

“If You Will, You Can”!

— a faith journey.

Devotional and Song Story:

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Matthew 8: 1-3 — When he came down from the mountain, great crowds followed him. 2 And behold, a leper came to him and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.” 3 And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, “I will; be clean.” And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

“If You Will, You can”... What a powerful statement of faith! The leper humbly postures himself before Jesus, falling to his knees and addressing Him as Lord. He then proceeds in a manner we would not expect! The leper, rather than asking Jesus to be healed, he proclaims what he believes Jesus can do; “If You will, You can make me clean”. The leper believes that whatever Jesus wills to be, will be. Jesus meets him in that very moment with a powerful proclamation of His own. “I will; be clean.” Period. Done. It is. The leper was made well.

Ever since I read this passage back in October (2023), the phrase “If You will, You can”, has been STUCK in my head. This powerful reminder has blessed me so greatly in the last couple months, that wherever we find ourselves, in ANY situation, God can make a way, if He wills. No matter the trial or tragedy. If He wills, He can. We are about to see this over and over again as we follow Jesus and his miraculous works.

Matthew 8: 5-10, 13 — “When he had entered Capernaum, a centurion

came forward to him, appealing to him, 6 “Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering terribly.” 7 And he said to him, “I will come and heal him.” 8 But the centurion replied, “Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed. 9 For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. And I say to one, ‘Go,’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes, and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.” 10 When Jesus heard this, he marveled and said to those who followed him, “Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith... .. 13 And to the centurion Jesus said, “Go; let it be done for you as you have believed.” And the servant was healed at that very moment.”

The centurion, unlike the leper was a very distinguished man of great power and authority, but, like the leper he humbles himself before Jesus saying, “Lord, I am not even worthy for You to come under my roof...” The humility of the centurion is a great lesson on it’s own, but even greater still is the next... The centurion then says to Jesus, “only say the word, and my servant will be healed.” Only say the word?! Jesus marvels! “With no one in Israel have I found such faith.” Just like the leper we see a man who believes Jesus is who He says He is and that he can do what is being asked. “If You will You can”

Matthew 8:23-27 — 23 And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. 24 And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. 25 And they went and woke him, saying, “Save us, Lord; we are

perishing.” 26 And he said to them, “Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?” Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. 27 And the men marveled, saying, “What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?”

Jesus’ disciples are gripped with fear; eyes fixed on the power and might of the storm... When they could no longer navigate the perilous storm they cried out to Jesus in a last ditch effort! *“Save us, Lord!”* Before calming the sea, Jesus first speaks, *“why are you afraid, O you of little faith?”*.

The power and might of the storm had stolen both the disciples peace and attention. They had forgotten who was with them...Jesus, the Prince of Peace... who by the way was sleeping!

There is a very important lesson to be learned here. Believing Jesus is who he says he is is one thing, it’s another to have faith in Him amidst the storms of life. I heard it said once that you can believe a parachute would carry you safely to the ground if you jump out of an airplane, but faith is what enables you to actually put on a parachute and jump out of a plane.

In the disciples case, they must have believed Jesus could rescue them or they wouldn’t have bothered asking. However, Jesus addresses their lack of faith. *“Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?”*. You see, Jesus had already commanded demons to flee, the blind to see, the lame to walk and the mute to speak and yet the disciples were still afraid.

“Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great

calm.” The disciples marveled saying, *“What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?”* The disciples learned that Jesus commands everything. Even creation! May we not only believe Jesus is who He says He is, but also have faith in what He can do if he only wills.

Matthew 9:20-22 — 20 And behold, a woman who had suffered from a discharge of blood for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment, 21 for she said to herself, “If I only touch his garment, I will be made well.” 22 Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, “Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well.”

