

You Can Climb Your Mountain!

Zechariah 4:6-7

In the book Men to Match My Mountains, a book about the way the West was won and about the brave heroes who risked life and limb and blazed a trail, is the story of a man named John C. Fremont. On January 19, 1844, he attempted something that had never been done before—crossing the Sierra Nevada Mountains in the dead of winter. Stone describes it as the longest 70 miles in the history of exploration. He suffered from snow blindness, hypothermia, near starvation. Three men, Kit Carson, Brokenhand Fitzpatrick, and John C. Fremont made it over the mountains and, when they did, the last barrier to westward expansion had been breached. The mountains were no longer impassable or impossible. Irving Stone uses the phrase, “The men matched the mountains” to describe these men in the title of his book, Men to Match My Mountains. John C. Fremont would often say, “What are you, mighty mountain?”

I don't know what mountain you face. For some, it is a mountain of fear or anxiety. For some, it might be a mountain of failure or a mountain of bondage or addiction. There's the mountain of injustice and unforgiveness, the mountain of depression or frustration. It might seem impossible or impassable, but maybe it is time to believe God for a miracle. Maybe it is time to believe that it is “not by might nor by power but by my Spirit, saith the Lord.” Maybe it is time to say, “What are you, mighty mountain?”

You have a climb in front of you, you have a battle to fight, but this is when and where and why I fall back on what I know for sure. He's still the God who makes sidewalks through the sea. He is still the God who makes the sun stand still. He is still the God who turns water into wine, and He is still the God who moves mountains.

Mountains in the Bible are used in a number of ways. There is the physical mountain that we normally use the word to refer to, but in the Bible, mountain can also refer to kingdoms. The kingdom of God is called a mountain. The kingdom of Satan is called a mountain, and the kingdom of men is called a mountain. It's referring to a rule over a sphere of influence. The third way that the word "mountain" is used in the Bible, as it is used in this passage, is for an impossible situation. A situation that looms so large you can't move it by yourself, and you don't even know anybody who can help you move it. It's just too big. You can't get over the hump. It's too large, and its impact is too big on your life. It's a mountain, and you feel like you can't get through it, around it, or over it.

Sometimes God delivers us from it, and He can deliver in it, but more often than not, God delivers through. And when you get to the other side, now, you have a testimony and guess what? The bigger the mountain, the bigger the person you become by getting to the other side. You cannot spell testimony without the first four letters, test. You've got to pass the test. You have to learn the lesson, cultivate the character, curate the change, and those mountains that you overcome, they become part of your testimony.

Zechariah 4:7 uses the word "mountain" in this way, some obstacle that looms large in your life to which you need divine help to move. In this passage today, Jesus talks about moving mountains.

In my life, I've been successful at turning molehills into mountains. There have been things that I have lost sleep over that, in the grand scheme of things, were no big deal. I've also allowed true mountains to make my faith waiver. There are times in life when we are faced with insurmountable odds and impossibilities. Those mountains loom over us and block our view of God. Our mind reasons that we have no chance of success, so we shouldn't even bother trying. Those always make our faith seem so small. God knew that we would feel that way at times, and He is able to make molehills out of our mountains.

Zerubbabel is the leader of this remnant that returned to Judah with a God-sized vision to rebuild the temple that Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed in 586 BC, Zerubbabel's name meant born in Babylon. Zeru babel. He was born in Babylon, but he wasn't a Babylonian. He was born to a Judean family. When the Babylonians conquered Jerusalem, they brought back many of the Jews to Babylon to live in captivity and Zerubbabel's parents were

