

Mountain, Be Thou Removed

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Bible Text: Matthew 21:18-22

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Matthew 21. Glad to see everybody here, appreciate you coming today to worship the Lord and be part of his church today. In Matthew 21, we'll begin reading at verse 18.

“18 Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered. 19 And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away.”

It's something to say something like that but if you're writing this gospel as Matthew did and you're writing it some 20 years afterward or some 10 years afterward, when you walk by this tree, it's still there and there is still no fruit on it. You'll notice the Holy Ghost was very specific in pointing out how he said “from henceforward forever.” If that tree is alive right now in the Middle East, it still has nothing on it but leaves. That's it. Why? Because the Lord said for it to be that way. Verse 20,

“20 And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away! 21 Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. 22 And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.”

As we look at this passage of Scripture I want you to make note of the word he says there in verse 21, “mountain, be thou removed.” You say, “That's impossible.” He said if you have the faith, not only can you move it but have it cast into the sea. That's what the Bible says and as we look at that statement, somebody might come along and say that that would be impossible even if the greatest belief is there but if you understand what he's talking about there, it's not so impossible. You see, we need our faith to get rid of some things. To get rid of some things. There are going to be times in your life in which you're going to say something along these lines, “I'm on the mountain one day and I'm in the valley the next,” about your spiritual life. That's a roller-coaster, right? Mountain top experiences, valleys. Then we go back up here and we have everything going our way, even the sun winks at us when it comes up in the morning and the next thing you know, we're back down here in the valley and it seems like Dial-A-Prayer hangs up on you. I

mean, it's just up and down like that. Maybe that's the mountain he wants moved. Maybe that's the one he wants gone. You say, "What can we do about it?" I think we need to believe and move the mountain.

I'm going to preach to you on that very thought there: mountain, be thou removed. Mountain, be thou removed. If we look at how he says that, he said "if you believe, if you have faith." Romans 10:17 says, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." The Bible also tells us that if we've got faith to move a mountain it can be removed but we've got to get faith from somewhere and the somewhere comes from the book you've got there. God wrote this love letter to you. He gave it to you and you read it to build up your own faith and grow in the Lord Jesus Christ and "babes desire the sincere milk of the word that you may grow thereby." But notice 1 Thessalonians 2:13 says, "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." When you believe, this works; when you don't, it don't.

But you've got to take it in and get faith to believe this and I've looked at this thing in a practical way to think about "mountain, be thou removed" and I see this: it takes preaching the Bible to build up faith. In Ezekiel 37, he tells the prophet there's a whole valley of dry bones and prophetically speaking, that's going to be the Jewish nation rising up but if we take a practical application, he says, "Prophecy to these bones and they shall arise." I notice that when you get to preaching to people in these dead liberal churches, they get full of life. Do you know why? Somebody has breathed the word of God in there and that's called "them that have faith to believe in something." But listen, when you take that, it takes preaching the Bible, not stories about you, not how you conquered all your enemies, how you have the greatest thing under the sun and how you're the cutest one out of the whole crowd. No, it takes preaching the Bible and telling what God said and somehow or another that breathes life into people. You can preach against everything they're doing as long as you preach from the Bible. Christian people respond to it; it breathes a breath of life into them. It takes believing the Bible. Jesus said in Mark 9:23, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." Listen, it takes the Holy Spirit of God because when he talks about the gifts of the church in 1 Corinthians 12, he says this, "To another faith by the same spirit." God's Spirit will impart faith through the word of God to try to build you up and try to help you. It takes having full assurance of that faith. In Hebrews 10:22, when he says, "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith," we want to get close to God and here's how we do it. We believe God, we're fully assured God can and then God does.

But I want to show you some things we need to remove by faith. You might want to write these down. I believe it would help you to take them to the prayer closet at altar day. 1. Remove the mountain of drama. Remove the mountain of drama. All you Facebookers listen up: it's time to remove the drama and that which causes it. Be thou removed. I like that commercial of them old ladies, she's got her pictures taped on the wall and she says, "This is my wall. These are my pictures." And the lady stands up and says, "This isn't how any of this works." She says, "I unfriend you." I like that commercial. Don't you all

like that? Isn't that the best one? That's the best commercial about that I've ever seen. But I want to tell you what is the best one apart from the live action version and that would be to help you out: you need to get rid of some things in your life because if they're causing drama in your life, get rid of them. Mountain, be thou removed.

