

Note: The following message will be shared by Reverend Caleb Kim this Sunday, August 30, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. for the congregation of St. Andrew's, Fenelon Falls, and our community on Zoom.

Title: Have Faith in God

In our Gospel reading, Jesus' disciples were amazed to discover that the fig tree they had seen just the day before had withered from its roots. Peter remembered what Jesus had said to the tree and wanted to know how He had done it. Jesus answered, "Have faith in God. Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours" (Mark 11:22–24). Here, Jesus teaches us the deep relationship between prayer and divine power. Today, I want us to reflect together on mountain-moving faith and persistent and active prayer.

First, Jesus invites us to speak directly to the mountains in our lives—commanding them lifted up and thrown into the sea. Speaking to a mountain and asking it to move is an extraordinary thing for us to imagine. In human terms, moving a mountain requires immense time, labor, and technology.

Shortly before the COVID-19 pandemic, my family and I traveled to Zhangjiajie, in the Hunan province of China. We brought my mother along for that trip while visiting our homeland of South Korea. For that special family adventure, we joined a two-day excursion to explore Zhangjiajie National Forest Park. This park is China's first national park; it is a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site; and one of the massive sandstone pillars served as the inspiration for the Hallelujah Mountains in the movie Avatar.

To visit one of the main sites, the Stairway to Heaven on Tianzi Mountain, we rode the world's longest cable car. It runs from the city center straight to the summit, spanning a distance of 7,455 meters. To descend to the mid-level of the mountain, visitors choose between two paths; taking twelve extremely steep escalators built directly inside mountain tunnels—each section about 100 meters long—or climbing down 999 stone steps built along the mountainside. From the Tianmen Cave Square, shuttle buses carry passengers down to the base along a cliffside road featuring ninety-nine sharp, winding hairpin bends.

It is difficult to visualize such massive human-made infrastructure carved into mountains. Can we picture tunneling deep inside mountain caves to install high-powered escalators? Can we imagine paving ninety-nine steep curves along a winding mountainside? China's population is roughly 1.4 billion, and its national engineering projects demonstrate tremendous human capability. With heavy machinery, vast labor, and abundant resources, humanity can physically alter a mountain. Yet, if we simply speak to a mountain and tell it to throw itself into the sea, humanly speaking, it is impossible. No matter how loudly we shout, the mountain will not budge.

What, then, does Jesus mean when He tells us to command the mountain to move? Speaking to the mountain is an expression of our prayer as children of God. It is the act of speaking aloud what we trust God to do. Prayer is the vocalization of our faith. King David declared his belief in this way: "I will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.' Surely He will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence" (Psalm 91:2–3). There is a direct connection between what we declare in faith and how God acts. God fulfills His promises when we trust Him and articulate that confidence in prayer. Do we spend our time talking only about how big our mountains are, or do we declare how big our Almighty God is?

Through prayer, we do not merely hold a conversation with God; we bring our real, specific requests before Him.

Some of us may ask: If God is all-knowing and almighty, why do we need to ask Him for anything at all? It is true that our Heavenly Father knows our needs before we speak of them. As parents, my wife and I often anticipate what our sons need and prepare to provide for them. Yet, there are times we wait for them to ask us directly, so they learn to communicate their desires and trust our love. Similarly, while God knows all things and provides what is best, He delights in being asked by His children. A young child who trusts their parents asks bold questions with confidence. In the same way, we can come to God in prayer with complete honesty. Nothing is too large for God to handle, and nothing is too small for Him to care about. Whether our prayers concern enormous crises or quiet personal needs, God is pleased to hear our voices. He invites us to come to Him at any time just as we are, and speak to Him about everything—including the mountains before us.

Second, Jesus calls us to confront and overcome the doubts within our hearts. Often, the greatest enemy in our journey of faith resides within us. It always begins with fear, worry, anxiety, and unbelief in our thoughts. After directing the disciples to have faith in God, Jesus highlighted the link between faith and answered prayer: “Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours” (Mark 11:24). God does not move the mountains in our spiritual path when we merely complain; God changes the impossible into the possible when we pray with faith.

When Jesus encourages us to pray about everything, He also addresses our underlying struggle with faith. It might seem paradoxical that Jesus speaks of the power of prayer alongside the reality of doubt in our human hearts. We might wonder: Must

we possess flawless, perfect faith for God to hear our requests? If our confidence fluctuates, will the Lord withhold His provision? The gospel answer is an assured no. Even if our faith is as small as a mustard seed, God can move mountains based on our tiny faith (Matthew 17:20).

At the same time, we must actively fight against persistent doubt with the help of the Holy Spirit because we are fragile, imperfect human beings. Whether we realize it or not, when we look at the Scriptures, God takes unbelief very seriously. For instance, in Revelation 21:8, the faithless are listed alongside severe sins that turn hearts away from God. Unbelief is not a minor problem; it is a root issue that separates us from God's full promise.

