



Bargaining with God

By Bryan Trotter on September 28, 2021

TODAY'S READING: John 11

We have all done it before...bargained with God. You have probably said, "God, if you will _____ then I will _____." For me, the most common occurrence of bargaining with God was in college. My lack of preparation led me to desperation and bargaining with God to pass a test. I confess that it did not work, but it did not stop me from trying over and over again. Truthfully, God had given me the ability to pass my test in the form of abundant time to study. Instead, I spent too much time hanging out with friends, playing video games and dating my girlfriend (soon to be wife). It is a familiar college story.

John 11 has so many applicable teachings for our lives. Jesus' empathy for those who were hurting and his teachings on the resurrection and the life. One part of the story that has always jumped out to me was rolling the stone away. Jesus stands in front of the tomb, a cave, with a stone at the entrance. This was no small stone that was easily moved. It was large and heavy enough take multiple people to roll away. Jesus knew that He would raise Lazarus from the dead, so why didn't Jesus also remove the stone? He created the stone and His power is limitless. With a single word or thought Jesus could have obliterated the stone. This stone teaches us a valuable lesson on ministry.

Jesus could have moved the stone, but the story is not about stone removal. We do not know who moved the stone because they are not listed. These individuals moved the stone away so Jesus could do a miracle and raise Lazarus from the grave. The focus of the story is Jesus bringing a dead man back to life. Here is a lesson we can learn: *God will not do supernaturally that which He has empowered you to do naturally.* The people gathered around the tomb were able to move the stone naturally so Jesus could do the supernatural. This happens on other occasions in the New Testament. Think about the feeding of the five thousand. An unknown boy brings the fish and loaves so Jesus can do the miracle. The focus always comes back to Jesus so He may be exalted.

God has enabled you to do the natural so He can do the supernatural. The boy in John 6 did not know his lunch would be turned into a miracle. Those gathered around the tomb of Lazarus did not wake up that morning thinking they would experience a dead man walking out of a tomb. Every day we have the opportunity to be part of what God is doing. God has called us to be part of His work. We only have to be open and available.

Today, spend some time in prayer for openness and boldness to join God where He is working.

TOMORROW'S READING: John 12

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