

# Impossible with Men, but Possible with God

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## **Grace Particular Baptist Church**

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If you will this morning, turn with me in your Bibles to our text this morning which will be found in the Gospel of Matthew 19:26.

26 But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

Let us pray.

*Dear heavenly Father, how glorious thou art, how great thou art. O Lord, may you search our hearts in this hour and the hour to come. May you reveal thy work, O Lord, what you have done in our souls. O Lord, may you testify this morning to thy children our election that is sure indeed, the surety that we have in thy Son, and Lord, may you humble us before thee that our testimony this day would be the testimony of thy holy word, that it is truly impossible with us but possible with thee. O Lord, glorify thy name. To thee be all glory and praise. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

When you heard this text this morning read, I wonder what goes through your mind. I wonder if you think maybe that there are things possible with you this morning. And that's my first question to us this morning: do you believe as you sit in that seat that you can make yourself believe? That you can make yourself trust in God? That you can make yourself believe in God? Do you sit there today and think that you can ascribe or can make yourself holy by the things that you do? Do you believe that these things are possible with you?

I know that when a text like this is read and the word of God is in red and we know that they are the words of Christ, I know that when the Holy Spirit testifies of the words of Christ in the soul of the believer, in the soul of the child of God, they smile. They smile. They say, "Yes, Lord. I understand with me it's impossible but with you, Lord, all things are possible."

But as we'll see today in this account, one of the things that we are so plagued with in this life, one of the things, one of the sins that easily besets us in this life is to believe that we can mix the law and grace; that we believe that there is a work that we can do. We believe that there is a possibility with us. That's a very deep statement this morning. That's what we are going to examine, Lord willing, this morning in this text.

As I said, once again, our text is Matthew 19:26, "But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible." What the Lord teaches his elect is his omnipotence in their life, his sufficiency in their life, his power in their life. We come every day and we get up and there is some sin that plagues us every day and that in our flesh is the ability that we believe that we have. And it doesn't matter how old you are. I know that when we're younger and we're in our youth we believe that we have an unabated strength, that we're so young and vibrant we believe there are things that we can do, that we can achieve, that we could do if we put our mind and our wills to. And as I said a few minutes ago, for the child of God, he's been brought to the feet of Christ to see and to experience that Christ is his power, Christ is his life, and truly at the end of himself, to be emptied of himself, he cries out to the Lord, "Lord, with me it's impossible but with you, Lord, all things are possible."

We could easily come to our life today and we can examine right now, right at this minute we could examine things in our life that we think are impossible. Impossible things and I'm talking about physical things and things that plague us and they come into our life and we go, "Oh, this is just such an impossibility," and for that moment we can say, "Oh, but with God those are possible." But this text goes a lot deeper than that. We'll talk about that a little bit more here as we delve into this account between this one and the Lord Jesus Christ. But the end result of this account is that the Lord says something very profound as he always did, but many times in this world in those that he spoke to, it went right over their head. There was no understanding.

Today I wonder about you. I wonder as you sit there this morning as you examine your life, do you look into your life and say, "You know, with God this was possible but I did this over here." I have had my fill of that religion. Sadly I know it still plagues this small flock. This small flock that still believes that, "Oh well, I can talk about grace but then I'll spend a lot of time talking about me. I'll talk about what I did. I'll talk about what my life is. I'll talk about..." But is that the truth of the Scriptures? Can the child of God stand in front of God and say, "You did this for me and this is what I've done for you"? That's where we're brought this morning in this account and, yes, as the Holy Spirit is pleased this morning, if it searches your heart, if the Lord plows our hearts, I know he's faithful. Just like we just sang, "Great is thy faithfulness." The Lord is faithful to himself, to reveal himself in the lives of his children.

So let's start now and go back to verse 16 where this all began. "And, behold, one came and said unto him." Now, I'm going to be making reference today because this passage is actually found in three different places. It's found in the Gospel of Matthew, the Gospel of Mark, and the Gospel of Luke, and along those passages they're all very similar but we get a little bit more depth in some and we get less depth in others, but one thing we know or two things we know about this one that came to Christ is he was young, he was a ruler, and he was very well off. He was rich, rich in the things of this world and he had authority in this world.

Now, think about that a moment. Think about that and how he's coming to Christ and what has already been achieved in this life. Mark's account says that he came running to Jesus like he was just full of exuberance to come to the Lord to ask him this question. But I said Lord but he doesn't address him as Lord because he doesn't speak to Christ as Lord. He's not shown that Christ is Lord and that's very key because what he says to him, he says, "One came and said unto him, Good Master," and don't miss that word "good" because Jesus is going to meet him where he talked to him. "This is how you approach me. I'm going to talk to you based on how you approached me."

