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Substance of Sermon preached by our Pastor

on Sunday Evening. July 3. 1983.

Lesson. Mark 10. vv.13-52.

Is any thing too hard for the Lord? Genesis 18. 14.

What an opportunity this is for the souls of the faithful, for those blessed with a divine promise from Heaven, for those in the trial of faith, for those who know what it is for the Lord to take special notice of them and, first, to renew His covenant with them, and to give them a promise and confirmation in such a positive, potent manner that it cannot be doubted. What an opportunity for you who have a grain of loving faith in vital activity by the Holy Ghost on a wonderful Saviour, on His glorious Being, on His wonderful character, on all His supreme perfections! What an opportunity for you who are in union and frequent communion with Him! There is a proposition made to Abraham and there is tremendous significance in the change of his name, for the Lord had added a blessed word. And He made a proposition to one He had already recently named as the father of many nations, and yet he has no child, no son, no promised son. So it is of tremendous significance and it sounds paradoxical that God should call him the father of many nations before he had the promised seed. But spiritually we view Christ, the Father of all His people round the world in all ages. He says to him, "Is any thing - A thing is whatever object ^{engages} your attention by faith, or whatever matter the Lord is involved with and that is His cause. "Is any thing too hard - too difficult, beyond the power of our wonderful God?"

I will say to you immediately the Scripture falls into a definite category, and I think you will understand if I show two things. The very journey of the people of God with its exercises, concerns and trials of life will contain those things that nourish despair and despondency, and the devil is the author of it, Also there is the wicked nature, the unbelief of man that stems from the basic evil of infidelity which is in our nature. It is a solemn thing that wretched unbelief is the work of the devil and it appears to be of some people to nourish your despair. So what is the category of the text? It is a word, a powerful, unctuous,

robust, glorious word by the Spirit to exceedingly nourish your faith. That is the category. In fact it is to bring your faith to the maximum of potency and power. It is wonderful. I suppose you may wonder what I mean by the maximum of potency and power. It is to be brought by what has nourished your faith to the place where the Lord so assures you of the fulfilling of what He has promised that you have no doubt left. It is as solid as the rock, as certain as your salvation, and you are built and established on the Rock.

The friends will begin to see the exact nature of the text. It all relates to our wonderful God who only doeth wondrous things. It is like a precursor to the Lord doing it. There are many things the Lord has done, as His creation work when He made all things out of nothing. This is remarkable and so opposite to all the teaching in the schools of evolution. He created all things by the word of His power. He spake, and it was done. You see the word of our wonderful God. There are those things according to His own volition. In the order of His Kingdom and grace He capacitates His people for the performing hand of God, and before He performs by omnipotence He gives an expectation to Sarah, a wonderful tonic and nourishment to her ^{living} faith so there was the preparation and forerunner of the fulfilment of the same. I suggest to you godly people the proposition before us. "Is there any thing too hard - too difficult, too complicated, too obdurate, too far gone. Is there any thing too far gone for the Lord?" You will know what I am thinking of; the death and burial of Lazarus and the state of his body. It was as though when Christ came to the tomb Martha said, if we translate, "What is the good of going to the tomb? It is beyond interposition. By this time he stinketh. His body is decomposed. Why go to the tomb?" That is the natural response of the creature. It is unbelief, not faith. Take the proposition. "Is there any thing too hard - too far gone - for the Lord?" There are times with His beloved people in trial when they keep praying and there are certain deteriorating conditions take place which bring them to feel it is too far gone for the Lord to do anything. "Is there any thing too hard for the Lord?" What a word for you, for me, for us! I feel to say because I know there are a number of older friends, and young friends who are very much concerned; you are anxious and prayerful and concerned that the Lord should do for you of His mercy

great things, and great things may be specific in your minds. If you meet frustration and disappointment and a closed door two or three times you become disheartened. The Lord is saying, "Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" It is a lovely word because it is a ray of sunshine in a dark world. It is full of hope and expectation. The Lord would never say "Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" if He had no purpose of doing it; if there is to be a terminus of utter disappointment, frustration and denial. The word exudes hope, strengthens you because the Lord will do great things and you will be able to say, "The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad." Our wonderful God does only wondrous things. I feel a special delight in my soul in preaching from this word in the Name of the Trinity with His authority, the authority of our wonderful God.

I will put a question to you. If you have living faith, what are you anticipating? that the Lord will do great things for you? If the Lord does for you what you pray for and need and desire it will be a great thing; not a little thing. Does not faith anticipate great things? The Lord encourage you that you seek that He do for you great things. "Which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number." I know the tiniest thing the Lord does by way of mercy is a great thing, and the smallest thing God did in His Creation work was a great thing. If the Lord does what you pray for it will be a great thing, and correspondingly your praise will be in the highest. With a full heart you will sing His glorious praises, laud, adore, praise and magnify Him. He does not want an insipid form of thanks, but that which is full and adequate to a degree to adore, praise, laud Him; to exalt, extol and lift Him high. The consummation of it will be in Heaven. We do not want the words of Scripture diluted. The Lord give you a degree of faith so you will be positive and say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name."

