

# Our God Can!

Jeremiah 32:1-26; Isaiah 40:28-31

East Berlin Community Church

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## Introduction

- Feeling empowered as we face the COVID-19 pandemic
- Martin Luther's advice on how to practically and spiritually overcome a pandemic
  - *"You ought to think this way; 'Very well, by God's decree, the enemy has sent us poison and deadly offal. Therefore, I shall ask God mercifully to protect us. Then I shall fumigate, help purify the air, administer medicine, and take it. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated and thus perchance infect and pollute others, and so cause their death as a result of my negligence. If God should wish to take me, he will surely find me and I have done what he has expected of me, and so I am not responsible for either my own death or the death of others. If my neighbor needs me, hoover, I shall not avoid place or person, but will go freely.'" — (Luther's letter: "Whether One May Flee from a Deadly Plague")*
- Feeling powerless to stop the plague and return life to normal
- We can face COVID-19 worry-free by actively trusting God, and by learning to live fully in the present, focusing on what God has put on our plate.
- Our faith is only as strong and supportive as the object of faith.
  - Corrie Ten Boom--*"If you look at the world, you will be distressed; If you look at yourself, you will become depressed; But if you look to God, you will find rest!"*
- Focusing on the greatness of our God! The three "omni" attributes:
  - **Omnipotent**—God can do anything that is an object of His power
  - **Omniscient**—God knows everything fully and completely, both the actual and potential.
  - **Omnipresence**—God is everywhere present in the totality of His being. He knows no spatial limitations.

## Our God Can!

### A. Our God can do ANYTHING He wills!

1. **Limited by His character.** Therefore, God cannot...
  - a. Sin or cause others to sin.
    - James 1:13-- *"Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone."*
  - b. Lie
    - Titus 1:2-- *"in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began."*
  - c. Deny himself.
    - 2 Timothy 2:13--*"if we are faithless, He--that is, God, remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself!"*
2. **Limited by definition.** God cannot do the self-contradictory.
3. God can do one thing just as easy as another.—Isaiah 40:28
  - Isaiah 40:28--*"Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary; His understanding is unsearchable"*

### B. Our struggle with believing that God can do anything as illustrated by Jeremiah— Jeremiah 32:1-26

1. **God's absurd command: Buy real estate.**
  - Jeremiah 32:1-8--*"The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar. For then the king of Babylon's army besieged Jerusalem, and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the prison, which was in the king of Judah's house. For Zedekiah king of Judah had shut him up, saying, 'Why do you prophesy and say, 'Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it; and Zedekiah king of Judah shall not escape from the hand of the Chaldeans, but shall surely be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon, and shall speak with him face to face, and see him eye to eye; then he shall lead Zedekiah to Babylon, and there he shall be until I visit him,' says the LORD; 'though you fight with the Chaldeans, you shall not succeed' '?' And Jeremiah said, 'The word of the LORD came to me, saying, 'Behold, Hanamel the son of Shallum your uncle will come to you, saying, 'Buy my field which is in Anathoth, for the right of redemption is yours to buy it.'" ' Then Hanamel my uncle's son came to me in the court of the prison according to the word of the LORD, and said to me, 'Please buy my field that is in Anathoth, which is in the country of Benjamin; for the right of inheritance is yours, and the redemption yours; buy it for yourself.' Then I knew that this was the word of the LORD."*

2. **Jeremiah obeys.**
  - Jeremiah 32:13-14--*"Then I charged Baruch before them, saying, "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Take these deeds, both this purchase deed which is sealed and this deed which is open, and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may last many days."*
3. **God's Promise: One day they will return to the land.**
  - Jeremiah 32:15-- *"For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land."*
4. **Jeremiah Prayer of faith and "doubt"**
  - a. Begins with extolling God's ability to do anything as seen in creation and the miracles in delivering Israel from Egypt's bondage. Jeremiah 32:17-23
    - Jeremiah 32:17-23---*"Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You. You show lovingkindness to thousands, and repay the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them—the Great, the Mighty God, whose name is the LORD of hosts. You are great in counsel and mighty in work, for your eyes are open to all the ways of the sons of men, to give everyone according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings. You have set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, to this day, and in Israel and among other men; and You have made Yourself a name, as it is this day. You have brought Your people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs and wonders, with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, and with great terror; You have given them this land, of which You swore to their fathers to give them—"a land flowing with milk and honey."* And they came in and took possession of it, but they have not obeyed Your voice or walked in Your law. They have done nothing of all that You commanded them to do; therefore You have caused all this calamity to come upon them."
    - Exodus 9:15-- --*"Now if I had stretched out My hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, then you would have been cut off from the earth. But indeed for this purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My Name may be declared in all the earth."*
  - b. But in the face of present danger, Jeremiah doubts God's ability to fulfill His promise.
    - Jeremiah 32:24-25--*"Look, the siege mounds! They have come to the city to take it; and the city has been given into the hand of the Chaldeans who fight against it, because of the sword and famine and pestilence. What You have spoken has happened; there You see it! And You have said to me, O Lord GOD, "Buy the field for money, and take witnesses!"—yet the city has been given into the hand of the Chaldeans.' "*
5. **God's rhetorical question in response to Jeremiah's prayer: Is anything too hard for Me?**
  - Jeremiah 32:26-27--*"Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying, "Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?"*

## C. Our God desires to channel His power through us—Isaiah 40:28-31

- Isaiah 40:28-31--*"Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength. Even the youth shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall. But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles; They shall run and not be weary; They shall walk and not faint."*
1. **The KEY: Learning to "wait" upon the Lord!**
  2. **God's ENERGY CONSERVATION PROGRAM.**
  3. **Paul's "powerless" moments and God's strength in his weakness. 2 Corinthians 12:1-10**
    - a. Paul's "out-of-body" experience—2 Corinthians 12:2-4
      - 2 Corinthians 12:2-4--*"I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body, I do not know, God knows—how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."*
    - b. Paul's "thorn in the flesh" which kept him weak—2 Corinthians 12:7
      - 2 Corinthians 12:7--*"Lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure."*
      - Romans 7:22-24-- *"For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?"*
    - c. God promises...
      - 1) Sufficient grace to help in our time of need.—2 Corinthians 12:9
        - 2 Corinthians 12:9--*"My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness!"*
      - 2) His power is perfected in our weakness—2 Corinthians 12:10
        - 2 Corinthians 12:10--*"Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake. FOR WHEN I AM WEAK, THEN I AM STRONG!"*
      - 3) *"To do exceedingly, abundantly above what we could ask or think, according to the power that works in us". –Ephesians 3:20*