

Furlough Sermon 2015

Building expansion

Doubts about our ability to raise that kind of money

Those doubts were reflected in my prayers

Why do we pray small? Why do we ask for less than we want?

Just send me a man who won't cheat on me or a man who will love me as Jesus loves me.

Just let me pass the test, not do my best

Just let me get through the day, or let me conquer in your name

Sometimes not worthy of God's blessings, live under a cloud of God's anger or at least disappointment or maybe that he isn't quite sure that he wants to bless us entirely – that is our guilty conscience and so we ask for less because we don't to be too proud or too needy –

God says be content and I don't want to complain – so maybe we are driven by that

Or is it that we allow our rational mind to limit what we believe God can do. And so if it seems impossible, then it must be. If it seems far fetched, then I won't ask for it. If it seems like we won't be able to do it, I will ask for something that I think we can do.

Ephesians 3:20-21

Paul prays for a strong faith and strength in their lives and ends with a doxology, a praise song to God.

Immeasurable more than all we can ask or imagine

Immeasurably – what an encouragement to pray big

Ask – more than I ask for God can do – bigger, higher, wider, deeper, greater

Imagine – more than my mind can even think up, can't even imagine what God has in store for me – I may think that the best thing for me is this and I can't even imagine anything greater than that, and God sees something entirely different

According to the power that is at work in us – We have God's power in us. So we as God's children with God's power can do amazing things. What makes us think that we can't. Why do pray halfheartedly about things? Why do we expect half way results? Why do we think that we won't be able to do? So if it is God's power at work, why do I doubt that God is not able to do something? He is. Can God do this or that? Absolutely, so pray it.

Not only that, but God's grace is at work in us as well. No greater power than God's grace to transform and change us, to turn us into something more than we thought we could ever be.

That grace means that we are not under a cloud of suspicion, completely forgiven so no reason not to pray big. And God even tells us that he wants to bless us. He wants us to pray big and bold and hold him to his promises. That is faith in his word to do that. When we pray small, when we put limits on what God can do in our minds, that really comes from a lack of faith and is insulting to God, to pray for something so small. That is all that you want? Really? That is your prayer? Okay.

2 Kings 13:18 – lack of zeal, a lack of faith led Jehoash to behave the way he did – note God’s grace, even though they didn’t forsake the sins of their fathers, he wanted to help Jehoash and the people. God’s patience.

Could it be that we don’t have the blessings that God desires to shower on us because we ask with half hearted enthusiasm, because we ask with hearts filled with doubt? Could it be that I have not conquered the sin in my life because I make a half hearted attempt and pray about it with half hearted words?

To God be the glory – but God desires to bless us – for his own sake – good thing because if it was for my sake, we wouldn’t get very much, but for his glory, and when he does bless us, it is important that we acknowledge where it came from and who did it to us, through us, in us, and give him the glory.

A bank account with \$1.6million US

Note the ending – Amen to that. Amen. This is most certainly true. This is going to happen.

Now to him who able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine according to the power that is at work in us, to him be glory in church and in Christ, forever and ever, Amen.