

Imagine Greater - Part Three
“Great and Mighty Things”
Pastor Dale Campfield - March 13th, 2011

Intro:

Matt 28:19 *“Go and make disciples of all nations...”*

ECC Process of Discipleship: Making an IMPACT...To Love...To Grow...To Serve

We have 3 priorities – To love...which is expressed in our Sunday morning celebration and connection groups. To grow...which is expressed in our Path to Discipleship. To serve...which is expressed in our daily lives in the places we live, work and play; as well as through the local church. The vision of E.C.C. is to gather together weekly for corporate worship, loving God and each other; then to come together in small Connection Groups for discipleship and fellowship, and are regularly involved in reaching out to others with the love, acceptance, and forgiveness of Jesus Christ through community outreach. To Love...To Grow...To Serve!

Key Verse: Ephesians 3:20 *“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us.”*

As a church, we now have a little over 3 years behind us. 3 years worth of blood, sweat and tears behind us. We have 3 years worth of IMPACT that we’ve made in the community and around the world. I see the past years as a launching pad, launching you into our future, a future where there is GREATER things yet to do! Greater ways to IMPACT our community! Greater ways to walk in the anointing that is upon our church! It’s time to release the gifts given to us by God and IMAGINE GREATER! Greater than ever before! Greater than we have the past 3 years!

I would anticipate that the majority of the congregation represented that morning already have a relationship with Christ. The issue is not if you are going to heaven or not, you are going. The true issue is how great of an IMPACT can you make in your world now for the Kingdom of God. Since we know who the Great I AM is, now we can Imagine Greater! For GREATER is He that is in us than he that is in this world! It’s time to IMAGINE GREATER ways to Impact the World through loving, growing and serving. Love God and each other, Growing to together in small groups and serving the community, state, nation and around the world!

It’s time to IMAGINE GREATER! Beyond What We Can Ask or Imagine...

John 14:12

12 I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things (works) than these, because I am going to the Father.

Jeremiah 33:3

"Call to Me, and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know."

Realize - Jeremiah lived in tough times:

1. Jeremiah was a prophet called by God living in the midst of a sinful nation. Sound familiar?
 - a. He preached to the Jewish nation and its people about their sin but they wouldn't listen to him.
2. He had prophesied that if the Nation of Judah wouldn't turn from their sin and turn back to God, they would fall into the hands of the Babylonians. (Exactly what happened)
3. His message was rejected. People didn't listen.
4. Today, people hear the message of the Gospel but turn a deaf ear and reject the Lord when the Lord has said "Hey! I came that you might have LIFE!"

So Jeremiah prayed and Called out to God.

1. Call= Hebrew "qara" means to "cry out", call aloud, roar, summons, to call together
2. This is a powerful word with a powerful meaning.
3. When we "call" on God, when we "cry out" to God, we are summoning the Power of God in our lives.
 - A. We acknowledge that He alone is God and that we can't accomplish in our own strength all that He is able to accomplish
 - B. Many times, we try to handle our lives under our own power. (I can do it myself today)
 - C. I heard the song the other day "I did it my way... "
 - D. The world wants to do it their way-just like the people of Judah but we need to be doing it God's way
 - E. It's time to rely on Christ, CALL UPON THE LORD so that HE can show us great and mighty things that only He can get the credit for.

The Hebrew word for "call" is the same word that is used in Psalm 147:9, to describe the "cry" of the young ravens for food.

Now, I'll be the first one to admit that we don't have to break down into tears and convulsions every time we pray... sometimes our prayers are calm...quiet...and peaceful... sometimes we meditate without great emotion...but there should be other times.... times when our prayer becomes so urgent that we literally break down in tears... there should be times when our hearts are so broken with whatever the burden is...that perhaps we cannot even mention the words...and we just communicate in groans and cries that

only God could understand.

Let me share with you a few stories of how God has done Great and Mighty things in accordance to the different degrees in which we see Him work. I've found that at the different ages of our lives, we pray differently; the fact is, God can do Great and Mighty things at each of these different levels of our lives.

Examples of Prayers we Pray

Example #1: Childhood Prayers

Illus: Cat, man, car, tree, etc.

Do you believe in prayer? Really believe in prayer. This is how one lady came to believe. This supposedly true story started this way:

One summer Saturday morning, a preacher had a kitten that climbed up a tree in his backyard and then was afraid to come down. He coaxed, offered warm milk, and anything he could think of. The kitty would not come down. The tree was not sturdy enough to climb, so the pastor decided to pull the branch down so he could reach the kitten.