You say, "I don't know what I'd do without it." I know what you've been doing with it and it isn't praying. It hasn't been studying the Bible. It hasn't been coming to church. It hasn't been growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ and all that other stuff. While I'm at it, I believe, let's see, there are at least five of those social media things and I only know of a couple of them, what they are, but I've seen people talking about them: there's Facebook, there's MySpace, there's Instagram, there's Twitter. What am I missing here? Are there anymore of them? Pinterest. You can just keep going with that stuff. Hey, listen: mountain, be thou removed. Mountain, be thou removed. If it's causing drama in your life, get it out. If we get rid of that stuff do you know what you'd find out? You probably wouldn't need that blood pressure medicine you're taking. "That just boils my blood." Well, get it out of your life. That's how you do it, just put it away. You say, "That sounds easy." It is if you believe.

2. Remove the mountain of deceit. Remove the mountain of deceit. You teenagers, listen to me: you stick to the truth and move the deceit of half-truths built to con and manipulate others and get it out of your life. "You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free," is what Jesus said in John 8. If we find out that we've got a mountain of deceit in our lives and it just keeps coming up and just keeps coming up, listen, here's how the deceit works: you tell a half-truth to get something done that you want to get done so you can get over on somebody. Listen, that's deceit. That's of the devil. You say, "I'm saved." Well, quit acting like the devil. Listen, the mountain of deceit, that mountain of deceit for some people it's way up there. They've got them big long cons while other people's deceptions are down here but they're all the same thing: they're deceit.

You see listen, when you go to your parents and you say, "Well, I want to do this and Momma said I have to ask you." You go to Mom and say, "I want to do this but I need to find out and Daddy said to ask you." Mom says, "Well, go find out what Daddy says," and you play them against each other. Do you know what that is? That isn't Christian, that's deceit. It's the mountain that keeps coming up in your life and when you happen to do something like that, teenagers, I'll tell you what you're doing: you are playing with fire and you don't know what you're playing with because eventually something is going to come up in your life and you're going to be caught with that thing and you're going to suddenly start pointing fingers at everybody else. "Well, I'm only doing it because such-and-such is doing it. Well, if I do this, they do that." It's a mountain. Be thou removed. Listen, most people when they get caught, they've got more excuses and names they can come up with than a dope pusher who gets caught on Saturday night by the police. They can spit out more names. Why? Because they got caught. Hey, remove that mountain of deceit. Don't tell everybody you're a Christian, just be one. Mountain, be thou removed!

Number three mountain, here's a good one: remove the mountain of depression. Listen, I wrote this thought down the other day: if sitting around and dwelling on things makes

you depressed, stop doing that. Do you ever watch Hee-Haw? I used to love old Archie on there. Archie dressed up like a doctor and he had a rubber chicken laying on his desk. A guy would come in there and he'd say, "Doc, my arm hurts me when I do this." He'd take that rubber chicken, pop him over the head and say, "Don't do that." If it's causing you pain, quit it. If it's causing you depression, stop it. Hey listen, I've heard people say this, "I just sit around thinking about how such-and-such. How this happened. How this happened. This happened. It's causing me to be depressed." Here's a thought: get up, get out of the house, walk around the place, do something. Listen, if you haven't got a good safe place to walk, go park at the public library and walk in the streets down through there, smell the air, do something but get yourself off that stuff because the more you repeat it – listen – the more you repeat it to yourself, the bigger it's going to get and you're going to be up here one day and down here one day and up here one day and down here one day. I've heard people say, "Well, depression is a sign that you're not full of the Holy Spirit." I want to tell you something: depression is a sign that you dwell on things that God's already got taken care of and no matter what those things may be, God's got them taken care of. No matter how big the mountain or how small the valley, get that thing out of the way and cruise, man. It's a mountain in front of you.

