



Can You Imagine, Luke 11:5-10

Can You Imagine

- Albert Einstein in *Cosmic Religion: With Other Opinions and Aphorisms* (1931), “I believe in intuition and inspiration. ... At times I feel certain I am right while not knowing the reason. When the eclipse of 1919 confirmed my intuition, I was not in the least surprised. In fact, I would have been astonished had it turned out otherwise. Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited, whereas imagination embraces the entire world, stimulating progress, giving birth to evolution. It is, strictly speaking, a real factor in scientific research.”

Can You Imagine

- Brandon J. O'Brien, "Faith is an act of the imagination. And a healthy, vibrant imagination is crucial to the Christian life."
- You will likely disagree with this statement if you associate the imagination with delusion, fantasy, and/or make believe
- After all, we follow the One whose name is Truth, so we must be committed completely and unwaveringly to the truth, not led astray by fantasy and illusion
- The trustworthiness of the Christian message is grounded in historical fact—the very real event of Jesus' resurrection from the dead

Can You Imagine

- The whole of Christianity hangs on whether or not there truly was a first Easter morning
 - Paul stated in **1st Corinthians 15:17-19 NLT**, "If Christ has not been raised... we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world."
 - Fortunately, we have solid historical reasons to trust the testimony of the Gospel writers that Jesus was indeed raised from the dead
 - That means our faith is reasonable, grounded firmly in fact and reality of Scripture

Can You Imagine

- But does your Christian life depend solely upon what you have experienced or can prove?
 - The reasonableness of our faith has been a major preoccupation for many Christians, especially in America, for the last few generations
 - Apologists and theologians have worked hard to amass scientific and historical evidence that supports Christian claims to truth
 - This research is geared to provide intellectual support for Christian belief, and it is important work, but is there another side of faith that needs to be present?

Can You Imagine

- Is there a place for sacred imagination in our Christian walk?
- We are accustomed to trusting our senses to tell us what is true, so we need an accurate definition of the word “*imagine*”
 - The dictionary defines imagination as “*the faculty or action of forming new ideas, or images or concepts of external objects not present to the senses.*”
- If imagination is the capacity to visualize, to be confident in or hopeful of a reality that contradicts our experience, then it refuses to let our senses determine the limits of what is possible

Can You Imagine

- This is why faith is an act of the imagination
 - **Hebrews 11:1 NIV**, “Now faith is confidence in what we hope for (*have not seen or experienced*) and assurance (*know it is true*) about what we do not see.”
 - Faith requires us to envision and inhabit a world that we cannot perceive with our senses—a world where an invisible God lovingly maintains his creation, where the Son of God became a human child, died on a cross to save sinners, and is seated at the right hand of God in glory

Can You Imagine

- From beginning to end, the Bible calls us to adopt a sanctified imagination, grounded in Scripture, that helps us look beyond our own experience
 - Noah build an ark in desert because a flood is coming
 - Moses you will lead Israel out of Egypt
 - David you are now the anointed king at 16 with Saul still on the throne
 - Jesus telling His disciples, “I will rise again on the third day.”
- Jesus called His listeners and us today to use our sanctified imaginations to understand His Kingdom as defined by His parables

Scripture

- **Luke 11:5-8 NIV**, “5 Then Jesus said to them, “Suppose you have a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; 6 a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have no food to offer him.’ 7 And suppose the one inside answers, ‘Don’t bother me. The door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed. I can’t get up and give you anything.’ 8 I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity (*yet to preserve his good name*) he will surely get up and give you as much as you need.”

Can you imagine

- The Model Prayer, **Matthew 6:9-13**
 - 9 Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed (*Holy*) be thy name.
 - 10 Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.
 - 11 Give us this day our daily bread (*needs for the day*).
 - 12 And forgive us our trespasses (*sins*), as we forgive those who trespass (*sin*) against us.
 - 13 And lead us not (*let me not fall*) into temptation but deliver us from evil:
 - For thine (*Yours*) is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Can you imagine

- Now, use your imaginations and think about what questions or concerns the disciples may have had after hearing this?
 - Since God is holy, why would He listen to me or even know or care about me?
 - How in the world am I supposed to know what God's will is?
 - Does God really care about my daily needs?
 - Will God really forgive my sins by just asking in faith?
 - Can I forgive those who have sinned against me?
 - How can He possibly deliver me from evil or the Evil One when I seem to be so weak?