He couldn't pull it by hand so he threw a rope over a high branch of the tree and tied a rope to his car. He slowly drove the car away from the tree. He watched his progress carefully, waiting for just the right time when the tree would be bent over far enough that he could reach the cat or it would jump on its own. He drove farther and farther away. The tree bent further and further toward the ground.

Then it happened. The unexpected! Boooiinng!! The rope broke; the tree flipped back in the opposite direction and one little kitten went sailing out of sight. Not being a "cat person" that would where the story would end if it had been me. The pastor felt terrible. He walked all over the neighborhood asking people if they'd seen a little kitten. No. Nobody had seen either a stray cat or flying kitten. Finally, he gave up and put it out of his mind.

Monday morning, the preacher was at the grocery store and met one of his church members. He happened to look into her shopping cart and was amazed to see cat food. Now this woman made no secret of her dislike for cats. So cat food was the last thing he expected to see her buying. "Why are you buying cat food when you hate cats so much?" She replied, "You won't believe this . . ." and then she proceeded to tell her story.

Her little girl had been begging her for a cat, but she kept refusing. Then a few days before, the child had begged again, so the mom finally told her little girl, "Well, if God gives you a cat, I'll let you keep it." She told her minister, "That was last Saturday. I watched my little girl go out in the yard, get on her knees and ask God for a cat. And really, Pastor, I wouldn't have believed this if I hadn't seen it with my own eyes. Just as she finished praying, a kitten suddenly came flying out of the sky, paws spread out, meowing to high heavens. It landed on all fours right in front of her. That's why I am buying cat food!"

Example #2: Sentimental Prayers

Illus: My H.S. Graduation diploma

When leaving Seattle, I put my wallet with money, credit cards and my H.S. diploma in it, on top of the truck we were driving. I found them, after much prayer, laying alongside the road, with the diploma being last.

Example #3: Healing Prayers

Illus: My dad conquering cancer

I've spent this last week with my dad after getting back a great report that all of the tumors in his body have been eradicated. He's a living testimony of God's healing power and how prayer works.

Example #4: Mountain Prayers

Illus: Church that needed a mountain removed (literally)

A small congregation in the foothills of the Great Smokies built a new sanctuary on a piece of land willed to them by a church member. Ten days before the new church was to open, the local building inspector informed the pastor that the parking lot was inadequate for the size of the building. Until the church doubled the size of the parking lot, they would not be able to use the new sanctuary. Unfortunately, the church with its undersized lot had used every inch of their land except for the mountain against which it had been built. In order to build more parking spaces, they would have to move the mountain out of the back yard.

Undaunted, the pastor announced the next Sunday morning that he would meet that evening with all members who had "mountain moving faith and believed in the power of God." They would hold a prayer session asking God to remove the mountain from the back yard and to somehow provide enough money to have it paved and painted before the scheduled opening dedication service the following week.

At the appointed time, 24 of the congregation's 300 members assembled for prayer. They prayed for nearly three hours. At ten o'clock the pastor said the final "Amen". "We'll open next Sunday as scheduled," he assured everyone. "God has never let us down before, and I believe He will be faithful this time too."

The next morning as he was working in his study there came a loud knock at his door. When he called "come in", a rough looking construction foreman appeared, removing his hard hat as he entered. "Excuse me, Reverend. I'm from Acme Construction Company over in the next county. We're building a huge shopping mall. We need some fill dirt. Would you be willing to sell us a chunk of that mountain behind the church? We'll pay you for the dirt we remove and pave all the exposed area free of charge, if we can have it right away. We can't do anything else until we get the dirt in and allow it to settle properly."

The little church was dedicated the next Sunday as originally planned and there were far more members with "mountain moving faith" who believed in the Power of God on opening Sunday than there had been the previous week!

It's not our great faith in God that can move mountains but faith in a GREAT GOD!!!
Folks, we need to place our Faith in a LIVING GOD who has the power to answer our prayer!!!

Conclusion:

Jeremiah 33:3

"Call to Me, and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know."

There are many verses in the Bible that exhort us to "call upon God"

Psalm 50:15 says, "Call upon me in the day of trouble; and I will deliver you."

Jeremiah 29:12-13 says, "You will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."

Psalm 10:17 says, "You hear, O LORD, the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry."

Isaiah 30:19 "The Lord will hear your crying, and he will comfort you. When he hears you, he will help you."

Psalm 91:15 God Himself says, "He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him."

Do you begin to get the idea that God wants us to cry out to Him?

It's God's desire to show and tell you Great and Mighty things that you've never heard or seen before. He desires to do MORE! So, raise your expectations. Imagine Greater!

And as you do.... You wait, you watch, you'll see!

Coming up...

IMAGINE GREATER Part Four: ____TITLE???