

Make it Harder for God to Surprise You

(Eph. 3:20)

by

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Sometimes we think too small! Our unbelief is not a limitation on God, the Limitless One, but rather a limitation on ourselves! We usually have to be surprised by God to get our belief ratcheted up another notch. If he did what we expected, unbelief wouldn't be an issue and we probably wouldn't even know that we had any unbelief. So, when God surprises us, he is showing us much more than just his awesome power and love. He is also revealing where we need to water in our gardens of faith. Some future beautiful blossom is just waiting to be tended and nurtured and then, "Voila!"; all of a sudden we are believing in what we previously thought to be impossible, because the flower has been seen!

Now, believing in the miracle after we've been surprised and actually seen it is not the hard part. Faith requires much more. It is "... being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see" [Heb. 11:1]. And we know that solid faith cannot come merely from experience but more fundamentally from "... hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ" [Rom. 10:17]. But as God continues to arrest our natural minds by his wonderful surprises, our ability to believe for those things unseen increases all the more! I think it pleases God that he has to work harder and harder to surprise us, because we are crying out for more faith, and more faith, and more faith!

The more familiar we become with the Father's inexhaustible power to circumvent what we previously believed were natural "laws", the more we expect him to surprise us yet again! It is great fun, really! This is what could be called "divine escalation", as God continues to "up the ante" and prod us on to higher levels of faith and maturity, that we might learn under his tutelage to become mature sons and daughters and speak for him, do the things we see him doing, and manifest the kingdom of heaven as the kingdom of God around us here on earth. In order for that to happen, we need to believe for the impossible. We need to think like Christ, believe like Christ, and behave like Christ, remembering that "... everything is possible for him who believes" [Mk. 9:23].

Oh, how little faith we have sometimes! Fortunately, God is not limited by our unbelief, and he can do whatsoever he wills to do to "touch" one of his children in a surprising way, while we are standing there with our mouths open in amazement!

God Will Bring Surprises!

One clear example that the Lord is not limited by our thinking or lack of expectation is the story of the beggar crippled from birth that Peter and John encountered at the temple gate Beautiful [Acts 3:1-10]. This beggar was simply going about his usual routine and had no idea that God was about to change his life completely! When Peter took him by the hand and helped him up, the man's feet and ankles *instantly* became strong! He began walking and jumping and praising God! The people were filled with wonder and amazement! Wouldn't you be? How many were expecting *that* to happen? Not only was he healed, but God instantly taught him to walk and jump!

Walking on Sponges

One night a few years ago, a Father's Touch team was praying for a woman and was just finishing up, so they thought, when the Lord impressed upon the leader that there was more to be done. When asked what other prayer need there might be, the woman responded that she needed prayer for her feet. She had high arches and her excess weight was aggravating the condition, so much so that it was hard for her to stand very long or to walk very far without excruciating pain.

So the team gathered around her and was about to begin praying for the Lord to heal her condition when the leader began to notice something happening around her feet. The Lord brought the vision into focus of angels tending to her feet by placing what could best be described as foamy sponges under each foot. A word came from the Lord that these angels would place these "cushions" under her feet every step she would take for the rest of her life here on earth! What an odd thing to hear! But out of obedience, the lady was asked to get up and walk, without the team uttering one word of "standard" healing prayer. She did so and soon exclaimed that she felt like she was walking on sponges! The pain was gone, but not in the way they expected God to remove it! The ratchet went up another notch! In addition, an important lesson was learned about the amazing extent to which God commands his angels concerning us [Ps. 91:11].

At the time of this writing, over three years have passed since that bizarre encounter with God's novel ministry method and this woman reports that she is still "walking on sponges"! God is "... able to do immeasurably more than all we can ask or imagine ..." [Eph. 3:20]!