He said, "Good Master," teacher, that's the way he looked at Jesus. And I'm going to tell you something, we're going to talk about this more later but I know what our nature says when we come to passages like this. Our nature wants to know right off the bat, "Is this a child of God?" That's all we care about because we want to see if he's going to have an experience just like we have an experience. And you see, that's the beauty of this passage. He does. Almost all of the religious world today preaches this passage or teaches this passage that this is not God's child because he goes away from Christ and we don't hear of his return. But we have to deal with that one little thing that Mark said: Jesus said that he loved him so to me when I read that, I say, "Wow, the Lord said to him that he loved him." And I know that when I read this account and if the Holy Spirit is pleased to convict me of my sin, to show me how this is still prevalent in my life, how I cleave to the things of this world, how I approach the Lord and I rest in the laurels of things that I have. "Oh, well, I attend this church. Oh, I'm a preacher. Oh, well, I teach this school. Oh, well, I have this." I know that this account that we read this morning can easily be found in a child of God's life. So if the Scriptures are silent on whether he's a child of God, I will be silent on that. I can make a case for both of them but may the Lord not rest us this morning if all we care about is this person. Guess what we're going to miss? We're going to miss Christ. We're going to miss who he is to his children.

So what we have, "one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do?" And listen, if you're true to yourself, if the Holy Spirit is pleased this morning to make you true and give you truthfulness in your soul, you know that that still is in our terminology. What must I do? What can I do in this situation? In that situation? In the works of salvation? We could all say grace but unless we are made to rest in the finished work of Christ, this is where we are. We are worried every day about what more we can do for a kingdom that's already been established and set up. We are worried, "Lord, what must my life be like? What light should I shine forth in my life?"

But this one comes to Christ and he says to him, "what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" Now I'll say this too: this one worried about eternal life. We don't hear or run into hardly anybody out there in the world today that cares about eternal life. Children, as you walk in this world and as you meet people in this world, how many people have you met that you've had a conversation with about eternal life? How many, and adults too, how many people do we run into every day that care about eternal life? This one did. He's taking inventory of his life and in that inventory he's checking off all the things he's done that are good but in his mind he says, "Well, what other good things do I need to do?" He thought very highly of himself. He approached Christ by

righteousness by works. That's the way he came to Christ and that's how the Lord dealt with him. Paul said in Galatians 2:16, "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ." Did you hear that? We're not justified by the works of the law. We're not justified by being obedient to the law. We're not justified by what we do. The justification, Paul says, is by the faith of Christ. It's by the work of another, not of yourself. It's of the work of another, the one who has stood in your place, the one who has imputed the gift of salvation, the one who has given the faith to believe. That's his work.

That's what Paul said, "but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." And we know that. The book of James tells us that if you are to keep the law, if you want to endeavor to keep the law, you must keep it all because in one failure of the law, in one failure of obedience, you are condemned in all. That's a big weight, a huge weight on the back of a sinner because he knows that he has fallen short. The Lord has revealed to him there are things I haven't kept, I haven't done.

But watch the depth of where we head here. As I said, keep in mind he cared about eternal life. Verse 17, Jesus meets him right where he said and he says, "And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good?" We look at that and we say, "Well, Lord, aren't you good? We know that you're good. You're good to us. You are good to your people. You are salvation of your people." But that's not what he's saying. He's meeting the one where he is and he says, "God is good. Nothing you've done is good." This is comparison. He's taking the onus off of the man-centered religion and he's putting it on the God-centered religion.

Remember how he approached him, he said, "Good Master, what things shall I do that I may have eternal life?" Jesus answers, "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God." He approached Christ as a teacher. Now as I said, we play these things in our mind and we say, "Oh, well, certainly this can't be God's child. He doesn't have a depth of revelation about Christ being his sufficiency, Christ being his all-in-all." But then I would say to you on the other hand, we have that revelation, right? Don't we all trust in Christ? Don't we all say that Christ is our sufficiency? Don't we all say that by grace we're saved? But do we live that way? Is every one of our walks every day, is that the way that we live, trusting in the Lord? Resting in his finished work? Or do we have this trouble too? So we have to be careful how we cast that stone because, certainly, the Holy Spirit will put that finger back upon us in a searching light that he does in the children. He convicts us of sin. He reveals to us. We must be humbled and that's what the Lord does for his children.

