

## Challenging God

Text : **Luke 11: 1-13**

### **INTRODUCTION :**

#### **A. What is the biggest thing you can think of ?**

1. Lovers are always looking for bigger superlatives.

**My love is :**

- a. Wider than the ocean.
  - b. Deeper than the sea.
  - c. Taller than the mountain.
2. We can always think of someone bigger or worse when justifying ourselves.
    - a. Yeah, I'm a little over weight, **but** did you see that guy of TV? WOW ! 1200 lbs.
    - b. I know I miss a lot of Sunday evenings, **BUT** Bro. DoWright misses a couple Sunday mornings a month.
  3. The Apostle John used the whole world to illustrate big :  
“... **even the world itself would not contain the books that ...**” **John 21:25**

#### **B. Size is a matter of perspective.**

1. To a small child even a short woman is large and intimidating.
2. I can't even conceive a trillion dollars, but politicians deal with it like pocket change.
3. Distance is relative to your mode of transportation.
  - a. Too my daughter a 35 mile trip is not far it it's to go shopping, but without her car she won't walk down the street to the local market.
  - b. Crossing the oceans once was a foreboding journey, but in a jet plane ...
4. Technology is re-defining how people view distance.
  - a. We've been to the moon.
  - b. We're headed toward Mars.
  - c. Our eyes are on destinations beyond our solar system.

#### **C. It's easy for us to impress ourselves, but what is big enough to impress God ?**

1. Men built a ship that was so large they couldn't comprehend it being sunk.
  - a. The Titanic was like a manmade island.
  - b. God sent it to the bottom of the sea with only a block of ice.
2. The largest thing of which the Apostle John could conceive was the world, **but** God just spoke and it came into existence.

3. The universe remains about the only thing too vast for man to comprehend, **but** it was no more difficult for God to speak into existence than our little planet.
4. None of these things are big to God.

**D. As time passes, it takes more to impress man, but we still cannot impress God.**

1. Remember when a \$64K prize was an amazing game show; **now** it takes millions to draw an audience.
2. In our childhood a 35K seat stadium was awesome; **now** 70K is common and they are covered with heating and AC.
3. A car used to be a good one if it got us there and back safely; **now** they must be more luxurious than a rich man's house used to be.
4. **BUT none of these can compare to the awesome works of God.**

**TRANSITION :**

**Sadly, it's gotten to the point that many people are so involved with the minutia of their little lives that they are no longer impressed with God. They've lost their sense of awe in the daily clutter of small things.**

**I. Once we lose our sense of awe we tend to just settle back into our mundane lives.**

**A. The longer we live the more we become well entrenched in our routines.**

1. The more established our routine, the more comfortable it becomes.
2. The more comfortable our routine becomes, the less we want it changed or disrupted.

**ill.- It's like breaking in a new pair of shoes.**

3. One day we wake up and realize we are in a lifeless rut. ( each day just follows the previous )

a. **ill.- In Elko Co., Nevada one can still see the 150 yr old ruts from the wagons.**

b. To go west one only had to put his wagon in the ruts and let the mules go.

4. Today apathetic ruts drain the meaning out of our lives; they destroy our spirit.

**ill.- When an horse is hooked to a plow day after day, it hangs it's head.**

**Horses carrying a rider are alert, especially if in a competition with others.**

**\* When riding a plow horse, it becomes like a different animal.**

**B. When we drift into comfortable apathy it affects every aspect of our lives.**

1. It affects our attitude toward our work. ( **I would never work on an assembly line.** )
2. It affects our relationships. ( **Marriages break up because of boredom – seek excitement** )

**C. Our comfortable rut even goes to church with us.**

1. We come to church every week and do the same things in the same ways.
2. Over the years our comfort zone becomes ever smaller until it chokes the life out of us.
3. One day we wake up and open our eyes realize we're in a rut so deep we can't see out.  
**We've become like that old plow-horse with our heads down just plodding along.**
4. The letter which the Lord sent to the church in Ephesus ( **Rev. 2: 1-7** ) could just as well have been addressed to many churches today.
  - a. You've done some good works.
  - b. You've stood steadfastly against the false teachers.
  - c. **Vs. 4- But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.**
  - d. **Paraphrase =** "You guys are in a rut. You're just plodding along like a plow-horse."  
Compare ... **Rev. 3:15-16**

**D. Brethren, we need to stoke the fire within us to rekindle our zeal, to reignite our love.**

1. That which was a blazing flame has become but a bed of coals.
2. Our zeal for the Lord has been relegated to a series of regularly repeated activities.

**II. Imagine how our comfortable thinking must bore God.****A. God thinks big; far beyond the tiny sphere of our comfortable lives.**

1. Look at the scope of His creation; it's not just this one little planet.
2. His universe is so vast we can't even count all the stars.

**B. God does big things. He doesn't deal in "get by" thinking.**

1. When He sent a flood, it covered the whole earth.
2. When He blessed His people they ruled the world.
3. **Eph. 3: 20** ... He is eager to use us to do more than we can even imagine.