How about this one? How about we remove the mountain of defeat? Remove the mountain of defeat. You know, when people have problems and they feel defeated, they start walking in defeat. They don't walk in victory anymore. Listen, our song leader could have gotten up here and said, "Let's all sing 'Victory In Jesus' today," and 90% of us have been singing a lie. Do you know why? Because we walk in defeat. Why do we walk in defeat? Well, the odds are too much against us. It's just so bad and we're outnumbered and we've just got this much and all this other stuff. Acts 1, Jesus speaks his final words to his men and do you know what he says? He says, "I'm going but I'm coming again. While I'm gone, here's what you need to be doing." Do you know what they do? They watch him go up and they stand there and watch him go up. Finally, some guy comes up and says, "Hey, hey." Yeah. "Did you see that?" Yeah, I saw that. I'm an angel of the Lord and I saw that. What did he say for you to do? "Um." Yeah, you need to go and do that.

So they could have walked around in defeat like they did in John 20 when they were sitting there and they were all mad, "Jesus is dead, what are we going to do? They're going to probably kill us next." Do you know what they did? Instead of walking around in defeat, Jesus showed up and gave them something. Do you know what it was? He said, "I'm here. All is well." Do you know what turned them boys around? They realized Jesus was alive. That's all it was; that's all it took. Do you know what's going to take you to get back in victory and get you out of defeat? You've got to realize that God is alive. Listen, I read in the book of Acts where they come through there and the most amazing thing happens. They walk out there and they say, "Okay, let's get about it," and in Acts 2, Peter stands up and preaches and thousands get saved. Acts 3, more get saved. They take a whooping for what they were doing and do you know what they did when they took their whipping for it? They rejoiced that they were so persecuted for the Lord.

Most folks, this is where they lose it at. Jesus told everybody, "Be about your Father's business." That's witnessing about him, telling about him. Give out little gospel tracts and you come up to somebody and give them a gospel tract and they say, "I don't want that junk." You think, "Well, he rejected me. I ain't doing that no more. That hurt my feelings." Hey, quit walking in defeat. Do you know something? I've seen people all my Christian life do this: one little thing like that destroys them. They walk in defeat the rest of their life. They go to a barren grave it seems like, because they can't get any victory in their life. Why? Because the devil opposed them one time and they gave up. Hey, can I let you in on something? God's alive. I don't have to go to the movies to find that out.

Listen, I said "Mountain, be thou removed." That mountain of defeat. Hey, don't walk in defeat, walk in victory. Do you know why? It's not only that Jesus died for your sins but watch this: he got up from the dead. Let me tell you a little secret the devil won't tell you: he can't do that; he hasn't done it; he isn't going to. He isn't going to die for your sins. He isn't going to rise again in the power of God and he isn't going to conquer Jesus Christ. Hey, I read the back of the book and not only do we win, we win big! And I see that you've got to remove that mountain of defeat. Those disciples were outnumbered, they stayed outnumbered the whole time and while Jesus was alive he was raising the dead and healing the sick before their very eyes. He had a homecoming dinner one day with 6,012 there. By the time the morning message was done, there were 12 there. They didn't walk out in defeat. Hey, you've got to keep going. You say, "Such-and-such is the best preacher I know." The devil will wipe them out of here and God will let him and do you know what you'll have to look at and say? "Well if they quit, I might as well quit." No, that isn't how it works. "There is none that does right." Do right. "No, the world is on fire." Do right.

Here's another mountain you need to conquer, it's the mountain of discouragement. More Christians than not, they have a Bible that never stays open so they never feed their faith. They feed their doubt. They feed all that other stuff. They feed their fears and they get discouraged. They look around at things that look so bad. You know, I've heard people make the statement about, "Well, there's only going to be 3-4 there when I do it." I had somebody tell me one time here back when there was only about ten people back 20 years ago, "Well, we don't even have a choir and nobody to sing to." Who are you singing for again? "Well, there aren't hardly any to listen. If they all get in the choir there will only be one out there listening." No, there's one up there listening. That's who we're singing to, right? Listen, we need to tell that mountain to "be thou removed."