But we go on, "there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life," if you are to enter into life, then "keep the commandments." You say, "Oh, well, that's impossible to do." Jesus said, "If you love me, keep my commandments." How do you and I today if we be Christ's children, if we be elected before the foundation of the world, how do we keep the commandments? Do you walk around and keep a chart and check

them off as we'll hear here in a minute? Do you say, "Oh, well, I'm not guilty of this one. I'm not guilty of this one." What happens when you get to one that you're guilty of? What do you do with it then? Because as we mentioned earlier, James says we're condemned. We're under the law, we've put ourselves under the law, we must die by the law. That's a huge burden. That's what the law does, the law is spiritual. Paul said the law is spiritual but I'm carnal. I'm sold under sin. I have this problem with sin. Yes, you and I have that same problem.

So as we hear Jesus say, "if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments," we know he's talking about what? What we just read in Galatians, the work of faith. What is the fruit that Christ produces in the soul of his children? How is it that we're holy? By him who is holy? How is that we can love? By Christ who loved us first. How is it that we have peace? Because he's the Prince of Peace. How is it that we can believe? Because he gave us the faith to believe. How is it that we rest? Because he is our rest.

Do you see how it works in Christ? Do you see how? And that's what's paralleled for us today. What is the impossibility of you sitting in that seat today? Do you find any of what I just said to be impossible to you? Because there are going to be some in here who don't. "Oh, I can love. Oh, I can do this." We've heard that, right? "Oh, well, I'm saved by his grace so here is what I do now, I go out and I believe, and then I love, and you see, this is how I do it." It's not the terminology of the child of God. Not one resting in Christ and what Christ has done.

It's not Gospel conversation. I'm sorry. I know it's offensive to some. I know that you sit there and you say, "Well, wait a minute, I say these things all the time." It's right and you're wrong. You're wrong if that's the righteousness that you believe in, if you think there's a mixture of grace in what you do. If your testimony today isn't what God has done for you, what Christ has done for you, how Christ is your life, how Christ gives you life, you don't understand the depth of grace. You're still mixing your carnality and man-centered religion with what the Lord has done and that's what we have in front of us.

He said, "keep the commandments." So now the answer comes back and he says, "Which ones?" Now isn't that interesting, that the religious man comes up and he still has a lot of merit in himself because he hasn't been emptied yet. He hasn't been shown that what he's done just isn't good enough. He's still pious in himself. He says, "O Lord, which one?" He doesn't call him Lord.

"Which one is it that you need me to keep?" You see, the thing with all that is we know that the Lord looks on the heart, right? We're going to read that Scripture here in a minute when we get down here.

He said, "Which ones?" Now listen to how Jesus deals with him, okay? So Jesus said to him, "Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." He gives him five commandments. How many are there? There are 10. Did you know that in the 10 Commandments there are four that deal with you and

God and the other six deal with you and man? Did you know that? Did you know that when the Lord made those commandments and gave those to men, the first four dealt with his relationship with God and then the other six that came, came from that relationship with God, what is it that the Lord works out of you in your relationship with others. And notice this, in the dealing with this one, he gives him five of them. Not six of them. He gives him five of them because the sixth one is where the problem is, "Thou shalt not covet." Hm.

So the Lord says to him, gives him these five commandments. Notice he said, "Which ones? Which one? Which one of these do I need to do?" And at this point before we even read 20, this guy is feeling pretty good because listen to these, these are the ones in your relationship with man. These are the morality ones. Man keys so much on morality. They look with their eyes and they say, "Oh, you're moral. This person walks this way." They don't look on the heart like the Lord looks. They still are stuck in that Pharisaical religion where the Pharisees look and they look outwardly. And the Lord said, "Yeah, you clean the outside of the cup but the inside, you're a ravenous wolf. You're dirty. You're nasty." Is that what our religion is today? Has the Lord dealt in your soul? Has he brought you to show you that all that you have done, you are still an unprofitable servant? Having done all, you are still an unprofitable servant, meaning there is never a time that you take the training wheels off, so to speak. "Oh, well, I've got grace now. I can run in my own self." No. You're still dependent upon the Lord every day. Every day. Every moment.

And as this one shows us, "The young man saith unto him," in 20, "All these things," he's excited, "All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?" I've checked them all off, Lord. I haven't killed anyone. Master, I should say. I haven't stolen anything. I haven't borne false witness. I've honored my father and my mother. I've loved my neighbor. So what is it? What's left? I've done it all.

And as I mentioned a while ago, the Lord looks on the heart. We get that from 1 Samuel 16:7, "But the LORD said unto Samuel," remember Samuel kept bringing all of David's brothers and he kept looking at all of them and going, "Oh, this certainly must be the one. This has to be the one, Lord, look how strapping this young man is."

