

Move That Mountain Tony Evans

Mountains in the Bible are used in a number of ways. First of all, there is the physical mountain that we normally use the word to refer to. But also in the Bible, mountain also refers to kingdoms. The kingdom of God is called a mountain. The kingdom of Satan is called a mountain. And the kingdom of men is called a mountain. It's referring to a rule over a sphere. The word "mountain" is used of that. The third way that the word "mountain" is used in the Bible, as it is used in this passage, is for an unovercomeable situation. A situation that looms so large, you can't move it by yourself, and you don't even know anybody who can help you move it. It's just too big. You can't get over the hump. It's too awesome in its problematic impact on your life. It's a mountain, those are called mountains.

Zechariah 4:7 uses the word "mountain" in this way, some obstacle that looms large in your life to which you need divine help to move. In this passage today, Jesus talks about moving mountains. And it is introduced by a fig tree. Peter says to Jesus, "Jesus," verse 20, "the fig tree that you cursed yesterday has withered today from the root up. You pronounced a curse yesterday. We came out here today. And what you said yesterday not only has happened today, but it has super happened 'cause it is withered not only with the fig part, but it has withered from the root up. So, whatever you said has completely reversed this situation". We find in verse 12 Jesus is hungry, and Jesus wants to get something to eat. He looks and he sees a fig tree in leaf. That is, the leaves were out. When the leaves are out on a fig tree, that means there are figs. The leaves are the external validation that figs are on the tree. Jesus, being hungry, goes over to the fig tree in leaf to get figs. We're also told it was not the season for figs.

So, the tree is showing fig leaf when it's not even the season for figs to grow, so Jesus sees something out of the norm and goes over in his humanity because he's hungry. But when he goes over, he discovers there are leaves with no figs. The fig tree was a deception. It was trickery because there were no figs. So, Jesus curses the fig tree. He says, "Because you are a deceiving tree, I'm hungry, you gave me the visible impression you can feed me. When I came over, there was nothing but a good look, but no substance. And so, I'm gonna curse your external activity because of the absence of an internal reality". However, between the fig tree yesterday and the fig tree today, there is a story. Let's look at the story to tie the two days of the fig tree together. It says in verse 15, between the two fig tree events, Jesus comes to Jerusalem, enters the temple. He drives out those who were buying and selling in the temple, overturned the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of those who were selling doves. And he would not permit anyone to carry merchandise through the temple. And he began to teach them, saying, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations,' but you have made it a robber's den".

Follow me now. On yesterday, Jesus was hungry, and he went to a fig tree that looked like it was real. But when he got up close, there were no figs, there was no reality. The following day, he goes to church, the temple. And where he should've found folk worshiping God, where he should've found folk praying to God, where he should've found folk living for God, he found fake religion, not the real thing. Now, it was in the right building 'cause it was in the temple. It had the right folk 'cause there was a priest. But it didn't have spiritual reality. They were shucking and jiving in church. They were playing religion in church. They had the leaves, and the leaves should've meant you should find God here. You should find his presence here. You should find his power here. But when Jesus showed up, all they were doing were playing games in the house of the Lord. There was no reality to their religion.

You see, religion without reality is leaf without life. Religion without reality is leaf without substance. You can look the part, but when we get up close and peer close, there is no spiritual life, spiritual

reality. You see, between the fig tree yesterday and the fig tree today is the temple story. And in the temple story, which is Jesus's major point, is you're supposed to be reality, but all I see is Christian leaves. I don't see the Spirit of God, the power of God, the presence of God. All you're doing is trying to make money. All you're doing is having programs. All you're doing is activity that has absolutely nothing to do with spiritual reality. You got fake church going on. In fact, he goes on to say when he quotes the Old Testament, "My house shall be known as a house of prayer". He says, "No, my house should be a house of prayer".

That the thing that should draw you here is your corporate contact with him, not your human contact with whosoever standing on the podium. He says God must be the center of it because if God is not the center, you're operating with Christian leaves. You're operating with religious illusion. And so, when he talks about that, it says Peter says to him, "Master, rabbi, the tree has withered from the root up. I mean, you cursed the tree, but in 24 hours, this whole tree is gone. How could you do this in that short amount of time"? Jesus, it says, answers. Now, it's interesting, it says, "Jesus answered". But technically, Peter didn't ask a question. All Peter said was, "The tree has withered from the root up". Well, that's not a question, that's a statement. But Jesus knew what he was getting at. What Peter was getting at is, how could something that big happen this fast? That's the question. Jesus knew what his question was. Tree is fine yesterday, you cursed it yesterday, it's gone today. How could all that happen in 24 hours?

