joshua prayed 13 words and it changed the cosmos.

Notice...God gave the victory...but Joshua still had to go to battle. God threw the opposing army into a panic...but Joshua still had to lead his troops on an all night march.

Mark this:

*If you are going to pray that God would make the sun stand still- you better be ready to march all night. God always involves your faith and your works before he supernaturally brings His grace into your situation.*

#### **D. WITH PATIENCE AND PERSISTENCE**

**Mark 5:36:** *But Jesus overheard them and said to Jairus, "Don't be afraid. Just have faith."*

I know that when we look at a passage like this today- it arouses the skepticism that lurks in many of our hearts. Perhaps you doubt whether God can pull it off. Perhaps you've been hurt in life and feel let down by God.

The fact is...you may ask God to make the sun stand still..but the sky keeps getting darker. You may ask God to change your marriage but your spouse gets colder.

Mark 5:- story about Jairus... Jairus' need could be symbolic of your greatest need today. There is nothing that you will go through that God's word does not address...

Mark 5:35ff.

Every time you step into the realm of faith and you begin moving towards trusting God for the impossible... the enemy will be right there with you saying, "Why bother?" "You've tried to stop this habit before? Why bother trying to get your wife to love you... every time you try she moves farther away from you? Why bother giving to the church... you tried that and your finances have gotten tighter...Why bother dreaming...Why bother serving at the church?... *Why bother?"*

If you are going to walk in faith- you are going to have to learn Mark 5:36. You are going to have to ignore detractors... you are going to have to ignore the evil one leading you to doubt inside of you... You have to practice selective hearing... you have to learn how to tune out the doubt.

Jesus told Jairus to just believe...Jesus doesn't see a death...He sees an opportunity for a resurrection. Jesus doesn't see things the same way as we do.

Your circumstances don't have to be at 100% for your faith to be at 100%... Jesus looks at your situation and says just believe... Here's something true about faith: you don't have to fully understand what is going in your life to believe. You can believe...you can trust God without fully understanding how your problems will work out.

Every time a situation leads you to the potential for belief...to act in faith... the enemy is going to be right there saying, "Why bother?"

Abraham, Joseph, Moses...could have all said, "Why bother". Joshua could have said it...Mary could have said it... Paul could have said it when he got beat and shipwrecked... Jesus could have said why bother... when He was hanging on the cross...

Doubt is like a telemarketer. And, the best strategy is to never even pick up the phone.

Jesus “put them all out” ... that is what we need to do with our doubt.

Here’s a quote from the book of 2<sup>nd</sup> Journey: *Don’t stop believing!*

*What will be your “Sun Stand Still” prayer(s)?*