

## You Asked For It...I Can't-But He Can!

II Chronicles 20:1-17

August 18, 2019

Of all the requests that I received for this sermon series, "You Asked For It," I must admit this one was the one that grabbed my attention the most. It was submitted by a person who simply wrote that his father would always tell him,

*"Can'ts never did anything. Success comes in can's."*

That young son took his father's words of wisdom and it has become evident that the "can'ts he has faced in life didn't keep him from the "can's" he has accomplished.

After reading those words of wisdom from a father to a son, *"Can'ts never did anything. Success comes in can's,"* I soon remembered a spiritual secret that was shared with me some 15 years ago. This secret came to me from a paralyzed pastor. He was for many years a successful pastor with a growing family. His wife became seriously ill. He had to juggle changing diapers, running a household and pastoring a church. One day, while changing the diapers and facing the hazmat odor of a diaper pail, with the phone ringing, he cried out to God, "I can't! I can't!"

It was right then that Pastor Dick Woodward felt God speak, "I've been waiting 13 years to hear you say that, now let's see if you can learn this: I can!"

In his agony of life he did learn that spiritual secret, **"I can't-but He can!"**

Dick's wife recovered. His church grew. Dick developed a disease that over 10 years would leave him paralyzed from the neck down. In this time of his life he had all rights to quit and say, "I can't." Instead, he reminded himself of his promise from God, "I can."

Dick developed booklets, sermons and Mini Bible College materials from his voice activated computer that have helped millions.

He has since passed on. However, his spiritual secret continues to enable and strengthen many who find themselves calling out to God, "I can't"

During his final years Dick actually developed 4 spiritual secrets he claimed and lived his life by:

I'm not, but HE is.

And I'm in Him and He is in me.

I can't, but HE can.

And I'm in Him and He is in me.

I don't want to, but HE wants to.

And I'm in Him and He is in me.

I didn't, but HE did.

Because I was in Him and HE was in me.

Most likely there is not a person here who has not at one time or another in their lives said, "I'm not...I can't...I don't want to ... or I didn't..."

We met a powerful and rich leader this morning in our bible reading who echoed these words. His name was Jehosophat. Anybody here ever heard of him? Let me give you a quick bio and encourage you to go back and read more on his life on your own. He was a successful and well loved king. He was a seeker and a follower of God. (II Chronicles 17:4) His heart was devoted to God...single-minded on God. (II Chronicles 17:6) He discovered that the people of God were ignorant of God's word and so he sent a team around his kingdom to teach them the truths of God's word. (II Chronicles 17:7 ff) He didn't follow or fool around with the popular culture religion of Baal. His weakness was that he didn't often look to God in the minor day to day plans. He thought he could handle life on his own. He messed up when he sided with King Ahab of Israel to fight a common enemy. (II Chronicles 18)

We meet him years later when he is facing a 3 on 1 battle. The Moabites, the Ammonites and the Meunites united their forces to make war on Jehosophat of Judah. Jehosophat had one of those, "I can't" moments.

He cries out to God in a "I can't-but He" can prayer. Shaken, scared, not sure of his future, he gathered the people and called them to a fast. There in front of the people Jehosophat prayed. I want us to look at his prayer and discover the "I can't-but He can" truths we can bring into our own "I can't" battles of life.

***"You hold all power and might...no one stands a chance against you."*** vs. 6

Jehosophat realizes what he's up against. It is more than he can handle. He called out to God...YOU can!!!

He then went on in his prayer to remind himself and the people how God had been with their ancestors to give this land to them through Abraham. vs. 7 In other words, God will and does keep His promises. He can!

Jehosophat then prayed his faith and commitment to God. He sought God's favor and vowed they would remain faithful to Him no matter what. They would stand in His presence because they realized, "We can't but He has and will." No matter what...I can't-but He can!

He then confessed to God that they realized they had no power on their own to face such a huge enemy. We can't! vs. 12

He confessed they didn't have a clue as to what they should do. We can't! vs. 12

But!!!!!!

