

Exceeding the Limit Part 4

This is the final message in our Exceeding the Limit series. We have been talking about removing things that limit the blessing of God in our lives. We made the point that God is an unlimited God and he desires to do more in us, through us and for us than we can imagine. The King James Version of Ephesians 3 says, **“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”** Ephesians 3:20-21 God wants to bless us. **“No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly.”** Psalm 84:11

The past three Sundays we read the passage from 2 Peter 1 that teaches everything we need to live a godly life is ours if we choose to obey the Lord. The problem is with us. We limit the blessings of God in our life. How? By tolerating sin in our life. By refusing to obey. We said, **Make every effort to get the sin out of your life. Make your obedience immediate.** God cannot and will not bless your sin. Stop living in sin and compromise!

How do we limit God’s blessing? I said **We limit the flow of God’s blessing in our lives when we refuse to forgive.** Also, **Inconsistency limits the blessing of God in our lives.** We need to consistently and faithfully obey God and live for him. Don’t let sin or compromise rob you of the blessings of God.

Last Sunday we focused on this passage from 1 Peter 3:8. **“Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. For, ‘Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech. He must turn from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.’”** 1 Peter 3:8-12

We said then **How we treat one another effects the blessing of God in our lives.** You can’t mistreat one another and expect the blessings of God in your life. We are to love one another and live in harmony. We are to turn from evil and do good. If we do, God is attentive to our prayers, but disobeying God and his Word means the Lord is against us.

Last Sunday I said **Get your words, your heart, your thoughts, and your actions in**

agreement with God's word and His will. We talked about Joshua as he faced the walled city of Jericho. God told him to obey all of God's word. Don't turn from it to the right or to the left. Don't let this Book depart from your mouth. Meditate on it day and night and do everything written in it, then let your speech match your lifestyle. Let your talk match your walk. God told Joshua if he would do those things, he would be successful wherever he went because the Lord would go with him. With that summary let me add a couple of things we need to do to remove those self-imposed limits and experience all God has for us.

We need to increase our faith. Our life with God, our life in Christ, is a spiritual life of faith. The bible says, **“And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.” Hebrews 11:6.**

Do you believe he exists? Do you believe he is who he says he is? Start with believing in God and then believe what he declares about himself in his word. This passage declares **God is a rewarder.** We believe he exists and he rewards those who diligently, earnestly seek him. And with what does God reward his people? **He rewards us with himself!** We seek him and we find him, the Way, the Truth and the Life, our Savior and Redeemer. We find him and he forgives our sins and we are made complete, whole, in him. It is by faith that we come to him and it is because of our faith he rewards us with himself.

Everything we need to live a godly, victorious life is found in Him and by faith we receive it. It's this wonderful cycle. He wants to reward us with Himself and with every spiritual blessing. By faith I seek him and the more I seek him the more I trust him and the more my faith increases. The more faith I have the more I trust him, the more I trust him the more I seek him and the more I seek him the more of him I find, which increases my faith. The unlimited God invites us to know him as He reveals himself to us in Christ Jesus. He invites us to come participate in this unlimited life by faith. I want to exceed those self-imposed limits in my life and we do that by faith. I need more faith! How do I increase my faith? What does the bible say?

Romans 12:3 tells us that each one of us has been given a measure of faith. **“...in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.” Romans 12:3.** You already have a measure of faith. But how do we increase our faith? Remember faith is one of those qualities mentioned in the passage in 2 Peter 1. In fact, it was the first one mentioned. Remember, “add

to your faith, goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, love.” Peter said we were to possess these qualities in increasing measure. Our faith should be, must be, growing in increasing measure. So what causes our faith to grow?

The bible says **“Faith comes from hearing the message and the message is heard through the word of Christ.” Romans 10:17.** This is the key: We increase our faith by reading, studying and believing God’s word. Need more faith? Read and obey God’s word. What did we say last Sunday? Read it, hide it in your heart and mind. Know what it says and more importantly, do what it says. Learn what he requires of you. “Whoever would love life and see good days must...” Know God’s word and live by God’s word! That will increase your faith.

It keeps coming back to knowing and obeying God’s word, doesn’t it? “Is it really that simple? Not just that knowing God’s word will increase my faith but that knowing God’s word and obeying it is the key to living this unlimited life God has for me?” Jesus said, **“Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father and I too will love him and show myself to him.” John 14:21.** This is the key. Then Jesus said, **“If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching.” John 14:23-24.** Know his word and obey it. You’ll increase your faith and you will exceed those self-imposed limits.