Listen, David had a problem. His problem was this: he took his men out and he was out conquering things and while he was out, an army came in and took all the women and children and all their possessions and when they got back, guess who was the bad guy? All those men pointed at David and said, "Here's the problem," 2 Samuel 30. They pointed at David. "David, listen, if we'd have been doing...you got us in a mess. They've got my wife over there. They've got my kids." And they spoke of stoning him. David looked at his Baptist congregation of men at his men's meeting and he said, "I'll tell you what, let me go and pray about it." While he's praying about it, they're picking out

smooth stones like he did for Goliath. They wanted to kill him. He wasn't the one who took them. Everything rises and falls on leadership. Mountain, be thou removed.

David had a mountain show up on him and it was called discouragement but he knew how to get rid of that mountain. The Bible says David encouraged himself in the Lord and he got there with God and said, "Lord, what do I do? Do I overtake them people? What do I need to do?" God said, "Go over and take them and you can get everything back." That's easy on this side of the mountain, isn't it? God said, "I'm going to give you everything back. You go and take it and you'll get everything back." They went out there and they took that armor and they took everything back and they wiped all of them out and the Bible in particular says this: David recovered all. He got his tv back. He got his cellphone back. He got his pda, his tablet. He got all of it back and his wife and his kids, all of it. Do you know how you do that? You encourage yourself in the Lord. How do you do that? Right here in this book.

If I'm mistaken about this, I want to tell you something: if the Bible says David encouraged himself in the Lord, if it worked for David, it will work for you. I notice that when we remove that mountain of discouragement and you encourage yourself in the Lord, you look at people and this is a bad picture we've got. We've got politicians that are worthless. We've got lawyers that are crooks. Preachers that are con-artists. Church members that are phonies. I mean, we've got all that going on for us right now in our world but Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. The same God that encouraged David where David said, "Lord, I need the encouragement." Hey, if you go to the right place, you drink out of the right fountain, you get the right water. David encouraged himself in the Lord. Mountain, be thou removed.

Watch this one: we need to remove that mountain called defiance. Defiance. Listen, that mountain of defiance and I find this – the generation that was not whipped growing up is already in charge. It's a scary thing. Listen, the generation that listened to Dr. Spock and I'm not talking about Mr. Spock, I'm talking about Dr. Spock who said don't whip your children. That generation is now in charge. Defiance is in a child but that's why you correct a child to get the defiance out of the child. We haven't corrected that and now they're adults and all they're doing is defying everything and they're raising up a bunch behind them that's worse than them. It's a mountain called defiance. So how do you get rid of that? Beat the living devil out of it, Amen, that's how you do that.

But just in case your parents are not going to do it, just in case you're an adult that's grown up like that, let me help you out today: mountain, be thou removed. How are we going to get rid of it? It's time for you to stop defying every authority figure in your life. It's time to stop it. You say, "How do you know that happens?" Well, we've got a boss on the job and we defy him. He says go do this and we wait ten minutes and go do it just to show him we aren't going to be told what to do. I remember this girl I went to high school with, she got a job at one of these peach sheds over the summer. She lasted five hours I think it was. The first four hours of it was orientation and filling out paperwork and I asked her, I said, "What happened in your job? Why are you not there?" This is what she

said, "That woman came out and thought she was going to tell us what to do." I said, "They pay you to do that." "Well, she ain't telling me what to do." Defiance.

It's kind of like those kids – listen – I was with a policeman one time and we were riding around and he pulled this person over and got up there to the car. I clicked on the little thing so I could hear and not only see what was going on and I heard this, "I can't make that child sit in that car seat." That's all. She said, "I can't make him sit in the car seat." That little boy bolded up in that back seat and told that cop, he said, "You can't make me either." That sucker grabbed that little boy, shoved him in that car seat and buckled him in and said, "Don't you move." He said, "Yes, sir." Mountain, be thou removed. She said, "I'm sure glad you're here." He said, "I'm gonna give you a little something to help you out." She said, "Good, what is it?" He said, "A \$375 ticket for that kid not being in there." He said, "Maybe that will make you see that you need to stop that defiance in that child." That kid's probably in high school by now. Do you know what's going on now? He's not doing that homework. "Shoot, I've got Nintendo time. You ain't getting in on that. You ain't. You ain't doing that to me. I'll not do it!"

