

## What God Can Do Eph. 1:18-23

God can and will do great things for those who love and serve Him. There are those – many of America’s founding Fathers – that think, God wound up the world like a clock, and lets it run down without interfering in the ways of the world. Others question whether God exists, and still others who think man cannot know if God exists. But the Bible teaches not only that God exists, but that we can know that He exists. Know this, God is very alive and willing to make a profound difference in our lives. If you let Him, God can transform your life and give you an abundant life; but you must give yourself to Him.

**The Lord knows many are confused and hurting;** He knows others have made a mess of their lives by following the ways of the world and sin. And He wants something better for us. The Lord Jesus promised in **Mt. 11:28-30**, *“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”*

*The more I study the Scriptures, the more I realize how powerful God really is.* We often lose sight of how capable God is to help us and provide for our needs. God expects our faith, our love, and our obedience; but let us not forget all the good that God can do to bless us, protect us, to and to help us overcome the challenges of this world. **God is indeed capable of making a difference in our lives.** The prophet **Jeremiah** in **32:17** said, *“Ah, Lord GOD! It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you.”* The God who created the heavens and the earth also created you. He loves you and knows what you need even before you ask Him. Nothing is too hard for God.

Paul warned the Ephesians that they needed to understand God’s power in their lives. In **Eph. 1:18-21** he said, *“having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.”* Think about it, if God could create the universe, and if He

could raise Jesus from the dead – **Can this God then, not also exercise His power toward us who believe.**

**First, God is able to bless His people.** When His people are striving to follow His will and serve Him, God will supply for them the things *they need*. **2 Cor. 9:8-10** says, *“And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. As it is written, “He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.” He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness.”* We need to put our faith in God’s ability to provide for us when we are doing good in serving Him.

God not only helps us in our efforts to do what is right; He also works within our hearts to want to do what is right. He works in us through the teaching of the Scripture and through answering our prayers. Paul spoke confidently to the church at Philippi, in **Phil. 1:6** he said, *“And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.”* **The God who saved us from sin and transformed our lives from sinners to saints is interested in our pursuing good works according to His will.**

Paul revealed in **Phil. 2:12-13**, *“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.”* God is interested in our attitudes. He wants to build our faith, strengthen our love, and embolden us to work for His good pleasure.

Paul wanted them to open the eyes of their hearts to understand just how great God’s power is towards us who believe. We should not think we serve a small and disinterested God who has little to do with us. **Eph. 3:20-21** says, *“Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”*

The Apostle Paul urges us to come to the Lord for strength when we face temptation and the struggles caused by the spiritual forces of evil. **Eph. 6:10-13** says, *“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers,*

*against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.”* We can put on the armor of God through being strong in Christ.

This passage urges us to, ***“Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.”*** We do this by putting on the whole armor of God. *Then the Lord can strengthen our hearts and wills through the truth, through righteousness, through the gospel of peace, through faith, through salvation, through the word of God, and through prayer.* We must take advantage of these things to grow strong in the strength of His might. He offers us the strength to overcome. So, let’s take advantage of that power.

**Second**, we should remember that God is faithful to His people. **1 Cor. 10:13** promises, ***“No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.”*** God wants you to overcome the temptations that you face each day. And He will not allow them to be greater than your ability to resist. If they are, He will provide you a way to escape, so that you can maintain a pure life.

*When the devil and the world seem overwhelming, remember that God is with you.* God will see your faith and help you through your struggle. **1 Peter 5:8-10** says, ***“Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.”***

**2 Cor. 1:18-20** says, ***“Was I vacillating when I wanted to do this? Do I make my plans according to the flesh, ready to say “Yes, yes” and “No, no” at the same time? As surely as God is faithful, our word to you has not been Yes and No. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not Yes and No, but in him it is always Yes. For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.”*** God does not stutter or take back His promises. He is faithful to His word. And you can put your soul into God’s hands, knowing

that He will do what He has promised. The apostle Paul in **2 Tim. 1:12** said, *“for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me.”*

**Third, God hears the prayers of those who love and serve Him.** Have you considered the fact that God invites us to pray? You know as God’s children we don’t have to beg to be able to speak to our Father in heaven.

Jesus in **Mt. 7:7-11** said, *“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!”*

**1 Jn. 5:14-15** says, *“And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.”* In **Mark 11:22-24** Jesus promises, *“And Jesus answered them, ‘Have faith in God. Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. Therefore, I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.”*

I am sure that some of you in your hearts at this moment are thinking, *“I prayed but I didn’t get what I asked for.”* **God hears the prayers of those who love and serve Him.** But Scripture declares that God will not bless evil: **1 Jn. 3:22** says, *“and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him.”* However, **Psalms 66:18** says, *“If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.”* We can’t presume that we may live sinful lives and still have the favor of God. **Isaiah 59:1-2** say, *“Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.”* God loves us and He loves you, and He wants to hear your prayers, but your iniquities have separated you from God. When people turn their hearts away

from God and go towards this sinful world, they focus not on being like God or serving God, they then find that God isn't any longer willing to hear their prayers. But when they repent and come back to Him, God will hear? One last thought on unheard prayers, it comes from **James 4:1-10**, *“What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, ‘He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us’? But he gives more grace. Therefore, it says, ‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.’ Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.”* Too often our prayers are selfish, that is for our own passion, and not for the service of our God. The answer to unheard prayer is always repentance of sin and a turning to God. If you are wondering about your unanswered prayer, maybe you need to ask yourself, *“What is my heart serving with this prayer?”*

**Fourth, God will take care of you.** In **Mt. 6:31-34** Jesus made this statement, *“Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”* *“Therefore, do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”* When you put God first, seeking His kingdom and His righteousness, God will supply your needs.

The apostle Paul stayed faithful to God, though he suffered many things. He knew God had something better for us in the future. In **2 Cor. 4:16-18** he said, *“So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.”* When we hold fast to God, God holds fast to us and gives us a home in glory.

I would like to sum everything up with the words of **Hebrews 3:12-14**, *“Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.”*

**If you have been thinking about quitting on the Lord; please hold fast to His promises.** Too many people who used to be faithful in their worship and service to God have stopped believing and worshipping Him. There are many good reasons to love and serve Him. But I want you to understand this: God wants you back; He wants to work in your life and bless you. **The question is, “Will you let Him? Will you love Him and faithfully serve Him?”**

The Bible says the best day to turn to, or even return to God, is **“Today!”** What about you? Do you need to turn to or return to the Lord Jesus? If you need to return to the Lord, you will need to repent of your sins and return to the Lord, if you have never come to the Lord, you will need to repent of your sins, confessing the Name of Jesus as Lord, and then in accordance with Scripture, be baptized in water for the forgiveness of your sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Will you do this today, then turn your heart and your life toward God - Obey the Lord today!