**C. What are we willing to challenge God to do through HIS power that works in us ?**

1. Most of us are so centered in our comfortable little lives that we see no further.
  - a. The walls of our RUT have become so high we can't see beyond them.
  - b. Because we can't see beyond them, we also can't pray beyond them.
  - c. We lead small lives with small aspirations so we pray small prayers.

2. Jesus challenges us to look beyond the minutia of our lives to pray big prayers.
    - a. **Matt. 6: 31-33** Do not worry then, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear for clothing?’ <sup>32</sup> For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. <sup>33</sup> But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.
    - b. Don’t worry about the same things the unbelievers worry about, trust ME.
- D. Jesus wants us to escape from the mundane and develop a vision for Him.**
1. He wants us to lift up our heads so we can see beyond our feet, beyond the minutia.
  2. *“I know you have to live; serve Me and I’ll take care of the little stuff.”*
  3. It all boils down to faith. **Do we trust Jesus to keep His promises ?**

### III. Are you praying about anything that’s big enough to get Jesus’ attention ?

- A. Do you have a goal for God ? ( or just one for yourself ? )**
1. What do you want to accomplish for God with your life ?
  2. How far to do you want the kingdom of God to expand ?
  3. What do you want this congregation to be ?
- B. We tend to become so involved with the blessings that we forget the giver. ( cf-Israel )**
1. We ask and do not receive because we ask for our own use. ( **earthbound thinking** )
    - a. **James 4: 3-** You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. ( Cf.- **Tim. 6:8** )
    - b. God blesses us so we can serve HIM, not so we can live this fat-cat lifestyle.
    - c. For us to **“Seek first His kingdom”** means to continually place God’s kingdom as the very highest priority in our lives.
    - d. Jesus meant it when He said : *“If anything or anyone is more important to you than Me, you CANNOT be My disciple.”* **Lk 14:26ff**
  2. We ask and do not receive because we ask too small.
    - a. We dwell on the minutia of our lives :
      - 1) Lord give me a safe trip to ...
      - 2) Help me to get over this terrible cold ...
      - 3) Give me a good night’s sleep and sweet dreams.
    - b. Most of these things will work themselves out without God intervening.
    - c. These things are not wrong; but they can’t be the first priority in life or in prayer.

3. Yes, ask for the things we need, but also look beyond our little lives.
  - a. When you pray challenge God with something worthy of His greatness.
  - \* **When I had a business I found it much harder to collect a small account from a rich man than from a poor man. They paid big bills, but ignored small ones.**
  - b. Ask God for something that can only he can do.
  - c. Keep on asking for it day after day, year after year.( **keep on asking, knocking, seeking** )

#### IV. Look at our text to see how Jesus taught us to pray : ( Luke 11: )

- A. **Vs. 1 ... context**
- B. **Vs. 2a ... praise God**
- C. **Vs. 2b ... prioritize HIS work on the earth**
- D. **Vs. 3 ... acknowledge physical dependence**
- E. **Vs. 4a ... acknowledge spiritual dependence**
- F. **Vs. 4b ... commit yourself to being like Him**
- G. **Vs. 4c ... ask for spiritual help**
- H. **The purpose of the parable is to teach us how to pray.**
  1. The parable represents God as the friend who does not get up until prodded to do so.
    - a. Keep on asking, keep on knocking, keep on seeking
    - b. If you keep on, you WILL receive.
      - 1) Not ask today and receive tomorrow
      - 2) Sometimes it takes years of asking.
  2. **Compare : Luke 18: 1-8** ( read only if time permits )
    - a. **Context :** Keep on praying and do not loose heart
    - b. The Judge who did not immediately respond = God
    - c. The widow who kept on asking = Christians
    - d. **“crying to Him day and night”** = We must keep on asking.
    - e. **“... will He find faith on the earth ?”** = Will Christians keep on praying ?

## **CONCLUSION :**

### **A. I challenge each one of you and myself as well, latch one to something bigger than yourself.**

1. Make it something bigger than those things that will probably work themselves out.
2. Make it something that will advance God's kingdom and His righteousness.
3. Dream a dream for God that is worthy of God.

### **B. Pray about that desire for God every day without fail.**

1. Knock on God's door unceasingly.
2. Be like the neighbor who would not go away and like the widow who would not cease.
3. Your persistence does not irritate God.
  - a. Jesus urges it.
  - b. It demonstrates your faith.

### **C. Identify one soul you want brought to Christ.**

1. Anyone ... Family, friend, neighbor **or** even a name out of the phone book.
2. Pray intently for that person by name ever single day without fail.  
\* **That's how some of you came to be in Christ today.** ( mother prayed, etc. )
3. Invite other brethren to join you in your prayers for that person.
4. Stick with it as many years as it takes.

## **INVITATION :**

**Before you can be a prayer warrior,  
you must enlist in God's army.**