But one day if they get fed up, guess what you have to do? One day Mom and Dad who let you do all that is going to be gone and then you'll have to one day wind up in prison because if you don't have anything to eat and can't afford to buy some, you'll go and steal it and they'll catch you and they'll put you in prison. Do you know what they're going to say? "Lights out at 9 o'clock." "I ain't going to do that." Old Claude and Leroy is going to come in there and they're going to say, "You ain't gonna do what?" "I ain't going to. You ain't gonna make me lay down and go to sleep." They'll just knock you out. You say, "Oh no, they don't do that in prisons." You keep thinking that. You keep thinking that. Keep thinking you aren't going to slip on a bar of soap and fall down and get more bruises on you that looks like Muhammed Ali and two other boxers and Bruce Lee whooped you. Don't think you're going to get away with all that. You aren't. You see, you're going to find that you hit a brick wall somewhere and before you hit the brick wall: mountain, be thou removed.

I hate to think it would take a prison guard to teach me I need to go to bed every night and get up every morning. I'd hate to think that. I'd hate to think that through the mountain of defiance where I've defied every authority: I defied my parents; I defied my school teacher; I defied this one; I defied that one, and what's so bad is we've got a bunch of parents that go around and when you've got a little defiant child like that, they're jumping on the teacher about it. Mountain, be thou removed. Hey, get that mountain out of your life.

Here's another good one for you: it's the mountain that you need to remove called the mountain of denial. That's not a river in Egypt, I'm talking about denial, not The Nile. That mountain called denial, when God saves a sinner, every time God saves a sinner, God changes that sinner. They are still capable of every sin in the book but God changes them. Every time they sin after salvation, the Holy Ghost deals with them about it. Every time they sin after salvation, they know it. If you've got a cussing mouth, let me tell you something: before you got saved you probably couldn't have kept up with the cuss words

you had but after you get saved, you can tell how many you said in a day because God will remind you of them until you get that out of your life.

Watch this: that mountain called denial in your life, maybe you tell everybody else you're saved, maybe your Momma and Daddy tell you you're saved, maybe you've made a profession of faith, maybe you've been baptized but you've got a mountain of denial in your life, God never saved you. Do you know what the problem is? You've got a mountain called denial right there in front of you. One day you'll feel saved and the next day you won't feel saved. One day you'll feel like this, one day you'll feel like that. One day you're running with the Christians and the next day you're running with the world. Constantly like that. One day you're up here and you're sitting around Christian friends and you're curbing your tongue but the next day you hang around with a bunch of people that have napkin holders in their head. One day you're up here and you're feeling spiritual and you feel like, "Hey, we sang the songs, it's great," and by that night your sports team is losing and you're cussing the tv, God and everything else. You've got a mountain of denial that's keeping you doing this. Why don't you get rid of that mountain? Mountain, be thou removed.

You see, when God saves a sinner, when you quit living in denial, if God has saved you, listen, get all of that out of your life. But it might be that you've got a mountain of denial there because God hasn't ever saved you. I heard somebody say this one time that if God saves a sinner, that sinner is changed not in the flesh but by the power of God. We can train our flesh. We can train our flesh to react to situations. You say, "I don't know if that can happen." I don't know, go and ask any Marine Corps Drill Sergeant and he'll tell you it can happen. They don't take you down there to make sure that you're a fine physical specimen, they make you one. Have you ever wondered why those guys come out and they all look the same? It's because they want them to look the same. It's called uniform. They want them all with the same look, all with the same skill, all of them like that to make one unit out of them. Do you know what God wants for you? He wants to change you but he doesn't change your physical appearance, he wants to change you on the inside because when he gets to the inside, he gets the outside. Do you ever wonder why people can look like a Christian one day and not look like one the next? Do you ever wonder why some days people come in and they've got all their flesh covered and the next time we see them they've got half of it showing? They're living behind a mountain called denial. We live in the South so people will come up to them and say, "Are you saved?" They'll say – they've been trained, they train their flesh, they train their tongue, "Yeah, I'm saved."