Secondly, to exceed the limit we need to **Increase our vision.** We need to extend our vision beyond ourselves. As we increase our faith we can extend our vision beyond our natural limits. You see God has bigger plans than we can imagine. Remember Ephesians 3:20, “He is able to do exceeding abundantly, immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine.” That is beyond what I can see. If I can’t imagine it, I can’t see it, and yet by faith I begin to see some things I can’t see any other way. Go back to our passage in 2 Peter 1. Each Sunday in the past three weeks I stopped at verse 8 - **“For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 2 Peter 1:8** But look at verse 9. **“But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins.” 2 Peter 1:9** King James Version says “he is blind and cannot see afar off”. We can’t see beyond ourselves and this moment. Those things we’ve allowed in our life that are displeasing to God

have blinded us. We have forgotten he has cleansed us from our sins. We have gone back to living like we did before we met Jesus because we haven't been possessing these qualities in increasing measure. We haven't been growing in faith, in love, in perseverance, in self control, in knowledge. We can't see beyond the self-imposed limits of our low vision.

God wants us to have a greater vision. He wants us to see beyond temporal things to the things of the Spirit, things that are eternal. He wants us to see life from God's perspective, to see that he has bigger plans for you than what you can see. His plan for you is tied to his plans for the kingdom of God, his plans for the church, his plans for the next generation, his plans for eternity. They are bigger and better than what you imagine if you will trust Him and obey him and his word! Open your eyes! Check your vision. Don't be blinded or seduced by sin. Don't be blinded by some temporary temptation or distraction. See beyond the limits. Increase your vision. Start seeing with eyes of faith!

I wish I could communicate to you what I feel in my heart and spirit today. God delights in giving good gifts to his children. He doesn't want to withhold good things from us, but we turn our back to him and to his blessing. We limit what God can do in our lives because of our sin and compromise, because of our unforgiveness and our lack of faith. We limit what he can do because we refuse to cooperate. We limit what he can do because our vision is so small, so limited, so nearsighted. We live for today, for what we can get, with no thought of eternity, with no thought of the consequences we will have to live with. We need to surrender to the Lord and begin to live for him, faithfully, consistently, refusing to tolerate those self-imposed limits any longer! God has so much more for you to experience. Believe me. Believe Him. Stop limiting what God wants to do.

Let me quickly read you a story from the Old Testament that illustrates what I'm trying to say. **2 Kings 4:1-7**.

Go get empty jars and don't get just a few. She didn't know what he was going to do with the jars. She had already told him all she had in her house was a little bit of oil. Nothing else. If he had said "Here is what is going to happen. God is going to start filling jars with oil. He will fill as many jars as you have to pour into and you will be able to sell the oil and make as much money as you need with plenty left over." What would have happened? She would have exceeded the limits. She would have increased her capacity for receiving from God by enlarging and extending and increasing her vision. She would have been telling those sons "go get more

jars. This isn't enough. Get bigger jars. Get anything that will hold oil. Don't you get it? An unlimited God with an unlimited capacity for giving says he is getting ready to pour out oil at our house."

What I'm telling you is that God wants to pour the oil of his blessing on your life but all these things we've been talking about these past few Sundays have limited your capacity for receiving. Just like the widow lady limited how much oil she could have by her limited vision and faith, we limit the blessings of God by our lack of faith, by our limited vision, by our sin and compromise and all the things we've been talking about. **"Trust God, obey God and go get more jars!"** God wants to exceed the limits in your life. Are you ready? Are you willing to surrender to Him, to obey Him, to live for Him, to cooperate with his plans for your life?

"But I didn't know God wanted to bless my life. I didn't know God's plan." That's what I've been trying to tell you. We don't always know the plan ahead of time because the righteous live by faith. We simply have to believe by faith that he is the rewarder of those who believe and trust him and obey him. It is a walk of faith and obedience but it is a blessed life.

Don't you think it's time you stopped limiting God and his blessing in your life? Don't you think it's time you stopped limiting your life by your sin and compromise, by your unforgiveness of others, by your limited faith and vision. Start seeing with eyes of faith. Start believing what God says and start living in obedience. Come on. God has more for you. God wants to exceed those self imposed limits. Kick the limits out of your life. Say yes to God and then go get more jars and allow God to pour his blessing into your life!