among them. Babylon was a real city and is in modern day Iraq. Babylon is used as a symbol for sin and disobedience and turning away from God. We're all born in Babylon until we're born again. Zerubbabel was born in captivity, but God raised him up in Babylon as a trusted administrator to the king. Then when Persia conquered Babylon, Persia, modern day Iran conquered Babylon, then Zerubbabel became a trusted leader for the King of Persia. When Cyrus became king of Persia, God put it in his heart to let 42,000 Jews go back to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. And Zerubbabel was appointed governor over Judea and Jerusalem and placed in charge of rebuilding the temple of God. And even though he had never seen Jerusalem, his heart was always there. He loved the one true God. He'd become a great leader. God raised him up to be a builder. They come back Jerusalem but it had been devastated by the Babylonians. King Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed the temple completely, but within two years, Zerubbabel had led the people to finish the foundation. They can't wait to see the building going up, but then they get hit with problem after problem. And finally, their enemies get the new king to stop them from building. And the building stops. Not one brick has been laid on the foundation. For 17 years, nothing more is built just the foundation. For 17 years, Zerubbabel and the people of Jerusalem have to look at that foundation and be reminded of their failure, reminded that their dream was unfinished. You see, the Temple Mount was on Mount Zion, where it still is today in Jerusalem, and it was up on the highest hill. It looked like the dream was done and the temple would never be finished, but God wasn't finished yet. God sent the prophet Zachariah to speak a promise to Zerubbabel that changes everything.

We're about half a century later. Zerubbabel is staring at all of these stones, at these ruins, and that's when the Lord says to Zerubbabel. *"It is not by might nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord. Unless the Lord builds the house, they who labor, labor in vain."* Psalm 127:1

Without the help of the Holy Spirit, I'm below average, but with the help of the Holy Spirit, all things are possible. The Holy Spirit is the difference between the best you can do and the best God can do.

God wants to do things in you and through you that are beyond your ability, beyond your resources, and beyond your imagination. Why? So He gets the glory. How? By His Spirit.

So he said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty." Zechariah 4:6

1. Spirit Power To Move Mountains

So he said to me, "This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty." Zechariah 4:6

The mountain is going to make you into the man or the woman that God has destined you to become. You are going to be bigger and better because of the opposition you encounter and because of the obstacles you are going to overcome, and you are going to have a testimony.

We need a word from God. This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel. Moving mountains starts with the word of God. Four words, *"let there be light"* (Genesis 1:3) spoke everything into the existence. *"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God."* (John 1:1) *"Through Him all things were made. Without Him nothing was made that has been made."* (John 1:3) So the Word spoke mountains and oceans and stars and planets and galaxies into existence, and if God can do that with four words, what are we worried about? To the infinite, all finites are equal. There is no easy or difficult. There is no possible or impossible. His Word does not return void, and He is watching over His Word to perform it. Nothing is more powerful than our God.

"Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words." Romans 8:26

"And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue His work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns." Philipians 1:6

- **DON'T GIVE UP UNTIL GOD'S FINISHED**

Don't give up before God has finished building in your life. God is the finisher. And sometimes God allows us to try to fix something until we're stuck, and we fail, and we fail over and over again until we realize He's the finisher. You're not the finisher. God uses you to finish things, but He is the finisher. He redeems the rubble to rebuild a life. He'll use your failure to rebuild a new foundation. He'll use your mess to work a miracle. He'll use your greatest problem to become your greatest purpose.

2. Speak God's Promises To Your Mountain.

There comes a moment when you've got to stop talking to God about your mountains and start talking to the mountain about your God. You have to declare His power, declare His grace, declare His peace, His glory, His love, His goodness, and His healing. You don't deny the obstacles or the odds; you confront the brutal facts, but you do it with unwavering faith. You don't lose faith in the end of the story. You exercise your authority as a child of God, as a follower of Christ, and as a citizen of The kingdom of God.

Sometimes we simply talk to God in prayer about our mountains. We shouldn't tell God how big our mountain is. We should tell our mountain how big our God is. It's all about perspective. Jesus even told us that we didn't need a lot of faith to be able to cast mountains out of our path. We don't have to have the ability, we just need the faith to believe God is able.

