

Is Anything Too Hard for the Lord?

Genesis 18:1-15; Romans 5:1-8

June 14, 2020

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With Mrs. Linda Meigs

I remember learning the story of Abraham and Sarah in Vacation Bible School, which is coming up, by the way, so be sure to register your children. I remember being spellbound by this story. Those three men who showed up at Abraham and Sarah's tent. Who were they? Were they just three men? Were they angels? Some kind of messengers from God? It's unclear in the story. Abraham's response to them makes you think they were special. He hurriedly provided them food and drink. And then their message. The Lord told them that Sarah would bear a son. She happened to be behind the door listening in on the conversation. When she heard the news about a baby, she laughed. She was too old, and so was Abraham. We're told in the previous chapter that Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah was 90. A baby? She laughed.

And then verse fourteen. It's something we still need to hear. The Lord said to an incredulous Abraham and Sarah, "Is anything too wonderful for the Lord?" My study Bible, the Revised Standard Version, reads this way: "Is anything too hard for the Lord?"

When circumstances look impossible, is it too hard for the Lord? The people of Israel would end up in slavery in Egypt. Their homes were ransacked. Their gardens and vineyards were destroyed. Even the Temple in Jerusalem was desecrated. They became slaves in Egypt, laboring under very hard taskmasters. Would they ever be freed from Pharaoh's powerful grasp? It was too hard. Until God raised up a prophet named Moses who demanded, in the name of the Lord, "Let my people go." You know the story. Finally, Pharaoh relented and let God's people go. It wasn't too hard for the Lord.

The fleeing Israelites made it to the Red Sea. The Egyptian soldiers were in hot pursuit. The Red Sea stood between the Israelites and freedom. But they couldn't cross. It was too hard. Until God divided the sea allowing the Israelites to pass on dry ground. It wasn't too hard for the Lord.

Then they got to the wilderness and ran out of food. The people grew hungrier and hungrier. They began to murmur, saying that it was better back in Egypt. At least they had food to eat. It was too hard. Until God provided the manna in the wilderness, just enough for each day. It wasn't too hard to the Lord.

So, when circumstances look impossible, we must not say that it is too hard for the Lord because the Lord has a history of proving that nothing is too hard.

What about the unrest in our country, you may ask? A few weeks ago we had never heard of George Floyd, the unarmed African American man who died with a policeman's knee on his neck. We all know his name now. We've seen the video many times. We've heard his final word, "I can't breathe." The world knows his name now, and the world is calling for reform. Not just of policing. The world—blacks, whites, Latinos, Asians—the world is calling for a reformation that will finally establish justice and equality for African Americans and all others.

Is it too hard? Never. Not for the Lord. Not for the people of God who embrace an ethic of love and justice for all people.

This will be my final sermon dialogue. Beginning next Sunday with Madi Harner, we will return to the traditional sermon format. I've enjoyed this. I've found our speakers to be very interesting. For this last dialogue, I've invited my friend and your friend, Linda Meigs, to join me. Linda was a long-time member of Weatherly until she moved to Arizona last year. Linda, we miss you. I hope you and David are well.

Tell us how you are doing during the pandemic, Linda.

Linda, racial inequality is a problem across our country and, as we've learned, around the world. Some people think it is a southern problem only. But that is not true. What has been your experience with race relations in other parts of the country?

Linda, the phrase Black Lives Matter is ubiquitous today. Some object and say All Lives Matter. Or Blue Lives Matter. Or some other group matters. I think it

is important that we validate that Black Lives Matter. Would you share your thoughts on this?

Linda, as you know the black church was a change agent during the racial strife of the Civil Rights Movement, while white churches and white clergy were mostly silent. What do you think the role of the church is in combating racial inequality?

Is there anything else you would like to share with the Weatherly family, Linda?

Thank you for dialoging with me today, Linda. Give our best to David. You're welcome back any time you get homesick!

I have told colleagues that I feel like we are at a turning point in our country. I know we have been here before—the death of a black man, the protests, the demands for justice—but it feels different this time. White people are engaged too. White churches are engaged. We've admitted that this is not a black problem. It is our problem. All of us. Because we want to live into the highest ideals of our country, where all men and women are created equal. Because we want to live into the highest ideals of our faith, where we are all one in Christ Jesus. And because nothing, nothing, is too hard for the Lord.

Closing Prayer

Lord, we long for that day envisioned by the fiery prophet Amos, when justice will roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everflowing stream. Take our hands and voices. Use us to bring about that day. Amen.