And that's when Jesus now gives him, and gives you and me, his secret for moving mountains, things in your life that are too big for you to handle on your own and for anybody else you know to handle for you. He says in verse 22, "Have faith in God". In fact, Jesus says in Matthew chapter 17, verses 20 and 21, "If you have the faith the grain of a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain," uses the word "mountain," "be moved, and the mountain will be moved". He says, "And this comes through fasting and prayer". He says mustard seed faith can work if it's in the right object. Don't have faith in your faith, have faith in the right object. To put faith in God means that you must put faith in God's Word, God's will, and God's character. And when you have faith in that God, now we can discuss mountain moving prayers.

If you don't have faith in that God, then you're asking the wrong person to move the mountain because you're not asking the person whom you ought to truly have faith in. He then says you must put confidence in God, his will, his way, his Word. What do you do next with your mountain? Here's what you do. He says, "Whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea.'" So, Jesus is probably on the Mount of Olives, 15 miles downhill is the Dead Sea. He says, "If God is working for you, you can say to this mountain, 'Be moved,' and it will relocate itself". The problem is the mountain. You want to get the mountain off of you. You want it to relocate itself away from you. He says, "If there's figs on your tree, there is life, you have faith in the true God. Then you can do with your mountain what you saw me do, Peter, with mine. I spoke to it"

He talks about praying to God, but then he talks about speaking to your mountain. Prayer is when I talk this way. My mountain is what I'm experiencing out here in my daily life. He says, "If there's figs on the tree, real life, you're not withering. If you have faith in the real God, not the god of your own making, his will, his Word, and his character, then you can have a conversation with your problem 'cause your mountain is your problem". And when you speak to your mountain, it says the mountain will relocate itself, means get out of your face. The mountain will relocate itself. Now, this raises the question, and the question is in what Jesus says after this, and it's a question in everybody's heart and mind. He says, "All things which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them and they will be granted you. Whenever you stand praying, forgive if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father in heaven will also forgive you".

In verse 24, he makes a staggering statement. "Whatever you have asked for, believe you have

received it". In other words, you haven't received it yet, but believe you have received it, even though you haven't received it. So, you expect it, but you haven't received it. The difference between God's unconditional will and his conditional will, God's unconditional will is what he decides to do regardless of what anybody else does. In other words, he's gonna do it, period. His sovereignty has decided, "This is what I'm going to do". And no matter what you do, don't do, what somebody else does, doesn't do, nothing will change 'cause this is my unconditional will. That is, it's not tied to any conditions. I'm just gonna do it because I have my prerogative to do it. The reason why God tells us to pray is so that we can link into his conditional will. Because his unconditional will is gonna happen whether we pray or not, but his conditional will only happens if we obey, if we pray, if we believe, and if we have figs on the tree. That is, we are full of divine life operating within us.

So, that's condition. So, many of the things that we pray for, we don't get because we didn't meet the conditions. It didn't fit God's conditional will. 'Cause if it's his unconditional will, it's gonna happen regardless. But if it's his conditional will, it happens if, only if certain factors are made. And that's why in the Scriptures, we're told that we have to qualify for certain things to happen because it's tied to his conditional will. So, how do you know if something you're asking for is unconditional, he's gonna do it or not do it anyway, or conditional? Let me answer that two ways. Number one, many times you don't know, okay? Many times, God is silent on whether it's unconditional or conditional. So, guess what you do? You treat it like it's conditional. If you're not sure, then you treat it like it's conditional, and you do everything you're supposed to do so that if it is unconditional, you've met all the standards for God to fulfill, if it is conditional, for God to fulfill his conditional will regarding that situation. But then there's another answer.

1 John chapter 5, verses 14 and 15 says, "And we have this confidence that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know he hears us, we know that he will grant what we have requested". So, here's another secret to God's conditional will. When God is operating on a conditional will and he wants you to qualify to move this mountain that you are facing, what he will do is give you an inbred confidence, or a sense of assurance, or a sense of peace, or a sense of for realness that this thing is going to happen. Because when God is doing something big in your life, he has to do two things at the same time: prepare the thing that he wants done, and prepare you for the thing he's doing. Both things have to collide.

If you're not being prepared, then you're not ready. You're like the children in the wilderness because you're not ready for the Promised Land 'cause you won't meet the conditions. But he also has to get the Promised Land ready so that when you arrive there and he's ready to move the mountain, the mountain is already ready to obey. It's in the hands of Almighty God of whether it's conditional or unconditional. But what I don't want it to happen is I don't want it to be conditional and I didn't do what I was supposed to do. But then one more thing, and it's an important thing. He says, "Whenever you are standing, praying, forgive if you have anything against anyone, so your Father in heaven will forgive you".