"For who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain! And he shall bring forth the finishing gable stone with loud shoutings of the people, crying, 'Grace, grace to it!'" Zechariah 4:7

Most of us are really good at talking to God about our problems. We explain our problems to God as if He doesn't know how to solve them. We complain about our problems as if He doesn't care, and then we remind God of our problems as if He has forgotten. At some point, you have to stop talking to God about your problems and start talking to you problems about God.

You need to start preaching the promises of God to your problems. You have to preach the goodness of God to your problems. *"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life."* (Psalm 23:6)

You need to preach the supremacy of Christ. *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."* (Philippians 4:13) You need to preach the preeminence of God. *"If God is for me, who can be against me?"* (Romans 8:31)

You need to preach the power of God. *"He is able to do immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine according to his power that is at work within me."* (Ephesians 3:20)

You need to preach the love of God to your problems. *"I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future nor any power or anything else in all of creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord!"* (Romans 8:38-39)

We need preach the promises of God, the goodness of God, the love of God, and the power of God to those mountains in our lives. You can focus on your problems, or you can focus on the promises of God. One way or the other, your focus is going to determine your reality.

Twelve spies went into the Promised Land and then after 40 days they brought back a report. Ten of them bring back a bad report. They say that there are giants in the land and then they specifically say they were like

grasshoppers in their own eyes. Of course they were, because they were focused on the size of the people in the land. But two of them brought back a good report because they were focused on the size of the promise that God had given them. I'm not saying you don't diagnosis it, or you don't admit it, or you don't deal with it, but at some point you have to shift gears. You have to invert, always invert and go back to the promises of God.

"Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, 'We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it.' But the men who had gone up with him said, 'We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are.' And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, 'The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. We saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim). We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them.'" Numbers 13:30-33

Warren Buffet's father, Howard Buffet, was a four-term Congressman. He carried a hand-written piece of paper in his pocket for many years. It said "I am God's child. I am in His hands. As for my body, it was never meant to be permanent. As for my soul, it is immortal. Why then should I be afraid of anything?"

Pick a promise, any promise. It might be this promise in Zechariah 4. Write it down on a piece of paper and put it in your pocket. Keep it on you. Go back to it again and again. Keep believing it. Keep declaring it.

What is the hardest thing that you can believe God for?

What is the bravest prayer that you could pray?

Joshua asked the sun to stand still and then Elijah asked an iron axe head to float. Jesus asked His Father to raise a man who had been dead for four days. You can ask God to move that mountain!

What did Paul and Silas do when they were thrown into jail? They didn't complain. They didn't submit to their circumstances *"Around midnight they began to praise God,"* (Acts 16:25) and God broke those chains of bondage and set them free.

Praise preaches to your problems and allows you to worship in the midst of those circumstances. Is there a mountain in your life that you are submitting to? You have stopped preaching the promises of God. You have stopped believing or stopped hoping. You have given up. I think I have a word for you. Stop tolerating anything less than the good, pleasing, perfect will of God.

"A voice cries out, 'Prepare in the wilderness a road for the Lord! Clear the way in the desert for our God! Fill every valley; level every mountain. The hills will become a plain, and the rough country will be made smooth. Then the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it. The Lord himself has promised this.'" Isaiah 40:3-5

"I tell you the truth, if you had faith even as small as a mustard seed, you could say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it would move. Nothing would be impossible." Matthew 17:20

"The mountains take one look at GOD And melt, melt like wax before earth's Lord." Psalm 97:5

"Look, O mighty mountain, destroyer of the earth! I am your enemy," says the LORD. "I will raise my fist against you, to knock you down from the heights. When I am finished, you will be nothing but a heap of burnt rubble." Jeremiah 51:25

A "promise" is an assurance that one will do or give something. Have you ever experienced waiting for something promised to you to be fulfilled? What if it will take 45 years for that promise to come to pass? Will you be willing to wait that long?