"But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him." I have refused your good works. I have refused your physical abilities. I have refused... And you say, "Well, is that just?" Not in your eyes but in an omnipotent God who performs all things for the glory of himself, it is.

And he says, "because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth." Listen, let that sink in. May the Holy Spirit bring that to our souls right now. The Lord doesn't see the way you and I see with our carnal eyes every day, the way we try to figure out the situations or the future of our lives. The Lord doesn't see how we see.

That's a tough one, isn't it, because we have to be in control. We have to have a say. We have to tell the Lord, "Look, but look what I've merited for your grace." I know it's absurd. It's absurd how we've been taught what grace is. It's unmerited favor but yet that's

what the power of this carnal part of us is. That's how fallen it is. That's how unreformable it is.

"For the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart." The Lord does.

Wow, "What lack I yet? What else do I have to do?" And Jesus looking in the soul and looking in the heart, he knows that that sixth commandment is a tough one because he was rich in the things toward earth. He had rulership in his life. How would that look? How would that look to my fellow man if I sold everything that I had? Wouldn't have that rank and file anymore in this world.

"Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect," in me. This is how he shows us today our perfection is only in Christ.

"If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast." The life of Christ is denying self and taking up your cross and following him. It's denying self.

"Sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." Isn't that what he said in the Sermon on the Mount? Lay for yourselves treasure in heaven. That's where humility is. That's where the singleness of eye is, where the Lord is the Lord of life. The Lord is life. Not all these things that we enjoy down here or that we have down here or that we have because our whole life we've accumulated all of these things and I'm going to keep until I'm gone. How important are those things?

"Thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying," when he heard the Gospel of what it is to follow Christ and to have no other gods before him. You see, didn't cover that one either, because that's in his relationship with God. But this one, this one that he had to do with man, he couldn't do it. The other ones weren't as hard for him, but this one was pretty tough.

"But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions." You and I on a daily basis go away sorrowful. When we serve the things and we serve our flesh, the end of that is sorrow. And you say, "Well, I don't know if that's true." Well, it will be true in the day of his power. It will be true when the Lord reveals to you that you're not walking in the way of Christ, when your mind and your heart is not single.

Earlier in Matthew, Jesus said in 16:26, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" I can't ask that question up here with power, but if the Holy Spirit is pleased in this hour to ask you that question, what are you profited if you gain the whole world, whatever it is you desire right now as you sit in that seat: health, wealth, companionship, things. What are you profited if you gain the whole world but you lose your soul? "Well, I'm profited in this life." Yes, but there is eternal life. There is eternal life for all men either in heaven or in hell. I guess you could call that eternal death. It will be eternal torment.

"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" What would you give today in exchange for your soul? What would you sell out for? What would you compromise for? We're full of that today, aren't we? Isn't that all we ever hear in the mainstream religion anymore is compromise, compromise? Well, Jesus taught this. "Oh, that was back then. That's not now. That's outdated way of looking at man. These sins should be accepted now. The times have changed. Don't you want more people in your churches? Don't you want their money? Don't you want these things?" Oh, well, yeah. "Well then, compromise."

What about you and I today? What about when we run into these things in this life, especially you younger people because your journey is just beginning of being bombarded by the world and all of its allurements and what it has for you? What will you give? What will you give in exchange for your soul?

"He went away sorrowful." And you see and hear the necessity of having Christ work in the soul. You see it, don't you? That's being withheld from him at this moment. He can't see it. His desire and his sorrow is because he has great possessions. That's what it says, "he had great possessions." He can't part with them and it's right, you and I won't part with them either without him, without him replacing that lust and putting that lust down and replacing it with love, the love of Christ.

Remember I told you Mark said that the Lord loved him when the guy said, "Oh, I've done, I've kept all these things," and the Lord loved him. And I have read commentaries, I've read, "Well, it can't be the love of Christ because he didn't love him back." How do you know? How do you know? Have you been left this way before? I have. Have I been left to walk away from the Lord and say, "Okay, I can do it on my own, or I'm not going to give this up, or I'm not going to give up this thought," and then the Lord dealt with me later? Absolutely. But we love him because he first loved us and if this is God's child, I can assure you that that sin was put down in his life. That cross is what he took up and he denied himself in the day of the Lord's power. And I don't care that it isn't there for me because I know that's how the Lord works. And I don't mind when the Scriptures leave it open like this, I don't mind it because I can see in my own life how my carnal way goes. I'm no better than this one. Without the grace of God, there go I, but with the grace of God, there is a denial of self, there is a denial of this world, there is a denial of riches, there is a denial of popularity, there is a denial of the way of earth, the way that we're taught here on earth.