Can you imagine

- The disciples could understand God the Father listening and answering Jesus' prayers, maybe even a godly rabbi or priest, but I am nowhere close to the purity and holiness of Jesus
 - I am so undeserving
- Jesus uses a common understanding at that time to emphasize the truth of this model prayer for all disciples of Jesus Christ

The understanding of this parable and the intent Jesus meant is understanding the importance of hospitality in middle Eastern society

- Suppose or Which of you = Another way of translating this is *“Can you imagine...”*
- Jesus is going to tell a parable that demands a negative response like, *“Of course not!”*, *“That would be silly!”*, *“No one would do that!”*
 - “Can you imagine having a donkey fall into a pit and not immediately pulling it out, even on the Sabbath? (Luke 14:5)
 - “Can you imagine having a hundred sheep, losing one of them, and not going after the one lost? (Luke 15:4)

The understanding of this parable and the intent Jesus meant is understanding the importance of hospitality in middle Eastern society

- In Middle Eastern culture, hospitality is **EVERYTHING**
 - Hospitality = the friendly and generous reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or strangers
 - Biblically, it is treating strangers and friends alike, welcoming one another into our homes and lives, Seen as a sacred duty
 - When you had a visitor to your house, culture demanded that you **MUST** serve your guest, and they **MUST** eat, even if they weren't hungry
 - They believe a guest is a person sent to them from god thus hospitality is a sacred duty

The understanding of this parable and the intent Jesus meant is understanding the importance of hospitality in middle Eastern society

- Your guests became a part of your family, under your protection, and treated with honor and respect
- Culture demanded you provide a complete unbroken loaf for each person, no broken or left-over pieces
- Hospitality was not just the obligation of the *“host”*, but of the entire *village*
- A host would say to their guest, *“You have honored our village with your visit”* and never, *“You have honored me”*

The understanding of this parable and the intent Jesus meant is understanding the importance of hospitality in middle Eastern society

- It would bring shame and dishonor to the entire village if the host refused or were unable to offer hospitality to their guests
- In going to his neighbor, the host is asking the sleeper to fulfill his duty to the guest of the village
- To American ears the sleeper is making a good point, but the point of this parable is just the opposite
- Jesus is saying, “Can you imagine this scenario where a sleeper would actually turn the host away and blame it on the sleeping kids???”
 - They would respond sort of like this

The understanding of this parable and the intent Jesus meant is understanding the importance of hospitality in middle Eastern society

- Jesus' listeners would have just laughed and consider it ridiculous
- **Luke 11:8 NIV**, “8 I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity/persistence (*yet to preserve his good name*) he will surely get up and give you as much as you need (*to protect the honor of himself and the community*).”
 - The sleeper may not get up and give you what is needed out of friendship, but to avoid shame or out of his sense of honor, he will rise and fulfill his obligation to the village
 - It's simple Mid-Eastern hospitality

Using the above parable, why would or does God respond to your prayers?

- Does God respond just to meet your daily needs?
 - Does God respond just because we are friends?
 - Does God respond just because He loves us (*which He does*)?
 - He will hear and respond to your prayers because His honor is at stake – go back to the parable
 - We are part of God's village as Christians and God has given us His Word
- Quoting Psalms 34 in **1st Peter 3:12 NIV**, "For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer"

Ask, Seek, Knock, Find

- **Luke 11:9-10 NLT**, “9 And so I tell you, keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.
 - These verses are tied to the Model Prayer

Ask, Seek, Knock, Find

- Based on the Model Prayer - Ask what?
 - God's will be done in my life as it is in heaven
 - God will supply my needs for the day
 - God will allow me the capacity to forgive myself and others
 - God will forgive my sins
 - God will give me wisdom to identify temptation set before me today and keep me out of my enemy's hands
 - God receive all the glory and honor

Ask, Seek, Knock, Find

- Based on the Model Prayer - Seek what?
 - God's will and direction for your life
 - God's peace to accept whatever His hand allows or gives
 - God's mind in every area of life
 - God's honor and His name be glorified in everything of me

Ask, Seek, Knock, Find

- Based on the Model Prayer - Knock on what?
 - Why do we knock on doors?
 - The doors to the Throne room of God
 - The doors to the Wisdom of Scripture
 - With the authority and privilege God has already given you in Christ Jesus
 - **Verse 10**, For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.
- God's promise to you Christian is you will find Him, and when you find Him, everything else falls into place

Can you imagine this morning

- **Verse 13** tells us that God has already given us His greatest gift possible, the Holy Spirit, because of that
 - Can you imagine God being close enough to you to hear our whispered prayers?
 - Can you imagine God responding to you with peace, prosperity of soul, love?
 - Can you imagine God changing you to be more like Him daily?
- **Romans 4:18 NIV**, “18 Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed”

Can you imagine this morning

- **1st Corinthians 2:9 NLT**, “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him.”



Can You Imagine, Luke 11:5-10