“Your faith has made you well...”
This woman had been bleeding for 12 years and was determined to reach Jesus. In Lukes account, he states *“and though she had spent all her living on physicians, she could not be healed by anyone.”* She had exhausted all her options and resources and was without hope, until Jesus, and when Jesus heals her he says, *“Your faith has made you well.”*

Jesus is not saying that her faith was the power that healed her. The power to heal her clearly came out of Jesus. What Jesus is saying is that her faith — to believe in Him — that he could do what no one else could — had healed her. If she had not stepped out in faith and sought out Jesus she would not have been healed. Faith was not the power, it was the conduit.

Matthew 9:27-31 — 27 And as Jesus passed on from there, two blind men followed him, crying aloud, “Have mercy on us, Son of David.” 28 When he entered the house, the blind men came to

him, and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord." 29 Then he touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith be it done to you." 30 And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, "See that no one knows about it." 31 But they went away and spread his fame through all that district.

"Do you believe that I am able to do this?" I love how personal Jesus is. He doesn't just wave his hand and heal these men. They cannot see. Rather he approaches them and has arguably the most important conversation anyone could ever have with Jesus. "Do you believe in me". Jesus didn't ask what they wanted, He asked if they believed. These men obviously had great faith because Jesus said "According to your faith be it done for you." They believed Jesus was who he said he was and that he could have mercy on them.

Mark 10:46-52 — 46 And they came to Jericho. And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside. 47 And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" 48 And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" 49 And Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart. Get up; he is calling you." 50 And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. 51 And Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" And the blind man said to him, "Rabbi, let me recover my sight." 52 And Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made

you well." And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way.

Bartimaeus, believed Jesus was who He said He was saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me." We also see that Bartimaeus believes Jesus has the power to extend the mercy which he was asking; "let me recover my sight". Jesus restores his sight saying, "Go your way; your faith has made you well..."

Again here with the "your faith has made you well" statement. Jesus was the cure to Bartimaeus' ailment, but faith was the access; faith to believe that Jesus is the Son of God and that He held the outcome in His hands, having the power to have mercy on him or not. (Something else that always catches my eye here. Jesus says, to "go your way", but the man does not, he follows Jesus on "the way". Jesus is the way the truth and the life. May he open our eyes as we follow Him on THE way!)

Mark 9:17-27 — "Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a spirit that makes him mute. 18 And whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able." 19 And he answered them, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me." 20 And they brought the boy to him. And when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. 21 And Jesus asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. 22 And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have

compassion on us and help us.” 23 And Jesus said to him, “If you can! All things are possible for one who believes.” 24 Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, “I believe; help my unbelief!” 25 And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.” 26 And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, “He is dead.” 27 But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.

“O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you?” — One rebuke for three different scenarios; 1. The crowd was not following Jesus because they believed in who He was but, because they had their *“fill of bread”*(John 6:26, 36) and/or their physical needs met). 2. The scribes and pharisees were without faith as well saying, Jesus was casting out demons by the power of beelzebub(the prince of demons). And 3. Jesus’s very own disciples(the men Jesus had been training for three years to carry on His ministry) lacked faith to do what Jesus had given them authority to do; cast out demons.

Three parties, one rebuke, one cure — *“Believe”*. Jesus responds to the fathers faithless question(*But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.*) with a question of His own. If I can?! Where have you been? Have you not heard...? All of you for that matter. How have you forgotten? Why do you doubt?(Matthew 14:31) Faithless generation...

Although, Jesus had every right to give up on all three parties, leaving them behind without a miracle — Jesus did not. He pressed in saying, *“All things are possible for one who believes.”* and the father responds correctly and honestly, *I believe; help my unbelief!”*.

This is possibly the most important thing we can take away from this whole devotional; acknowledging the tragic state of who we are as people. Unbelieving and in need of Jesus. The boy’s father asks Jesus to make up for what he lacked and Jesus does! May we bring our weakness to Jesus with the same plea. Give us faith to believe!

Later that day...*when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?” 29 And he said to them, “This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.”* — Mark 9:28-29

And again in...Matthew 17:19-20 — *19 ...the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why could we not cast it out?” 20 He said to them, “Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.”*

Prayer and Faith... John Piper says it this way, “It was not the amount of faith that was lacking but trusting in the object of their faith - which is Jesus. They were not trusting HIM. It was not the quantity of faith that mattered but the Person upon Whom their faith was founded. The faith of the disciples should have been rooted and grounded on the Person of Christ, but instead, they were

relying on themselves and their own abilities instead of Christ's strength.”

