

## Potential for the Impossible

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

*Matthew 19:26*

When a believer begins to share their faith with those in spiritual darkness, they soon discover that the Good News is not always readily received. Jesus' teaching on the Parable of the Sower describes the different types of hearts and how they respond to the Word of God. There are various conditions of the heart which hinder the seed of The Word from germinating and the hearer does not respond to the gospel. The background of today's verse is our Lord dealing with a young and rich ruler. Though showing some inclination to Jesus, he could not bear the cost of discipleship and sorrowfully departed. The young man's wealth and self-righteousness were a barrier that he could not breach. Jesus acknowledged that with men this was a very difficult case, but with God it was not impossible.

Probably every Christian who has a burden for others can think of a situation where an individual is very difficult to reach, or even seemingly impossible. Many ingredients go into hardening a person's heart towards the gospel. Self-sufficiency, wealth, intellect, unresolved issues from the past, and the ever-present pride contribute to making it difficult to understand and receive the gift of salvation. As difficult as some cases are, we should resist classifying them as impossible. Saul of Tarsus stands out as an example of what most of us would consider an impossible candidate to receive Christ. His 180-degree turnaround on his way to Damascus should be an encouragement to trust that God can do the impossible. Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, broke away from the influence of his Messiah-denying peers, first to seek Jesus and then to follow Him. The Roman Centurion, who was a member of the detail in charge of Jesus' crucifixion, would have been influenced by the idol worshipping Roman culture and hardened to cruelty and violence; yet he was so moved by Jesus' death that he declared Him to truly be the Son of God. Each of these men would seem to be impossible cases to receive Christ; but the God of the impossible did His mighty work of salvation in their lives.

As we share our faith with others, we must remember that we are the seed planters and it is God who gives the increase. Even when impossible individuals reject all of our attempts, they cannot reject our prayers for them. We are to plant the seed of the gospel as God gives opportunity, then pray and trust that *the word of God will not return void but that it shall accomplish that which God pleases, and prosper in the thing whereto He sends it*. With a burden in our heart and prayer on our lips may we share the great message of God's salvation and trust that He will do the impossible.

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