I feel it may be profitable to embark on the ramifications. There are those things our wonderful God cannot or will not do. Does that surprise you? He cannot do what is opposite to His will. If a thing is not the will of God He will not do it. He only does what is His divine will; corresponding with divine decrees, heavenly purposes and promises.

If we ask according to His will we know we have the petitions that we desired of Him. You can pray for a hundred years: if it is not the will of God you will never get it. His will stands supreme. It may be many have tried it: they can never persuade Him to do what is contrary to His will. He will never do what is in disharmony with His Word, in conflict with His Word, with all the statutes, precepts, promises, divine teaching and tenor of the Book of God. He will never do what is inimical to His Word. This the Great Prophet has taught you. He will never do what is contrary to His glory. You see how needful it is to teach this. You will never persuade God to do what is opposite to His will, character, Word, also to the nature and Spirit of Christ, or to that which is to His glory. This may send you home with a few inquiries, and to search to see if what you are asking for is contrary to the Scriptures, to His glory and honour, His nature and character. He will never do it. Vital it is to know our prayers for the performance of Omnipotence have certain rudiments accompanied by the Spirit and that it is His will. How do you know it is His will? This is where the devil catches and holds people in a snare. The point is, you will know a thing is the will of God and of God because He will give you a promise relating to it with almighty power and efficacy, and confirm it. Another thing is, if you are able to assimilate it, you will know it is His will if earth converses with Heaven, and if there is harmony between your soul and Heaven. You are in sweet liberty, holy light, and in blessed acceptance. Wonderful it is when the Lord makes known His will.

There are a few more points. Take it as falling on the ears of the faithful, blessed with like precious faith. The dear younger friends come to the time when they are leaving home. It is a perfectly natural instinct if called by God, to hope and desire to have a dear husband or wife, and your own home and little family. There are many things come into this gamut; your situation, the location of it, what the Lord has put in your heart to seek for and your home; where is it to be, and all the fine details concerning it so you may meet with happy days of success. There will be the dark day of disappointment, but "Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" to find you a home, a good partner, the right place, the right situation, and you will pray about it all. Older

Christians go back to their early days. You will remember the place and where you gave your hand, and what settled it. Had you the authority from God for it? "Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" It is a lovely word to cover all our lives, the vicissitudes, every chapter of our lives. The Lord times things to a split second. Later would have been too late, or earlier, too soon. It is just the right time. What an opportunity for you in the congregation to bring your matters to the Lord. "Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" Bring them, press them, plead them before Him. Think of the wonderful things the Lord is able to do. You may have an enemy, one who is a great trial to you, and I am not thinking of the world. Your nature is roused and you would retaliate if left. "Is any thing too hard for the Lord? Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." Your weapon of retribution or bitterness falls from your hand, and the instrument of prayer is given. "Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" You may become close friends. No one understands it; the two parties do not. Our wonderful God has done it. Two men, or whoever it is have walked at a distance and are brought together and love each other. They did not before. It is a wonderful thing.

I do not know your problems but "Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" He can change the outlook of your mind. It is a great thing to concentrate on the mercy and goodness of God; it is lovely and beautiful. "Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" You may have a disease, a traumatic experience, an illness, a fundamental weakness which is hereditary. "Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" Bring your hardest matters: they will not be too hard for the Lord. Some preachers in the past have stuttered severely, so it would appear to disqualify them from public speaking. The Lord sent them and cured their speech defect. "Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" And there are those far distant in unregeneracy. We have had proof of it to day, the Lord exercising His sovereignty, His glorious supreme power and government and dominion, sending forth His quickening Spirit. "Behold, he prayeth." Do you remember when you began to pray? You felt ashamed, you smote on your breast, and that was the end of being joined to the world. You pleaded for divine mercy. The text covers every thing. Moses was inspired to write the biography of Abraham, and by the

Spirit he gives the beginning of things, and he shows the glory of it all the end. You see the whole. Twenty-five years and Sarah was laughing in a happy, joyful manner. There is a wealth here of holy doctrine divine taught by the Spirit, and a prophecy of the Saviour. So by divine commandment Abraham must leave Ur of the Chaldees, and a great promise was given him: that in him should all the families of the earth be blessed. It was a promise of Christ. It all points to the people of God leaving the world, and they have a better country and an heavenly, and they go every step by faith. As yet the promise was unfulfilled. The trial of faith is a needful part of the process. It is real, it has been tried; it has gone through the furnace.... Now there no possibility of such an event according to nature's rule. "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." With His dead body was the rising of the promised seed, with Christ. Out of the grave of Sarah's womb, a type of the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Let me remind you when Abraham was instructed to offer his son for a sacrifice he obeyed, and our good teacher the apostle gives us light on it. "Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure" or as a type of Christ. Blessed be God.