"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily," of a truth, "I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven." Hardly. "And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." I know we've heard that explanation before: there was a gate in Jerusalem, a small gate, it's actually a people gate that the people went through. That's what Jesus was referring to. It's called the Eye of the Needle, the Needle's Eye. Man could pass through there but the camels couldn't. That camel would have to get down on

his knees and crawl to get through there and put his head down and hopefully he didn't have big humps. It sounds impossible because it is.

But with God, all things are possible. That's what I hope the Holy Spirit impresses upon you today, your impossibility in yourself. Do you see that? Do you live that? Or are we just the proudest people there are on the face of the earth? Is there impossibility in yourself and all possibility with God?

The Lord shows them the impossibility of man and you and I and the disciples answer this way in 25, "When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed." Listen to that: they were exceedingly amazed. Why? Well, look at the religion they were brought up in, the Pharisaical religion. You see everything with your eyes. You then process what you see and that's how you believe. "Oh well, look, the rich man over there, he must have God's favor," because he was the one who had all the riches. Jesus already taught about Lazarus, the rich man and Lazarus the beggar. But we don't understand those things. We look at favor and we mistake that for grace and we look at that and we say, "Oh, well, all these people are well off, they're rich, they must be God's children." Maybe you have a problem with that. Maybe as you see these small numbers in here, you think, "Wow, that big church over there across the street has got 1,000 people in it. They must really have the truth. They must really know what they're talking. Their preaching must be dynamic over there," and I'm not saying it's not comparatively speaking.

"When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed." They couldn't believe it. "What do you mean, Lord? Look at all the commandments he kept. Look how religious he is. How can this be? How can this be with rich men?" Oh, to be able to see with the eye of faith and not the eye of man in sight. Remember what I read a while ago: the Lord seeth not as man seeth. I want to see how the Lord sees. I don't want to see how man sees.

"And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." You see, that's the wisdom of men. But, you know, Paul said in 1 Corinthians 2:5, "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." We can't look and observe things and say, "Hm, my wisdom and my intellect." I've heard a lot of that lately. "My intellect, what I'm taught, what I'm taught by these people. Oh, I've gained so much religious knowledge." But Paul said it was all dung because he was taught of the Lord.

Look at the things that we value in this life. We put a value on them and they're not of faith. It's impossible to please God without his faith. He tells us that in Hebrews 11:6. Without faith it is impossible to please him. And we just heard from Paul in Galatians, it's the faith of Christ. We know it is. We may not be able to attain to it, but the Lord reveals to us that it is true.

"When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?" I mean, look, this looks like salvation is not a hard thing if you just do right and you have the blessings of life. Doesn't that mean that you're saved? Boy, that is just so contrary. And it's right in line with what we hear today but it's so contrary to the truth,

isn't it? It just takes grace right out of it, doesn't it? It makes grace of no effect. God forbid.

"But Jesus beheld them," we come to our text. He looked on them with earnestness, he looked on them with love and he "said unto them, With men this is impossible." Salvation is impossible. To understand the depth of grace is impossible. To come to me on your terms is absolutely impossible. I won't receive it. I don't receive it. I don't look at your stature. I don't look at what you have. And I've got news for you: everything that we have is because of him, not because of what we've done.

"With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible." He's taught this power to his saints of old. He taught it to Job. Job said, "I know," in Job 42:2 he said, "I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee." But that's at the end of Job. He had to be brought to the end of himself, his reliance on religion, his emptying of self. David said the same thing in Psalm 57:2, "I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me," because he couldn't perform them for himself. Have you been shown that?

Paul says it in Romans 9:16, "So then it is not of him that willeth," Paul certainly had a will, didn't he? "Nor of him that runneth," and he certainly ran for God. He certainly went out and did his religious duties. He was persecuting the church in the name of religion. "But of God that sheweth mercy."

Paul would tell us in Ephesians 2:8, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves." Do you see that? That "not" is a nullifying "not." It's not of yourselves, "it is the gift of God." Do you see what he's saying? It's impossible with you but with me, all things are possible.

2 Corinthians 4:7 says, "But we have this treasure," Christ, "in earthen vessels." Don't ever forget that. That's why it is impossible with us. And why is that? "That the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." That too is another "not." Not of us.

And I leave you with Psalm 115:1, "Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake." O Lord, with men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible. May the Lord preach that to our souls in this hour.

*Dear heavenly Father, glorify thy name. Come to our souls, Lord, and show us your all sufficiency, your power in our lives, that through you all is possible. Show us, Lord, our impossibility and bring us to thy feet, bring us to our knees to thy feet, to see the one thing needed. Reveal thyself with power for your name's sake. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*