3. Small Steps To A Divine Future

“Who dares despise the day of small things, since the seven eyes of the Lord that range throughout the earth will rejoice when they see the chosen capstone in the hand of Zerubbabel?” Zechariah 4:10

The writer of Ecclesiastes said, *“Whoever watches the wind will not plant, whoever looks at the clouds will not reap.”* Ecclesiastes 11:4

“The Lord our God spoke to us in Horeb, saying: ‘You have stayed at this mountain long enough. Turn and take your journey, and go to the mountains of the Amorites.’” Deuteronomy 1:6-7

“You have stayed at this mountain long enough.” Enough is enough. What are you tolerating that is robbing God of His glory? What are you tolerating that is short-changing the price that Jesus paid on the cross? What are you tolerating that is less than God’s good, perfect, pleasing will? What are you tolerating that is acceptable, but is not beneficial, and you know it? We have to stop tolerating those things.

Millions of people were camped at Mount Sinai, and God says, “Break camp and advance into the hill country of the Amorites.” They had babies. They had flocks and herds and animals. They rode donkeys. There was no air conditioning. How was anybody in a decent mood? The Levites were responsible for moving the tabernacle. There were three clans, 8,580 tabernacle movers, and they had to move the tabernacle. It sometimes feels easy just to settle for where you are. They were probably saying, “Can’t we just stay here?” Breaking camp is a big deal, but if you keep doing what you’ve always done, you are going to keep getting what you’ve always gotten. If you want God to do something new, you cannot stay camped out at that mountain. You can’t keep tolerating it.

What is the hardest thing that you can believe God for?

You have to take dominion over your thoughts. Take every thought captive and make it obedient to Christ. It is not easy. Paul said, *“I train my body like an athlete.”* 1 Corinthians 9:27

The King James Version says, “I bring it into subjection.” Don’t tolerate it. Take dominion over it.

You have to take dominion over your attitude. You have to quit complaining. You have to quit making excuses. Quit playing the victim. You’ve stayed at this mountain long enough!

You cannot finish what you do not start. What is the first step that you need to take? What is the next step you need to take? I think you need to identify the mountain. I think you need to call it what it is. Then you begin to speak, by faith, the promises of God, the goodness of God, the love of God to that mountain.

Stop and think about this: God was rejoicing. Before they even began building—they don’t even have permits, they haven’t even broken ground. All they have is blueprints, and God has giving them a standing ovation. God is great, not just because nothing is too big. God is great because nothing is too small. He celebrates the small steps of faith. He celebrates the small acts of kindness. I think we’re often easily overwhelmed by the size and scope of dreams or goals that God has given us.

“The chosen capstone in the hand of Zerubbabel” is the word for the plumb line. It was an ancient measuring tape. They hadn’t started rebuilding, they were just measuring. God is already celebrating. God is not great because nothing is too big. God is great because nothing is too small. He rejoices over those small acts of kindness, over those small acts of obedience. He rejoices over those small steps of faith, those small sacrifices, and He doesn’t just rejoice over them, He honors them. If you do little things like they are big things, God will do big things like they are little things.

How do you lose 20 pounds? One pound at a time. How do you get out of debt? One paycheck at a time. How do you train for an iron man? One workout at a time. How do you read through the Bible? One chapter at a time. How do you experience miracles? One prayer at a time. How do you work through your emotional issues? It might be one counseling session at a time. How do you get the promotion at work? One project at a time. How do you win the game? One practice at a time. How do you rebuild trust? One day at a time. One step at a time. That is how we don't despise the day of small beginnings.

Does anyone dare to despise the day of small beginnings. Don't despise the day of small beginnings.

- God Always Uses The Small Beginnings To Make Big Endings.

We want the big ending without the small beginning. The foundation looked really small and insignificant, but it was the most important part of the temple.

What is your small thing? It might be filling out an application. It might be making a phone call. It might be a tough conversation. Whatever goal you are going after, whatever problem you are trying to solve, it always starts with the first step.

Don't despise the day of small beginnings. If you do little things like they are big things, God is going to do big things during this series like they are little things.