



Grace News

Super-Size Me!

Walk into just about any fast food establishment and the person taking your order will probably ask you if you want your meal super-sized; or something along those lines. Sit down at any chain restaurant and you will receive a plate of food that could easily feed two, if not three. Food portions in this country have steadily grown over the years and so too have our collective waistlines!

Getting super-sized at a restaurant is probably not a good idea for anyone, but this month I want to propose an area of our Christian lives that desperately needs to be super-sized. I be-

"Where is God in that?"

lieve that far too many Christians, and thus far too many churches, are completely deficient in the size of their prayers. We need to be super-sized immediately!

I recently challenged my church to write down ten "impossible" prayers and set about the business of praying for the fulfillment of those requests. I think it was a good idea in the respect of getting our church to realize just how big our God is, but I think I need to change the terminology. I don't like using the word impossible, when the point of praying big is because nothing is impossible with God. Maybe I need to change

it to Super-Sized Prayers or God-Sized Prayers. I'll have to work on that.

The trouble with this idea is that most Christians are under the impression that God is like them - meaning He operates in human terms and on human levels. In other words, if we cannot figure out a natural way for our prayer to be answered, it is senseless to pray. For example, when your finances are tight you will have a tendency to pray for answers that you can see or imagine, like getting a raise at work or being approved for a loan. Can I ask a question? Where is God in that? Why does God even need to be involved

when you have it all figured out? Prayers like that are insulting to God! How small do you think He is to even go down that road? Yet I believe this is the plight of most Christians today.

In **Mark 9:14-29** we have the account of a demonized boy. Jesus' disciples were not able to drive the evil spirit out and the boy's father came to Jesus asking for help. In doing so, the father says to Jesus, "***If You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!***" Jesus responds, "***If You can! All things are possible to him who believes.***"

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Memorial Day

I know that most Americans simply view Memorial Day as an opportunity to grill some hot dogs and burgers, but it is more than just a holiday that kicks off summer. Memorial Day is a time to remember those who sacrificed everything so that you and I may live in freedom in this great country. It is a time to be thankful.

I would suggest that you take it

a step further and be thankful because these same ultimate sacrifices allow you and I the freedom to worship God openly and without fear of the government dictating what you can believe, or dictating to you if it legal to own a Bible.

So take at least a moment, between the food, fun, and enjoyment of friends and family, and remember the sacrifices made; and thank God!

Super-Size Me! (continued)

This is the typical attitude most Christians have in regards to God and His power. In our minds we far too often pray “IF” concerning God’s ability to handle our situation; meaning we truly do not believe that God is able. At times like these we have a serious lack of faith and an insufficient understanding of God’s Word. Our faith and our prayers need to be super-sized.

I will go so far as to say that more often than not we are living in defeat and are experiencing far less than God desires for us due to our lack of faith and belief. We have placed God in a box and the size of the box represents our level of faith. Some Christians have God in a 12-inch by 12-inch box, some have Him in a 12-foot by 12-foot box, and some have Him in a 12-mile

“Don’t try to figure out how God will answer your prayer.”

by 12-mile box. But it is still a box; and any sized box is sin! Any limitations you place on God violates what God’s Word says about Him. God has absolutely no limits! He is infinite in power! He is infinite in knowledge and wisdom! He is infinite in ability! He is infinite in love and compassion! He is infinite in being able to handle ALL the issues you face! The only limitations God has in your life are those you place on Him!

Sometimes God will overrule your level of faith and belief, and take care of your issue anyway, but many times He will allow you to needlessly suffer until you learn more of Him. We desperately need to super-size our faith, and one way to do that is to super-size our prayers. Stop being so safe with your prayer life! Stop asking God to take care of your issues as if you are interrupting His day! God wants us to come to Him in boldness! **Hebrews 4:16** says, **“Let us therefore come**

boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (KJV).

Do you have a need? Go to God with boldness! Don’t stop to think of the reasons you don’t deserve an answer to your prayer; don’t try to figure out how God will answer your prayer; and don’t waver in your faith and your belief that God will answer your prayer. Get super-sized!