Prayer or faith — take your pick. The disciples did not act on faith in Jesus to cast out the demon, nor did they stop to pray which, resulted in nothing. Jesus says this in John 15:5, *5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.*

This treatment was not only for his disciples either. In Jesus' hometown, the people were skeptical of Jesus' power and miraculous works and took offense at him. They did not believe Jesus was who He said He was, *58 And he did not do many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.* —Matthew 13:58 “Little” faith lead to “little” or no miracles...

Throughout the gospels, we find the same occurrence over and over again. Jesus moved in the miraculous when people had faith to believe that He was who He said He was and that He was able to do what they asked of Him. Jesus heard the pleas of humility, faith and belief and moved in mercy and power!

No. — What we don't see in the previously mentioned passages. Often times God says no to our requests. Even though the formula was spot on; humility, belief, faith... Even when God could have been greatly glorified in answering our pleas... Sometimes He still says no.

Matthew 26:39,42,44 — “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.” ...42 Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink

it, your will be done.” ...44 So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again.

Jesus teaches us what our prayers and petitions should look like. He believed His father was who He was He was, and that He could do what Jesus (His son) was asking of Him, but, here's the most important part... “nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.”

When we come humbly to God in prayer and full of faith, believing He can do what we are asking and so much more — We have to remember that none of that determines the outcome. His will determines the outcome. His will is perfect. This part may sound discouraging, but trust the process. Your faith is not in vain! If He didn't want us to petition His will, He wouldn't have asked us to. He wants us to come to Him open handed with our pleas and our petitions!

Philippians 4:6-7 — “6 do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

There is great peace to be had here. Peace that surpasses all understanding; even when He says no. Even when He says wait or not yet. His plan and His will are perfect and good. May we be a church that prays bold prayers in faith, believing Jesus can do the very thing we are asking for, with outstretched arms and open hands trusting in our faithful father who gives good gifts and in His time works all things

according to His perfect will and the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. Have faith! *“... without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.”* — Hebrews 11:6

Song Story:

July 28, 2023 — I remember standing at the bedside of my sister Amie’s newborn baby. Arabella was only a couple hours old, gripping her daddy’s finger in desperate need of heart surgery (Her heart was not oxygenating her blood). My cousin’s wife, Danis had begun to pray over Arabella and her family when it occurred to me; God You knit Arabella in Amie’s womb with her hearts major arteries connected backwards. In that moment I realized God was more than aware of his creation. I began to pray...

“God you have knit Arabella in Amie’s womb, and you know the number of days that you have ordained for her to be with us. But Father, if this day is all that you have ordained for her, we ask You for more. We petition Your will for more days! We ask that you allow us to teach and raise this baby to know You and to follow after You. Allow us to be uncles and aunts, fathers, and mothers, cousins, brothers and sisters to this beautiful child. In Jesus’ name, that you would be Glorified.”

Arabella was absolutely bathed in prayer by all of our friends, family and the Church and all to the praise of God’s glory she is alive and well and growing like a weed!

At that time, I didn’t know that God would give me a song to minister to and encourage others who would find themselves in a similar situation.

October 15, 2023 — My best friend Caleb (My cousin) told me his wife Danis’ MRI test results had come in and she had a brain tumor. It was like a gut punch after Arabella... Their biggest concern was that she was 20 weeks pregnant with their fourth child! They didn’t want to operate on her brain while she was pregnant as the baby would be put under anesthesia as well. There were a million concerns and we were without words...

