

If You Believe...

³⁸ Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. ³⁹ “Take away the stone,” he said.

“But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odour, for he has been there four days.”

⁴⁰ Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?” (John 11:38-40)

Jesus is about to do a miracle... raise a dead man called Lazarus from the grave!” Interestingly, Martha the dead man’s sister, and also a close friend of Jesus, reminded Jesus that Lazarus’ body is already in an advanced state of decomposition. Recall the conversation between Jesus and Martha in John 11:21-27:

²¹ “Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.”

²³ Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”

²⁴ Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

²⁵ Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; ²⁶ and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

²⁷ “Yes, Lord,” she replied, “I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”

Although Jesus told Martha that her brother “will rise again,” she did not quite understand how this would be done. What Jesus was about to do was never done before, and it seemed hopeless! Yes, Jesus healed the sick and restored sight to the blind! But to give life to the dead...that was something only God could have done! Perhaps Martha, knowing that there were mockers among the onlookers, didn’t want Jesus to make a fool of himself, because she loved him. Just a thought. Recall John 11:37 which says:

³⁷ But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

I can relate to Martha. In life there are situations (problems) we confront that seem hopeless. At times, things (goals) we dream of achieving seem impossible. These feats have never been done before. For example, you may be embarking on a new career and you may be saying to yourself, “I am too old!” Perhaps you about to start a course of study, like Math, but you put up a mental block by saying, “This too hard!” or “I’m not good at it!” Maybe, that new business venture requires money and you have already resigned to the fact that you are broke, and will never get the cash. Or, you may want to make Jesus the Lord of Your Life, but you already hear their comments in your mind, “Who that heathen think she fooling!” or “He will never change!”

What you are about to do will require you to step away from the crowd...to stand out...to think beyond your human limitations! Yes, people are looking at you. Some are waiting to see you fail! Among them are those who are waiting just to say, “I told you so!”

Now, you are about to take a bold step, and someone dear to you takes you aside and whispers in your right ear, “Are you OK? You know what you are about to do is not possible, right? You will only make a fool of yourself.” What will you say? Before you answer, let’s continue with the story.

Understandably so, in Martha’s mind there were limits since bringing a dead man back to life was virtually impossible. Jesus answers:

“Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?”

LOL. I can only imagine what may have gone through Martha’s mind when Jesus rebuked her! Jesus may be thinking, “Martha, Martha, you have been around me for some time now, but you are really taking a long time to get this...*Did I not tell you...*”

Martha, perhaps in shock, may have said to herself, “I really have to see this!”

Jesus said, “...if you believe, you will see the glory of God.”

In other words, our miracle depends on the extent to which we are willing to believe. Our miracle is conditional. It depends on whether we believe that God can do it!

Usain Bolt once said, “I don’t think limits!” This was his response in respect of his decision at aged 32 to follow his dreams of playing professional football in Australia with the A-League Central Coast Mariners. Some may be sceptical about his decision. But Usain has a track record for success. His statement “I don’t think limits!” is not only applicable but it is timely. Arguably, the best sprinter of all times, Usain has achieved what no other human being has ever done. He did not limit himself but believed that he could have achieved his goals...no matter how impossible it may have seen to others. I believe that Usain will succeed at his dreams. Go for it!

Martha may have set limits to what she felt Jesus could have done! DO NOT LET OTHERS SET LIMITS ON WHAT YOU CAN DO!! But there is another point to appreciate. What a human being cannot do... God can do! Jesus is reminding us that God steps in where human limitation begins....it is called faith....stubborn faith which says, “I believe!”

Luke 18:27 (NIV) - Jesus replied, “What is impossible with man is possible with God.”

Just Believe! And You WILL see the glory of God in your life. Therefore, when you are about to do the impossible and someone who cares for you says, “Are you OK? (What madness is this?) You know what you are about to do is not possible, right? You will only make a fool of yourself.” What will you say? Let us pray.

Heavenly Father,

Help my unbelief! Thank You for sending Your Son Jesus to show me that with God all things are possible! I silence the voice of the mockers and those who seek to limit me. My dream will not die! I stand up and step out in faith and declare that with You, all things are possible! I wait in joyful expectation to see Your glory at work in my life. In Jesus’ name I pray with thanksgiving. Amen.