



Maurice Roberts

My wife, Peggy, and I have lived in Hayden, Idaho, longer than in any other place of residence through nearly sixty years of joyful marriage. We came here to serve as the administrative pastor of the Friends church and during my time of service I oversaw two major transitions: (1) the construction of a \$1 million worship center addition and (2) the merger of two significantly different Friends churches. I retired four years ago and we continue as active members of what is now Anthem Friends Church. I am a lifetime member of the Friends faith.

Our three children: Kevin (and Meg) live in Dallas; Kirsten (and Jerry) Miller; live in the North Carolina coastal area; and Kim Figge lives in Hayden. The photo, taken at my eightieth birthday last September, includes myself and Kevin and our grandson, Justin. (I got third place in our game.)

This week we will journey through just two verses, Ephesians 3:20-21. In the 1970s I was introduced to Dr. Richard Halverson, who at the time was serving as the chaplain for the United States Senate. He wrote a small devotional book for men titled *Walk with God Between Sundays*. I will take bits and pieces from his chapter titled "Invincible."

BIBLE READING: Ephesians 3:20

“Now to him who is able to do....” The apostle Paul is writing to the believers in Ephesus about their God, who is able. Let’s try to personalize this letter as being written to you and me. These two verses are kind of a doxology, lifting up the God who is able. Dr. Halverson says the emphasis is on God’s ability and what he can do—but chooses to do through us.

Stop and think on a time or circumstance when God did something from which you benefited greatly because what God did was unlikely or impossible. With a friend, I was driving down the western slope of the Rocky Mountains in Colorado on a winding, two lane highway. On one side of the road was the steep wall of the mountain and on our side was a deep ravine protected by a guard rail against our lane. As we rounded the curve in our outside lane, a vehicle suddenly appeared coming around the curve in my lane. Because of the sharpness of the curve the car came into my vision instantly and I had no place to go and no time to strategize. I veered quickly into his lane and we met and passed while traveling in the opposite lanes. I quickly veered back into my lane just in time to meet another vehicle.

My hands felt frozen to the steering wheel and, as soon as there was a wide spot, I pulled over and took a deep breath. Together we reflected on how this was a miracle beyond our control. This was totally a result of the One who is able being in charge of our car.

SONG: Great Is Thy Faithfulness

PRAYER SUGGESTION: Heavenly Father, truly your faithfulness is to be praised. The desire of your heart is to guide us along the best pathway for our lives. We want to give you permission to be our daily guide.

—Maurice Roberts

BIBLE READING: Ephesians 3:20

The apostle Paul emphasizes that God's ability to do more is expanded to doing *immeasurably* more. According to wordsmiths, the definition is "very great in size or amount, impossible to measure." God's ability is a God-sized promise that is not comprehensible in our own understanding. Even in the outcome of the experience, we stand amazed at God's intervention outside our own ability.

I had gone through a rocky bump in the road on my professional life's journey, and circumstances denied me employment at the time. An acquaintance who actively worked as a strategic planner for international missions invited us to a seminar where Peggy and I made connections that led to our call to serve for a year with a mission organization in the destabilized country of Sudan during its civil war. We then came home to await what God might do that would be immeasurably more.

A phone call came within weeks inviting me to consider filling a new position (that didn't yet have a job description) as administrative pastor at Hayden Lake Friends Church. It was a perfect fit. It had been immeasurably more in getting the call to Sudan and now immeasurably more in getting this new call, more than I could have orchestrated. What's your story?

SONG: God Is So Good; God Answers Prayer (chorus)

PRAYER SUGGESTION: Father, you are so good, beyond our human understanding. We honor you and want you to guide and teach us each day, because Father knows best.

—Maurice Roberts

BIBLE READING: Ephesians 3:20

Let's not be satisfied simply with measurable things—the status quo in our prayer life—when it comes to asking by faith. The very definition of faith, as recorded in Hebrews 11:1 (NLT): “Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see.” Our confident assurance is beyond just casual prayer life.

When our children were young, they didn't ask just for what they already expected. They asked for something they had been dreaming about, something they probably anticipated would be outside the box of their parents' thinking. It's tough to discern how to ask God for direction without the temptation to couch it as our own wish-list. We feel selfish, yet we are told to come boldly before the throne. The apostle wrote to the believers in Philippi (4:6) saying, “by prayer and petition and with thanksgiving present your requests to God.”

