

“MOVING MOUNTAINS”
Pastor Mike Corwin

TEXT: MARK 11:22-26

GOD’S WORD: EXODUS 32:1-14

I – MOUNTAINS:

As I looked at Miley Cyrus’ song “The Climb” for this sermon series on prayer, one of the lines in the song kept jumping out at me. It said,

*There’s always gonna be another mountain
I’m always gonna wanna make it move
Always gonna be an uphill battle
Sometimes I’m gonna have to lose*

As I have gone through life I have found this to be true. There have been a lot of mountains in my life that I have wanted to move.

There were mountains called promotion tests that I wanted to move so I could climb the ladder. There was the mountain of love as I met my wife and wanted to have her love me back. Mountains surround our life together such as buying the houses we wanted, paying the bills when money was sometimes short. There were mountains to move so our children would thrive and survive. There were mountains to move as we faced numerous illnesses in all our lives. There were even mountains of faith to move to get us back to God, get us to the bottom of the cross of Jesus. And just like the song it was usually an uphill battle...an uphill climb.

You’ve had the same experiences haven’t you? You’ve had mountains to move too. Tell me what some of them were...

OPEN DISCUSSION W/CONGREGATION

There’s always going to be another mountain.

II – MOUNTAINS CAN MOVE:

The part of her lyrics I don’t agree with is that “*Sometimes I’m gonna have to lose.*” I know that sometimes we *may* lose, but I don’t think we *have* to. I think that the power of prayer, used right, can move any mountain we face. Matter of fact I would consider our God to be

the biggest and most powerful mountain there is. Yet I see in this morning's reading that God can be moved too.

Moses has been with God for a while now. He has been up and down the mountain more than a few times since the burning bush initiation. This time he has been up there a long time as God gave him the commandments and rules to live by. (See verse 18). And while he's up there the people have gotten unruly. They've been problems since they left Egypt, but today they outdo themselves. While Moses is speaking with God about the future of his chosen people, his brother Aaron is enlisted to make an idol for them to worship instead of God. So Aaron has them gather up all the gold they can find as they snatch earrings from their wives and he melts it and shapes it into a gold calf. He then built an altar in front of the calf. The next day, while Moses is still with the God who had just delivered them from Egypt, the people make offerings to the golden calf and celebrate their new god with a feast and plenty of drinking. Other detestable things took place also in what is termed a "pagan revelry." God sees what is going on and tells Moses to go down the mountain and leave him alone so his anger can build before he destroys them all.

But Moses doesn't leave. He stays and talks to God. He stays and prays on the holy mountain. He begs God to remember his covenant with all the ancestors of the people, and pleads for the lives of the Israelites even as they sin. And it tells us that the mountain moved. It tells us that in response to the intercession of Moses, God changed his mind. The largest mountain moved.

III – TEXT:

Jesus himself taught us that no mountain is immovable if we have the faith to do it.

Jesus is in the final week of his life. He has rode into Jerusalem on a donkey and then stayed the night with his disciples and followers in Bethany. The next morning he gets up and starts back to Jerusalem. He's hungry and stops to get some figs from a fig tree. The tree had a lot of leaves but no figs so Jesus cursed the tree that it would never again produce fruit. They then continued on into the city and this is the day he enters the Temple and clears it of all the money changers. That evening he leaves the city with his disciples and stayed somewhere else. The next morning they head back to Jerusalem and as they pass the fig tree he had cursed they see that the thing has withered away from the roots up, and they call it to his attention. Jesus then uses it as a teaching moment.

Mark 11:22-25 (NLT)

²²Then Jesus said to the disciples, "Have faith in God. ²³I assure you that you can say to this mountain, 'May God lift you up and throw you into the sea,' and your command will be

obeyed. All that's required is that you really believe and do not doubt in your heart. ²⁴ Listen to me! You can pray for anything, and if you believe, you will have it. ²⁵ But when you are praying, first forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against, so that your Father in heaven will forgive your sins, too."

