

GOD'S CALL TO THE IMPOSSIBLE

by J. Ray Klingensmith

Texts: "For with God nothing shall be impossible" (Lk. 1:37).

"Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" (Gen. 18:14).

The call of God to believing people seems to be something totally impossible to the unbeliever. Our belief in God who created us, and all things that exist seems preposterous to unbelievers who do not know God. They would rather ascribe all life and existence to what they call "mother nature," or more vaguely, hundreds of millions, or billions of years. They pretend that it is impossible for them to say "God". But the believer stands in awe at the vastness and complexities of all things and humbly bows before the God who created them. Thus, what to the believer is totally obvious and acceptable is just impossible to the unbeliever. And there is a reason for this, which we will discuss later.

Again, another "impossible" for the unbeliever that is fully accepted by the believer is the One called Jesus Christ. The unbeliever respects His wisdom and His moral and social works, but to believe that he is the Son of God, that His great death and resurrection were accomplished in behalf of every sinner, is just out of the question for the unbeliever. Thus, what is impossible to plain human reason is wholly acceptable through the gift and experience of faith, which every believer knows.

So the natural human mind seeks what to him is reasonable, acceptable, provable; but faith, the gospel, the Bible, go far beyond the mere human reason. As the Bible says: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (I Cor. 2:9-10).

Now consider all of the "impossible" things God gives to the believer with which to witness to an unbelieving world. Everything in the Christian's arsenal of faith is just impossible to the "natural man," as the apostle Paul would say. Yet consider also how powerful and effective these "impossibles" have been to claim millions of believers for Christ. Only God knows how many hundreds of millions have given their lives to him, to serve, to believe, to go into the ministry, to become martyrs, or whatever their witness became. And there are now hundreds of millions believing and praying and working for Him regardless of how impossible it seems to those who do not have faith.

The Christians proclaim a Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ. The unbeliever says "impossible". The unbeliever proclaims that such

things never happen, in fact can't happen. But God tells us to proclaim it! And hundreds of millions celebrate what they call the Christmas story which proclaims God's entrance into the human family "made of a woman" (Gal. 4:4). And to make the story even more impossible this one born was called the Son of God! And he was born to an unmarried girl! And still worse, born in a barn! Now what a message to proclaim to a lost world! This one the Saviour of mankind? But it is this to which we witness. And it confounds the wisdom of the wise. And it is so unique and so out of the ordinary that only God could have brought it to pass. Thus its power.

The story continues with this One growing up as a laborer, a carpenter whose own relatives at one time thought him "mad". The religious people were always challenging and contradicting Him and trying to make Him an enemy of their religion. They could not deny His miracles and great wisdom and His divine power; but they could not give up their own reasoning to accept by faith what God had given them. So they finally proved their own carnality by having Him murdered. So He was crucified between two thieves as an outlaw, a blasphemer, and enemy of God and the Jewish religion. And God gives us such a story to tell to a lost world! Impossible! So the Cross has become the symbol of victory, not of failure; of life, not of death. So the cross now decorates the churches and cathedrals and missions and is even worn as jewelry. Doesn't it seem that God would have given us a great success story to proclaim? He gave us the worst possible message to proclaim: a baby born to an unmarried couple, in a barn, in controversy with his own people, murdered as an outlaw! What a story! And yet millions bow before it! It is told and retold and sung about and written about and painted and preached more than any other event or life known to mankind. And by it we are redeemed.

And is there still more to this impossible story? Yes! The worst yet: He arose from the dead! God raised Him up! He broke open the way for all of us to go to God! Impossible! But that is the Gospel! And that we proclaim. And that becomes the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Would it not seem that God would have given us some great success story to proclaim? Could it not have been verified by great intellectuals and powerful leaders? But no, they rejected it.

And who witnessed and perceived and grasped all of this? Not the "wise". Not the powerful politicians. Not the great religious leaders. Just people! "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom. . . ?" (James 2:5). And they tell us that more than 500 people saw Him after He had arisen

from the dead, and they don't even give us the names of very many of them. And who were some of the witnesses who proclaimed it first? Mary Magdalene? The one out of whom he had cast seven devils? And the other Mary? And Peter who denied Him? And a couple people going down the Emmaus road who didn't know Him when He appeared unto them? Surely it would seem that some great scientist or some great historian or some great religious teacher should have been there to verify it. But no. God didn't need that. The event in itself would carry ample power with it to touch the human soul. So now God has armed us with the story of a Virgin Birth, a carpenter, a controversial life, a person murdered as an outlaw, a cross, and a resurrection from the dead—which becomes a victory over death and a salvation and redemption for a lost world! And it has changed the lives of millions upon millions in every nation, language and tongue. And it is still doing so.

But to carry the story of God's call to the impossible a bit further let us consider the people God used to get the message into writing and to what we now call the New Testament. The great religious leaders and intellectuals were offended that they were not called upon to be His disciples or to proclaim His Word. Neither were they needed to write it. For who were they who gave it to us? Matthew the publican. Mark, who had quit outright on his first attempt at a missionary venture. There was Simon Peter who had denied that he knew him. There was the original Saul of Tarsus who hated Him before his conversion. And there was James. Now surely we should have had some great University professor or some famous historian or some widely known philosopher publish this great story. But no. Our writers didn't even have a college education, except Paul. They had no experience in writing. In fact they didn't even have a publisher! Now how can this story get off the ground without a great public relations promoter? This is impossible! But we have their story in more homes and hearts than any other ever written. It is published in more languages, dialects, parts and parcels than any document ever written. Impossible! But this is how God works. This is the God and the Gospel that the unbelievers won't accept, while the evidence of it is so abundant that it practically smothers them.

So here we are with the simplest people carrying the most profound truth while God makes foolish the wisdom of the wisest of men (I Cor. 1:26-31).

So you have heard of some "impossible" Christian? And you know some impossible church? And you know some impossible life that God can't use? Well, that's quite normal. All believers feel as if we are the most impossible of all; but God has called us and is using us, and we love it.

It was ever so that the great gift of faith supercedes all of the impossibles. Have you heard of Noah and an ark? Just impossible, but it saved the human race. Have you heard of Moses who was pitted against an Egyptian government and all of its power to rescue a nation of slaves who had been in captivity for over four centuries? Have you heard of a Daniel in a lion's den or the Hebrew children in a furnace of fire? Have you heard of a David and a Goliath? Did you know about an Isaiah or a Jeremiah, or Amos, or Elijah? All were called to what the world would say was impossible. Have you read the eleventh chapter of Hebrews lately? This is the faith. This is the power. This is where God always did and still does work.

Where is your church working? Or where are you working? *Still in the possibles? Why not get into Faith for a change?* We walk by faith and not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7). The possibles are for those who live and work only by their own poor human reason. The impossibles are for those who have faith in the God of the impossibles. Be it done unto you according to your FAITH—not your worth, nor your merit, nor your virtue.

God is still calling thousands of young people into this "impossible" but greatest of all lives. Can you by faith join them, or help them? But even greater yet, can you and your church get out of the possibles into the great impossibles where God is always at work?