It was **October 26, 2023** — I read Matthew chapter 8 and came across this massive statement from the leper. “If you will; You can”... Immediately after reading the rest of the passage the Lord gave me a melody to put to the leper’s words. Over the next couple weeks I continued to read through Matthew and I began to notice a rhythm to Jesus’ miracles; a recipe per say: 1. believing Jesus was who he said He was and 2. that He could do what they were asking of Him. God opening my eyes to see this in His word couldn’t have been more timely for me and my family as we prayed for Caleb and Danis and processed the road ahead.

As I began to write, God kept laying more and more peoples stories on my heart; cares, hurts, tragedies, needs and prayers with only one answer “If You Will You Can”.

Slowly but surely God breathed life into the song as I grappled with scripture and pleaded and begged Him for the right words to encourage and strengthen His people. I was convinced that the song needed to bolster faith and encourage the Church to petition God as the leper did. Not demanding anything of Him, but to carry our prayers with open hands saying “If You Will You Can”.

November 17, 2023 — Danis went into surgery that morning with a tumor on her brain and a baby in her belly. She left surgery that afternoon without a tumor(it was benign!)and beautiful baby alive and well still inside her. All to the praise of God’s glory!

God has turned prayers into miracles with just a word over and over again. He raises the dead and he splits the sea. Jesus, give us faith to believe.

The only way I can explain the choruses and bridge of this song is that God answered my pleas for the right words. I did not labor; He gave them to me. Thanks be to God, “If You Will You Can” has truly turned into an open canvas for the Church to insert and sing their pleas and petitions to God in faith.

My Prayer is that this song will encourage His Church: 1. Into more and more faith to believe Jesus is who He says He is and that He can do anything

we ask and 2.To petition our God and Savior with open hands. If you will, You can, God!

I’ll leave you with one last thought — “O you of little faith” — Jesus makes this statement over and over again in the gospels, but what about us? Do we have little faith? Is our faith abundant enough to believe that He CAN do whatever we ask? I’m not talking about faith to believe that Jesus IS going to do what we ask.(Ie. I am not healed because I didn’t believe enough that Jesus was going to do it.) Do we have faith to believe that God CAN do anything we ask?

Matthew 19:26 — 26 But Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

Luke 1:37 — 37 For nothing will be impossible with God.”

It’s not a matter of if God can, but if He wills! I pray that our faith to believe may be the conduit by which Jesus moves in power to heal, save and show mercy toward His bride and this lost and broken world. — Remember, we are only responsible to have faith and believe. The outcome is up to God! So rest in the prince of peace and let God take care of His will.

1 John 5:14 — “And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us.”

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, we ask that you would give us great faith and belief to come to you boldly in prayer with our greatest cares; and all the things that seem impossible! We ask that you would come glorify yourself and show your mighty power in what looks to be our darkest hours. We believe that if you will, YOU CAN turn our prayers into miracles! In Jesus powerful name we pray, that You would be glorified and Your will be done. Amen

Lyrics:

Verse 1

If you will — you can God
If you want to you can
If You only speak — it will be

Verse 2

If you will — you can;
Turn our prayers
Into miracles — just say the word!
If you only speak — Then it will be
Lord, We believe

Chorus

If You will You Can!
Overcome — Anything
All We need is faith — To believe
I believe — That if You Will — You Can!

Verse 3

If you will — You can God
If you Want to — You can
If You only speak
Then it will be (We believe)

Verse 4

If you will you can — Raise the dead

You can Split the sea - Lord, we believe
You make possible The impossible
We believe it Lord

Bridge

1. (Sickness/Disease)

The power was not in the robe
The power was Jesus alone
According to faith let it be
You can if You Will - We believe

2. (Storms/Trials)

The power and might of the storm
Will bow to the one on the throne
According to faith let it be
You can if You Will - We believe

3.(Life/Death/Miscarriage)

The power that conquered the tomb
Is the power that opens the womb
According to faith let it be
You can if You Will - We believe

4. (Everything)

Oh Father give ear to our pleas
We cast all our cares at your feet
According to faith let be
We believe!
That if you will; You can!

Chorus 2

If You will You Can!
Make a way — God we pray
Come glorify your name — In his place
Give us Faith to believe that
if you will — you can!