Okay, watch this. Forgiveness is a condition of moving mountains. Forgiveness is not necessarily reconciliation. You can forgive without being reconciled. But what God is saying is, "You're blocking me moving your mountain. Because what you're wanting for me is my forgiveness for you. Well, if you want my forgiveness for you, you got to be willing to offer it to somebody else". Now, unless you have the right view of God, you're not gonna do that because you think, "I'm gonna repay this. I'mma get my posse to repay this. 'Cause you shouldn't have done that to me, and I'm gonna get you for doing that". Well, what you just did, you didn't have faith in the God of the Bible. So, you got to have faith in the God of the Bible, which keeps you from

needing vengeance for yourself, not necessarily reconciliation, but vengeance for yourself.

See, the reason why Joseph could forgive his brothers for selling him into slavery, putting him in a hole, selling him to the Ishmaelites, he says he forgives. He said, "I forgive you. And the reason I can forgive you is you meant it for evil, but God meant it for good. God is so big, he used your mess to create my miracle". Unless you have that view of God, you will do the wrong thing because you don't have faith in God. I'm trying to create for me, for you, for us this bigger view of God, that we have faith in that God, that we are life Christians, not leaf Christians.

We don't just come to church on Sunday. We want to make this house a house of prayer, not just the house of preaching. A house where we cry out to God, and where we see miracles happening here. I want people to come not for the preacher or the sermon, but because of the power that's happening. Lives are changing, miracles are taking place, sicknesses are healed, marriages are restored, sins are overcome, addictions are canceled. That's why they come. And then, if they come for that, the preaching becomes extra because they're coming for the power of God in this house. That's what we're crying for. And so, if you meet the qualifications, you want to be an authentic life Christian. You want to cry out to God in prayer and in faith. You're gonna speak to the mountain and you're gonna forgive those who need to be forgiven, whether that's writing a letter, sending a note, making a call if those people are contactable.

Or just acknowledging to God if they aren't, "I release them. Lord, I don't feel like releasing them, I don't even want to release them, but I do know I want my mountain moved. So, because I want my mountain moved, in the name of Jesus Christ, I release them from the offense against me. I'm gonna let you handle them 'cause I need you to move this mountain in my life". And when we qualify for the mountain moving work of God, we will see mountains move. Things that God wants moved, we'll see them moved. And we will see God's power in this house, and that's what I want. We've got a mountain. You have mountains. And if you don't have one, keep living. You're gonna have a mountain, something too big for you to move. Just make sure that when you face your mountain, you have qualified for the conditional will of God to see that mountain moved.

In closing, there was a husband who went to the doctor on behalf of his wife. He says, "Doc, my wife has a hearing problem. She can't hear well. I can be talking to her, screaming across the room, and she doesn't hear". The doctor said, "Okay, well, I'll tell you what. Let's set an appointment, you bring her in next week. But between now and next week, I want you to run a test". Said, "Doc, what's the test"? Said, "Stand 15 feet away, and when she's cooking, ask her what she's cooking. If she doesn't answer, then go 10 feet away and ask her what she's cooking. If she doesn't answer, go 5 feet away and ask her what she's cooking. If she still doesn't answer, go right up to her ear and shout in her ear, 'What are you cooking?' to see whether she answers then because that'll give me a measurement of how many feet it takes before she's hearing". He says, "Okay, I'll do it". He went home, 15 feet away, "Dear, what are you cooking"? Nothing. He goes 10 feet away, "Dear, what are you cooking"? Nothing. He goes five feet away, "Dear, what are you cooking"? Nothing. Goes right up to her ear, "Dear, what are you cooking"? She says, "For the fourth time, vegetable stew". See, the problem may just be you.

We all face obstacles that seem too steep for us to climb over, a mountain if you will. Something so big, so large, so high that we become discouraged at thought of it, and we just come to two words, "I can't". Or four words, "I can't do this," or, "I can't make this". It's just too big for us to handle. But did you know in your prayers, you can not only speak to God about the mountain, God gives us the privilege of speaking to the mountain about God? You heard me right. God wants our prayers not just to be to God about those towering situations that we face in our lives. He wants us to tell the situation about how big God is, how great God is, how powerful God is, how omnipotent God is, how faithful God is, how transformational God is. When is the last time you've confronted your situation about God? When you have dictated the character of God and the Word of God into your situation? That's a form of prayer.

Yes, prayer is talking to God about it, but it's talking to it about God because you're still bringing God into the equation. You and I ought to have such confidence in God through our prayers that we can look at the unovercomeable, the thing that is bigger than life, the thing that no human being can support you on 'cause it looks like it's beyond human capacity to fix. And it is, but when you bring God into the equation and you say to that sickness, to that situation, to that relationship breakdown, to that addiction, to that financial trauma, when you can say to it, "Hey, this is what God said. This is what I know what my God can do. This is what he has done in similar situations, and I'm looking to my God to handle you. I'm looking for my God to get me the ability and give me the ability to override you," oh, now you're speaking to the mountain. Now, you're dictating to the situation. And yes, God wants us to use him righteously and humbly in that way so that the mountain has to react to him and not just dictate to us. So, go ahead and tell your mountain about the greatness of your God.