God's Word doesn't say he withholds unless we ask for it, but we can know by experience that an answered prayer is a greater blessing than receiving something that was already expected. So, do we ask for the moon and accept anything less? 1 John 5:14 declares the condition: We are challenged to ask in accordance with God's will and not our own wish-list, and the promise is immeasurably more than all we could ask or think.

SONG: Crown Him with Many Crowns

PRAYER SUGGESTION: Lord Jesus, you have invited us to make our request known to you. We desire to honor that privilege selflessly and purposefully.

—Maurice Roberts

BIBLE READING: Ephesians 3:20

I realize that the Saturday morning cartoons of today are light-years beyond what I remember seeing when my children were young. Imagination is what made them so captivating, like watching Road Runner always escaping from the pursuit of Wile E. Coyote. I sat there on the sofa alongside the kids and cheered for the underdog.

Imagination—more than all we ask or imagine, the verse says. We say it so casually, “I imagine it will rain today.” A definition of imagination is the forming of ideas or concepts. I cheered for ole Road Runner to keep getting away from that Wile E.

Here, the apostle Paul tells us that God is able to do more than we can possibly imagine, which seems to challenge my faith in my closet of prayer. I think we in the Western world have less faith imagination than do our friends in the two-thirds world. I have not only heard about such miracles, but I have witnessed a few; even yesterday there was another answer! If you saw the movie *War Room*, the character Miss Clara was gifted with the faith of imagination about the impossible miracle that God could do. God wants to do more than we can even imagine. I want to have the gift of imagination in a godly way.

SONG: How Great Thou Art

PRAYER SUGGESTION: Father, our imagination is so limited in understanding how great you are. Help me to imagine more completely how great are your leadings and guidance for my life—one day at a time.

—Maurice Roberts

BIBLE READING: Ephesians 3:20

When our daughter was about age five, she observed her mother dusting furniture and she wanted to help, “Mother, can I do it?” So Peggy handed her the spray polish can and dust rag and gave her a brief tutorial on the finer points of dusting. Shortly, our daughter ended her mission by saying, “All the power has gone out of my health. I’ll shoot and you rag it.”

The power of prayer does not depend on our words or expectations. The power comes from its source, him who is able, almighty God through the Holy Spirit. I have learned that a great inducement to understanding the power of prayer is for me to be intentional each evening and reflect on a specific prayer that was answered earlier in the day. The more I realize and recognize that yet another prayer was answered, the greater my faith grows for asking according to God’s will for me. It was his power that brought the result into reality, not me. Let us not allow the power to go out of our health when it comes to prayer from our heart.

SONG: Where He Leads Me, I Will Follow

PRAYER SUGGESTION: Father God, I want to be more conscious of your presence in my life today, and the ways that you answer my prayer time after time. I am so honored that you care about me.

—Maurice Roberts

BIBLE READING: Ephesians 3:20

In Henry Blackaby's study, *Experiencing God*, he sets out seven realities of God's leading. One of them is "God invites you to become involved with him in his work." If we are seeking to follow God's leadings in all our ways, the reality is that it isn't our work in the first place, but what God is doing. God does not work in a vacuum; this power is at work in you and me as we live within his plan for our lives.

Just yesterday and this morning, as I write this, I learned about four unrelated but current situations that gave clear evidence of God's work in answering prayers. He could certainly have done his work without my prayers, but God invited me to become involved with him in his work. These four had been on my prayer list for an almost daily remembrance, but the outcomes were not mine to claim. Only God's. He could do all this without us being involved whatsoever, but in us it is God's power at work. As Richard Halverson was often known to say, "God's method is men" (and women, I add). Are answers not forthcoming, perhaps, because we fail to let him do it his way?

SONG: You're a Good, Good Father (Chris Tomlin)

PRAYER SUGGESTION: Creator God, in your divine plan you have given us the freedom of choice, but your invitation is so compelling that we choose to seek your will and allow you to do your work through us.

—Maurice Roberts

BIBLE READING: Ephesians 3:20-21

Now to him who is able to do more - - -

- - - *immeasurably more*

than all we ask - - -

- - - *or imagine,*

according to his power (not in a vacuum, but) - - -

- - - *that is at work within us,*

to him be the glory in the church - - -

- - - and in Christ Jesus

throughout all generations (my posterity)

- - - for ever and ever.

SONG: Because He Lives I Can Face Tomorrow

PRAYER SUGGESTION: Lord God, we honor you for inviting us to not only have a new life in Christ, but to be the conduit through which you choose to do your work.

—Maurice Roberts