Jesus tells them that there are two things they need to know, need to tap into for effective prayer. The first is to have faith in God. It's by the power of God that our prayers are answered, not by ours. Prayer has power only because it asks God to use his. The fig tree didn't wither only because Jesus had cursed it; it withered because God had heard the curse and granted it, used his power to answer the wishes of his Son. It's this powerful God that we have to have faith in to move our mountains.

And Jesus uses the mountain as an example. He told them and us if we had the faith that really believed in God and his power, if we believed in our heart that God loves us and wants to grant our wishes, and then we can move mountains. What he's saying is this, that the greatest possible difficulties can be removed when a person has faith.

Verse 24 says it very emphatically. "Listen to me! You can pray for anything, and if you believe, you will have it." There is a connection between prayer and faith. Praying is saying you have a faith that God can and will answer. That God loves you and will use his power to move your mountains.

The second thing is that we need for effective prayer is forgiveness. That doesn't mean that you just have to forgive your brother for calling you names in the 3rd grade. It means that you have to have the heart of God. That you build such a relationship with him on the mountain that you look at all his children with compassion. That you look at the world and want to move mountains not so much for you, but for God and those who need God. It means that when you pray, you do it seeking the will of God, to build the Kingdom of God, not get a winning lottery ticket.

With faith and forgiveness you can pray and mountains will move.

IV – MOUNTAINS MOVED:

I know personally that mountains have moved based my prayers, and the prayers of others:

A couple of years ago they found four masses growing in my lungs. With my history of cancer the doctors immediately surmised that's what this was. They sent me for a CAT scan with contrast and that showed that it wasn't just cancer but it was digging tunnels in my lungs trying to get out. A PET Scan done a week later showed them all as cancerous. They glowed in the dark. Next was a pulmonary oncologist who started talking about the surgery I

would need, but first she wanted a biopsy. So I had the pleasure of going to Riverside and laying under an x-ray machine as they poked a needle thru my chest wall and into the mass in my lungs. I was supposed to go in the following week for the results and to discuss the next step but it was holy week and I told her it would have to wait until the following week. She said she would call me when she got the results back so I would know before I came in the following week. She called me on Good Friday and all I heard on the other end of the phone was “YIPPEE – IT’S A FUNGUS.” It turned out that I had a fungus called “Histoplasmosis” growing in my lungs, which can be serious but it wasn’t cancer. The treatment was successful and the masses died and quit digging holes.

My mountain was moved! All the tests showed it was cancer, all the doctors said it was cancer, I and my family had accepted the diagnosis and were making plans for my care and recovery after surgery. But I asked God to move the mountain! I called personal prayer warriors I knew and everyone commenced to praying and God moved the mountain! I am convinced that I had cancer and God took it away and changed it into something that was easily treated.

I know personally that when you have faith and spend time on God’s Holy Mountain you don’t lose...The mountain you face does!

V – SUMMATION AND ASSIGNMENT:

So as this prayer month ends I want to look at what we’ve learned, remind you of the lessons.

- God calls us to the mountain of faith. God calls us to pray.
- God reveals himself to us on the mountain. As we spend time on the mountain talking to God we learn more and more about him.
- God changes us on the mountain. It’s on the mountain that we come to know fully the love and grace of God and our faith in him deepens.
- God will move mountains for you when you pray through that faith and relationship.

I believe that this church has grown and prospered because of prayer. The first thing I did as your pastor was make prayer a priority instead of an afterthought. So as I conclude this series I am calling us to prayer. Not just 10 people designated to be on a team, but this entire faith community. When we pray together to the Holy God we worship things happen. Mountains move. So you all need to be praying for things like our worship services, our officers who lead us, our youth, our vision, our missions, and our building project just to name a few. As we do this, sit back and watch God’s mighty power at work, watch mountains be moved.

AMEN