But maybe you just aren’t there yet. Maybe you have lived in a certain level of unbelief for so long that you think this is all there is. Your experience is telling you God has limits; at least in your life. If this is you then you either believe God is not powerful enough to take care of your issue, or you believe He is not willing to take care of your issue, or you believe that He is not concerned enough or compassionate enough about you to take care of your issue. Any way you look at it you lack belief about some aspect of God’s character.

You will have to begin where the demonized boy’s father began: He says to Jesus in **Mark 9:24**, **“I do believe; help my unbelief.”** Start there. Start by praying to God to help your unbelief—and you will have to admit that you are living in unbelief to genuinely make that request, so you may want to start with, “Lord, forgive my unbelief.” If you are sincere, and if you truly desire to know the Lord and to know His unlimited power in your life, He will answer that request. He will show you that He is all-powerful; abundantly powerful enough to handle any issue you face. He will show you that He loves you with an everlasting love, and that He is willing to help you with the issues you face. He will show you that His compassion for you never fails, and that He is infinitely concerned about the issues you face. But it all starts with your willingness to repent and believe.

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Grace Calendar

Praise & Prayer is scheduled for Friday, May 9th at 7:00 p.m. We meet at Dick & Jean’s home.

Saturday, May 17th at 9:30 a.m. will be our next monthly Ladies Meetings. Meet at Jean’s home.

Monday night Bible study at Chuck & Judy’s home at 6:30 p.m. each week.

Wednesday night Bible study at Pastor Al & Connie’s home at 6:30 p.m. on the Book of Isaiah.

Saturday evening worship service. 6:00 p.m. for coffee and fellowship, 6:30 p.m. for worship and testimony, and about 7:15 for adult and children’s church.

Grace Church Happenings

Grace Church 3rd Anniversary

On Saturday evening, May 17th, we will celebrate our third year as a church! God has brought us a long way since that very first meeting in Pastor Al & Connie's living room.

We will enjoy a cookout fellowship at 5:00 p.m. and then enjoy a great service together at our normal time of 6:30 p.m. Bring a dessert or side dish; we will be grilling burgers and brats. Please join us!

Building & Property Update

We have had a lot of activity concerning the building this month. See below for more details.

Quarterly Church Celebration Recap

On Sunday, April 27th we held our quarterly celebration of what God has done for Grace Church. Although several of our regulars were not able to attend for various reasons we still had a good crowd, a wonderful discussion, and a great fellowship luncheon.

Our church treasurer, Ginny Copeland read the first quarter's financial report and fielded any questions from the group. God continues to bless as we continue to follow His leading. We finished the quarter in the black again and will continue to allow the Lord to direct us in the use of the funds He so graciously supplies. I once again thank all of you who continue to prayerfully and financially support this ministry.

We looked at the current drawings for the proposed church building and Pastor Al gave us an update as to what the elders and deacons are doing in this process. The county is requiring a complete set of drawings before we will be able to petition for zoning approval and planning commission approval. We are working on securing a supplier/contractor so those drawings can be completed. We will move as judiciously as we are able in this process and trust that God's timing will allow us to break ground this year—but we will also be content with His timing.

Pastor Al led us through a discussion of Revelation 2-3 where Jesus addresses the seven churches. We learned many things including the following:

- Ephesus (2:1-7) - You can easily fall into the trap of ministry activity without having the proper love for the Lord. Jesus commended their ministry but reprimanded them for leaving their first love; their love of Jesus Christ. We must be careful to keep our

focus and devotion on the Lord.