Let me ask you this, saved person: are you the only one who believes that you're saved? Are you the only one? "Well, Momma does. Daddy does." Yeah, but they're living behind a mountain called denial. They don't want to admit what you are. It's like two women who were sitting there talking one day and one of their daughters got caught and the one that didn't get caught said, "I'm glad my daughter isn't like your daughter. It would just kill me if she did what your daughter did." Guess who she was doing it with before she got caught? It's a mountain called denial that you're living behind. Be thou

removed. How are we going to get that thing removed? We've got to believe God. We've got to get in here and get faith from the word of God.

In America, we live behind a mountain of denial. 85% of Americans profess to be Christians. 85%. The abortion doctor is still practicing. He says he's a Christian. The politician that signed that thing into a bill, he says he's a Christian, he's okay with it. Sodomite marriage, whatever they sign off on, they say they're okay with it. I'm going to tell you something: a preacher who does a Sodomite marriage, he needs to be put in jail. The one that signed for it, needs to be put in jail. Are you listening to me? The abortion doctor needs to be put in the electric chair for murder and the politician that says it's okay needs to spend the rest of his life in prison for accessory to murder. Are you listening to me? We are living behind a mountain of denial. Do you know what Christian is to most people? It's a box you check on a thing. That's all it is. It's a label.

I hear all these people say, "It's not about religion, it's about a relationship." You are a parrot. Do you hear me? If you look up religion in the Bible, it talks about pure religion that is undefiled is this. What is it? I don't know, you can probably look that up and find out if you have the real thing or not. You might be living behind a mountain of denial. You see, all this religion and relationship, that's from a bunch of NIV, NASV, NKJV, contemporary, rock-n-roll crowd. That's their lingo. That's their lingo. Listen, if you're an apple, you aren't hanging around on an orange tree. You're living behind a mountain of denial. I hear folks all the time when they come up with these little catchy phrases and all this kind of stuff: you're living behind a mountain called denial.

Listen, I had to go to court one time and in the courtroom, I was sitting there as an observer and I noticed that everybody that came up, the guilty or non-guilty thing was based on one thing. Do you know what it was? Simple: evidence. A guy was in there for bad checks. How stupid can you be to write \$1,000 worth of checks knowing you haven't got the money? Do you really think they're not going to figure out where you live and come and get you for it? Do you know what that is? You're in denial. You don't believe. Had the guy in there and he said, "Not guilty." The judge said, "Let me see that stuff." He got that thing up there and he pulled about 15 checks out of that little folder. He said, "I'm sorry. You're guilty." He said, "Can I have a jury trial?" He said, "Why? Do you want to waste other people's time to say the same thing I'm telling you right now? Let's get the court costs, okay?" He said, "Just fess up to what you are." The guy dropped his head and said, "Yeah, you're right." Hey, why don't you fess up to what you are today? I'm not going to ask you if you're saved. Let me ask you this: don't you really know that when you die you're going to hell? Don't you know that? Do you know why you're doing that? Because you're lost. You say, "No, I'm saved." Where's the evidence? Where's that? Where's your Bible today? Where are the Scriptures? You say, "Well, I've got them on my phone, my ipad." Are you sitting there on Facebook right now while I'm doing this? Tweeting out cute little things? #imboredatchurch Hey, you're lost. L-O-S-T.

Mountain, be thou removed. Come to Jesus today and let him do something for you that you can't do. He'll move the mountain. He's a mountain moving God. Always has been and always will. Do you know why he's able to do that? Because before this world began,

he looked at one mountain, a mountain called Calvary. Everything about this world before it was ever formed was formed around that place. The Bible says that Christ was crucified before the foundation of the world. God made all of history to point to one place and all of history since has pointed back to it. They can't get around it. But one thing is this: you've got to come to that mountain to get rid of all these other ones.

Let's stand with every head bowed and every eye closed, no one looking around.