"We're looking to you!" vs.12 "We can't but YOU can!

What we find in Jehosophat's, "I can't-but HE can" prayer is that He committed the situation to God. He sought God's favor and will because his people were God's people.

He acknowledged God's power (HE can) over the impossible scenario he was facing, (I can't).  
He praised God's glory and took comfort in God's past and present promises to His people.  
He professed his complete dependence on God and not himself. "I can't-but He can."

What happened after the "I can't-but He can" prayer?

God spoke to the people through a priest by the name of Jahaziel. How would you like your parents to give you that name?

"Jahaziel!" Maybe "Jaha" for short?

It's not the name that matters, it's the message given to Jaha by God for the people of God in their, "I can't-but HE can" mess. In front of everyone and the king, this young man had the courage to share:

***"Don't be afraid; don't pay any mind to this vandal horde. This is God's war, not yours...Don't be afraid, don't waiver. March out boldly tomorrow---God is with you."*** vss. 15, 17b

I know God gave Jaha the words but what faith and trust it took on his part to speak these words to the people with such a threat at their front door.

"Don't' freak out! You can't-but God can!"

Now go to bed and get a good nights rest and lets get up tomorrow morning and see what happens!

Do you think many got a good nights rest? You know those nights you wake up and your mind starts trying to solve the messes coming at you in your life.

The sun rose the next morning. Jehosophat and his people got up and God did!

God did defeat the mighty armies and gave success to the people. There was probably no one more happy and doing a victory dance than Jaha!

Daily you and I face the "I can't" situations in life. The enemies are bearing down on us. God seeks to speak to us that the battle is not ours. The mess is His. We live in a culture where we daily battle temptation, pressures and "rulers" of our lives. It seems others unite to gang up on us and we are "shaken" or freaking out.

Like Jehosophat, we need to stop and be reminded that the battle is not ours alone.

We are to recognize our human limitations of "I can't" and allow God's strength "He can" to work through our fears and weaknesses.

Then, and this is a big then, we are to make sure that we are pursuing God's interests and not just our own selfish interests or desires.

We are to seek God's help in all of our daily struggles in prayer. We are to get prayed up each day we wake up and head out in life.

Sleepless nights become opportunities for prayed-up nights before the sun rises on the horizon beginning a new day.

Jesus spoke to his followers these words of His power over this world when he told them:

***"You're tied down to the mundane; (I can'ts)  
I'm in touch with what is beyond your horizons. (He can)  
You live in terms of what you see and touch. (I can't)  
I'm living on other terms...(He can)"*** (John 8:23 Message)

When you walk out to the ocean and look out over the horizon, you can only see so far. Imagine seeing beyond the horizon to the next land over. Jesus sees beyond our horizons. We are to trust His vision and plan.

Jesus can take our biggest "I can't" mess and turn it into a great (HE can) message!

We don't know what to do but we trust God can and does!

James, a disciple of Jesus, wrote about humility, (I can't) and trusting God's power, (He can) with this word:

**"Humble yourselves before the Lord, (prayer) and HE will lift you up."** (James 4:10)

Our worth and ability comes from God alone. To be humble involves working with his power according to his guidance.

The Apostle Paul understood this in all the messes God pulled him through when he shared:

**"For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose."** (Philippians 2:13 NIV)

God has not left us alone in our struggles, our messes in life. He sees and knows what's on our horizon before we do. He desires us to humble our hearts and come to him in prayer and praise. In humility we pray, "I can't" and in praise we celebrate, "He can!"

It doesn't matter who we are or are not. It doesn't matter what we do or don't do in life. It doesn't matter what we are capable of doing or can't do.

What matters is praising God for WHO He is and trusting Him to do His perfect will for us.

We trust Him to take our messes and give us HIS message.

When we ignore or forget God our "can'ts" can and we are defeated in life.

However, when we humble ourselves and cry out to God, "I can't-but He can," we find His presence is with us and will see us thru the struggles we face in our lives.

Practice each day praying this prayer of trust in God:

"I can't-but HE can because I am in Him and He is with me."