- Smyrna (2:8-11) - By all outward appearances this church was poor and intensely persecuted, but the Lord only have commendation for them. We must be faithful regardless of outward circumstances.
- Pergamum (2:12-17) - This church was faithful in dire circumstances but they were also tolerant of sin. All of us are responsible for confronting sin.
- Thyatira (2:18-29) - This was a church that was very active in good deeds, love, faith, service, perseverance, and they were improving in all of these areas. But they also were tolerant of sin, especially the sin of one particular woman named Jezebel. We must be careful to confront and deal with those who will not repent.
- Sardis (3:1-6) - This church never followed through with what they had been taught. Only a few in the church were pure. We must always show immediate obedience to God's Word.
- Philadelphia (3:7-13) - Jesus only had commendation for this church because they kept His Word. We must also keep His Word in all things.
- Laodicea (3:14-22) - Jesus only had reprimand for this church because they were like the world. They were not overtly sinful but they were not overtly holy either—they were lukewarm, and thus useless to God. We must be careful to not allow the world to get into the mindset of the church.

Upcoming Sermon Titles

The mission of Grace Church is "To know Jesus and to make Him known," and so we have embarked on a journey through the Gospel of Matthew to deepen our knowledge of Jesus Christ. Here is the May schedule (subject to change as the Spirit leads):

- May 3rd - A Bold & Unusual Preacher—Part 2 (3:1-12)
- May 10th - This is My beloved Son (3:13-17)
Mother's Day Recognition
- May 17th - A Look Back
Anniversary Service
- May 24th - Defeating Temptation (4:1-11)
Flag Ceremony to honor our veterans who have gone before us and those who are still with us.
- May 31st - God the Preacher (4:12-17)

Please join us, or request a cassette tape of the sermon if interested.

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*"To know Jesus and to make Him
known"*

"We will diligently strive to bring people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, IN ORDER that we can help them grow spiritually, IN ORDER that we can make disciples of Jesus Christ, IN ORDER that we can fulfill the Great Commission of our Lord by reaching the world for Christ."

Super-Size Me! (concluded)

When you super-size your prayer life you will be super-sizing your faith; you will be super-sizing your knowledge and understanding of God's character; and you will be super-sizing your relationship with the Almighty God of the universe! When you become intimate with God you will discover that you are truly free from all that binds you and hinders you in this life. You will begin to understand the vastness of God's power and you will learn to not only believe that your prayers will be answered, you will expect them to be answered.

1 John 5:14-15, says, *"This is the confidence that we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him."*

Aha! Now I got you Al. It says that only the prayers that are according to His will are guaranteed to be answered. How can anyone truly know what God's will is?

I am so glad you asked; because it is high time God's children stopped hiding behind this pitiful excuse for a weak and powerless prayer life. Yes, Only the prayers that are according to God's will are guaranteed to be answered, but why do so many believe that it is not God's will to answer their prayer? Most Christians think God's will is hidden like an Easter egg, with God smiling from on high and saying, "You're getting warmer!" Beloved, God's will is not a mystery! God's will is available and accessible to anyone who desires to know it. God's will is contained in His Word; plain and simple.

Ah, but therein lies the problem. Very few are willing to open the Book long enough to discover all the aspects of God's will. Very few will put in the time and effort to dig through the rich and fertile soil of God's Word to find the treasure contained within. After all, a new episode of CSI is on tonight and I just started the

new John Grishom novel; and it's a real page turner.

And life goes on. And Satan smiles because he knows he has one less person to worry about.

I received an email a while back that said, "Live your life in such a way that when you get out of bed in the morning, Satan shudders and says, 'Oh no, he's (or she's) awake!'"

Beloved, the problem is, Satan has no concern for most Christians because he already has them right where he wants them—so wrapped up in the things of this world and the cares of life that they have no time for God and His Word. And thus, they keep God in a box, their prayer life stays in the realm of human capacity and ability, their faith follows the roller coaster that coincides with their current circumstances, and their spiritual growth and maturity is non-existent or virtually imperceptible.

But it doesn't have to be that way. It is within your control to make the necessary changes, and God will immediately help you when you begin. **James 4:8**, says, *"Draw near to God and He will draw near to you."* And the terrific news about that promise is when you take a you-sized step toward God, He takes a God-sized step toward you!

So shout it with me to the Lord: "Dear God, super-size me!"

Pastor Al

Scripture Memory

This month's challenge is to memorize **1 John 5:3-4** - *"For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is that victory that has overcome the world—our faith."*