

Faith

In a Pit With a Lion on a Snowy Day by Mark Batterson
Excerpts from Chapter 2

Impossible Odds

One of the most exhilarating things in the world is doing something that no one thinks you can do. As a kid I turned everything into a challenge. It didn't matter whether we were driving in the car, taking a bike ride, or eating dinner. *Do you think I can hold my breath through the tunnel? Do you think I can do a pop-a-wheelie to the end of the block? Do you think I can eat a kitchen-sink ice cream sundae in thirty seconds?*

If someone said yes, I wouldn't even bother trying. What's the point of doing something that someone already thinks you can do? So I'd up the ante or raise the stakes until no one thought it was possible. Then I would attempt the impossible. Is there any greater high than doing what no one thinks you can do?

Maybe that's why God sometimes invites us to defy impossible odds. Maybe it is one way He can show us His omnipotence. Maybe God allows the odds to be stacked against us so He can reveal more of His glory. [...]

Too often our prayers revolve around asking God to reduce the odds in our lives. We want everything in our favor. But maybe God wants to stack the odds against us so we can experience a miracle of divine proportions. Maybe faith is trusting God no matter how impossible the odds are. Maybe our impossible situations are opportunities to experience a new dimension of God's glory. Here is the mistake most of us make when it comes to God: We think of Him in four-dimensional terms. But God is omni-dimensional. [...]

Four-Dimensional God

I am limited to three space dimensions, which simply means that I can only be in one place at one time. And I am limited to one time dimension, which means I am stuck in a moment and I can't get out of it. I cannot travel into the past or the future because, in one dimension, time is linear. But God is everywhere all the time.

Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. [Gen 1:2]

In the beginning, the Spirit of God was hovering over the chaos. And nothing has changed. God is still hovering over chaos. The creation story is a microcosm of what God wants to do in your life. He hovers over the chaotic situations ready to create order and beauty. He wants to fill the void. [...]

A High View of God

Maybe it's time to stop placing four-dimensional limits on God. Maybe it's time to stop putting God in a box the size of your cerebral cortex. Maybe it's time to stop creating God in your image and let Him create you in His. The more we grow, the bigger God should get. [...]

Degree of Difficulty

We tend to rank miracles. Almost like a judge at a gymnastics competition that ranks a routine based on degree of difficulty, we rank our prayer requests. We have *big* requests and *little* requests. We have *easy* requests and *difficult* requests. But that is a false construct. The truth is this: *To the infinite all finites are equal*. There is no big or small, easy or difficult, possible or impossible. When it comes to God, there are no degrees of difficulty. There are no odds when it comes to God. All bets are off.

What were the odds of Jesus feeding the five thousand people with five loaves and two fish? Let's just say each loaf of bread or each fish is equal to one meal. Then I'm guessing the odds were approximately five thousand to seven. And to the disciples, that seemed like an insurmountable problem: "Eight months' wages would not buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!"

You can almost see the disciples trying to crunch the numbers, but any way you slice five loaves and filet two fish, you still come up 4,993 meals short. It just doesn't add up. $5 + 2 = 7$.

Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed them to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish. When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, "Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted." So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten.

In God's economy, $5 + 2 = 5,000$ with a remainder of 12. They actually end up with more than what they started with after feeding five thousand people. And God is glorified because He defied impossible odds. [...] The issue is this: *How big is your God?*

Relevant Scriptures

Matthew 17:20	<i>He replied, "Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you...</i>
Matthew 21:21	<i>Jesus replied, "Truly I tell you, if you have faith...</i>
Hebrews 11	Faith in Action
1 Peter 1:7	<i>These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith...</i>

Questions for Discussion

- What is faith, in your own words?
- How big is your God? Do you have a high view of God that increases your faith?
- When have you seen God do the impossible in your life or in the life of someone around you?
- Where in your life do you put "God in a box the size of your cerebral cortex"?
- Are there any areas where you are believing that God can do the impossible?
- What can you do to increase your faith?

Recommended Reading

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