Renewing of the Mind

One night at a home meeting of The Father's Touch ministry, a lady came for prayer and just after she had walked through the door the Lord revealed that she had a "division in her soul", but she didn't specify her need until after the time of worship and teams were formed to pray for the guests. When a few of the team members gathered around her to pray, she said that she had come because she had MPD (Multiple Personality Disorder), a condition that many healing "professionals" believe takes a long time to heal, if ever. The prayer team of course hoped that God would get the healing started that night, but little did they suspect that God intended to surprise everyone with much more!

It wasn't long before the team felt that it was time to pray! As they were praying, a strong leading came from the Lord to command the fragments of her mind to fuse together in order to be made whole. Within just a few minutes of praying through some of the issues in her life, she exclaimed that her mind was healed! All the voices she had been hearing, some since she was two years old,

were gone! Some of them said, “Goodbye!”, on their way out! She had suffered from severe torment in the past, including self-mutilation, but now, the torment was gone!

So, the healing that was supposed to take a long time, God did in a few minutes! Surprised again by the Holy Spirit! The ratchet went up a notch!

This lady continued to visit a few more times and the team prayed for the Father’s touch to help her walk in her new freedom, which seemed a bit strange to her. She was definitely becoming a new person; even her best friend was unable to recognize her at first in a telephone conversation shortly after her initial visit. To God be the glory!

Yes, We Have Bananas!

Not only does God sometimes surprise us when someone is in desperate need for healing, as in the example of the crippled beggar above, but he also delights in meeting even our less pressing needs. Here is an example that not only ratchets up our faith, but also encourages us to ask and not be silent because we think it wouldn’t be important enough for God to be “bothered”. We “... do not have because [we] do not ask God.” [Js. 4:2] All of our needs are important to our Father!

On a 3-day weekend retreat trip to Mexico from Los Angeles, some of the Father’s Touch team members were riding in a car together and one of them remarked how disappointed she was that she wouldn’t be able to eat her favorite, spicy Mexican foods because of her recent bout with stomach trouble, including an ulcer. Rather than praying for healing for the stomach outright, one of the team members felt led to first ask the question, “What is the food that is easiest for your stomach to tolerate”? She replied, “Well, that would be bananas. They give me no trouble at all.” The Holy Spirit then prompted the following prayer: “Lord, while she is in Mexico, please let her savor the taste of whatever she eats, but *change* it into bananas *before* it reaches her stomach!”

As you may have guessed by now, that is *exactly* what happened over the three days of feasting on wonderful, spicy Mexican cuisine. Anything and everything she ate did not irritate her stomach in the slightest! The Lord blessed her wonderfully by answering that simple, but rather unconventional, prayer. What an awesome God we serve! You can imagine how the faith of the people around her, and that of many others who have heard that story since then, was ratcheted up another notch!

An interesting side lesson was learned through this experience, by the way. Recall the exact wording of the prayer prayed before leaving California: “...while she is in Mexico...” On the way back home to California, the carload stopped at this lady’s favorite taco stand in Tijuana so she could get two of her favorite, super deluxe, spicy tacos! She ate one of them while waiting in the long line of cars at the border, and in keeping with the fact that she was still in Mexico, her stomach was fine! About an hour later, however, as the group was well within California heading home to Los Angeles, she ate the other taco. Big mistake! Her stomach rebelled and required a fast dose of peppermint! So God honored the prayer request to change all she ate in Mexico to bananas, but once back across the border, the miracle ended! God evidently wanted to teach everyone a lesson about the power of our words and to think carefully about our requests, since he took the request literally! Be forewarned!

Dare God to Surprise You!

The common theme running through these examples, and perhaps others you may have experienced in your own walk with Jesus, is that God really is "... able to do immeasurably more than all we can ask or imagine" [Eph. 3:20], and that in those times when we are praying with limited belief, he may choose to answer anyway, and perhaps with *much more* than we asked for!

So why not *dare* to ask God for more surprises and *believe* that he will do it? In fact, why not let him increase your faith to higher and higher levels so that he has to work harder to surprise you? It's another way that you, as the apple of his eye, can bless your Father in heaven!

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