In our Old Testament reading, we see how God dealt with the doubts of the Israelites. In Exodus, the people of Israel repeatedly struggled to trust Him. In today's sacred text, they were trapped by Pharaoh's powerful army pursuing them from behind while the Red Sea blocked them in front. Finding themselves in a desperate situation where they felt helpless, they fell into complaining against God and doubting His protection. We might be quick to judge their panic and criticize their attitude toward God. However, the Israelites reflect our own human nature. Think about this for a moment: how often do we react the same way when we are surrounded by trouble? If we were in their position, we too might cry out in fear and doubt God's love.

Yet think of how God had already intervened for the people of Israel. He heard their cries in Egypt, delivered them from slavery through ten powerful wonders, and spared their firstborn during the Passover. He guided them with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Later, God provided manna in the wilderness for forty years. They had witnessed extraordinary grace, yet when a new crisis arose, fear paralyzed them once again. In that moment of trial, God continued to show mercy to the people of

Israel and spoke to them through Moses: “Do not be afraid... The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still” (Exodus 14:13–14). And at the edge of the sea, God parted the waters so they could walk across on dry ground.

Have we ever been in a situation like the people of Israel did? I believe that everyone worshipping in this sanctuary as well as those joining us online, has often felt trapped by unmovable challenges. Whatever the size of our difficulties, they weigh heavily on each of us. When we doubt God’s power because of the mountain in front of us, two things happen: our minds wander into anxiety, and our eyes drift away from the Lord toward our circumstances. We lose our focus. This is why God commands us: “Be still.” Being still in God’s presence can be difficult when fear takes over our minds, and our natural instinct is to rush around seeking human solutions. Yet in times of crisis, God calls us to wait and watch what our mighty and merciful God will do. He calls us to remember who is in charge of our spiritual battles and to fix our eyes on Him.

Third, Jesus calls us to move forward—not only in prayer, but also in faithful action toward the mountains in our lives. Remaining still before God and trusting Him does not mean praying to God while sitting passively by. True faith requires us to act in obedience. As the author of Hebrews writes: “Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see” (Hebrews 11:1). According to this scripture, faith is a way of perceiving the circumstances in our lives from God’s point of view. Faith is a way of understanding what takes place through the eyes of God. By faith, we gain spiritual vision, understand what is truly happening, and move forward in the direction God leads.

In today’s Epistle, we meet a cloud of witnesses who did something remarkable from God’s perspective while guided by this divine principle. By faith, Abel offered a pleasing sacrifice. By

faith, Noah built an ark when warned of unseen danger. By faith, Abraham left his homeland without knowing where he was going. By faith, Moses chose to stand with God's people rather than enjoy temporary privileges in Pharaoh's court. By faith, the Israelites crossed the Red Sea on dry land, and by faith, the walls of Jericho fell after seven days of marching. None of these followers of God waited until their condition improved or until they felt comfortable before taking action. Feelings are important, but sometimes they can hinder us from doing what is right. All these faithful believers "were commended for acting based on pure faith" (Hebrews 11:39).

What are the mountains before us today? Every person worshipping here in the sanctuary, as well as those joining us online, carries different burdens. Some of us long for a mountain of physical or emotional healing to be moved. Some of us are striving to overcome addictive habits. Some of us are seeking God's guidance to fulfill a dream or vision. These mountains are not only obstacles for ourselves, but also for our loved ones. How do we move them? I want to quote another teaching of Jesus on mountain-moving prayer from the Sermon on the Mount: "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened" (Matthew 7:7–8).

In the original Greek, these verbs—ask, seek, knock—are in the continuous present tense. This indicates that prayer is an ongoing practice rather than a single event. While committing time to persistent and active prayer requires discipline, it is not a burdensome duty; it is a sacred privilege. Through prayer, we engage in dynamic fellowship with our "Way Maker, Miracle Worker, Promise Keeper and Light in the darkness."

Persistent prayer leads naturally to persistent action alongside God. Let me share a wonderful example of a mountain-moving project prayed, planned, and carried out by Cameron Townsend, founder of Wycliffe Bible Translators. As a young man, he went to Central America to preach the Gospel to unreached people. While ministering to a local tribal one day, his life was changed completely when a man asked him: "If your God is so great, why does He not speak my language?" That single question inspired a lifelong mission to translate God's Word into every native tongue on earth. Think about the time, energy, and sacrifice the Bible translation teams at Wycliffe have invested over the years. Millions of lives have been transformed through this persistent action born out of prayer .

Before I conclude, I want to add one more well-known illustration of mountain-moving faith... I believe that each of us worshipping here today has our own testimony of times when God has moved mountains for us, our loved ones, and our church in the past. Let us pause for a moment to reflect on the abundant blessings God has given over the years. When I look back on my journey and my family's journey through the eyes of faith, I acknowledge that God has done countless wonderful things for us. I believe that God is doing new things among us today, and I anticipate seeing even greater things that God will do for us, our church, and those we have been holding in prayer. Our continued trust in God enables us to be still and experience His loving presence along the way.

Friends, what mountains do we face today? If God delivered the people of Israel at the Red Sea, the same faithful God will guide us through our current challenges. If God provided for that small congregation, He can work powerfully in our church ministry today. In this bright upcoming season, let us declare the favor of the Lord in our daily prayers. Our perspective shapes how we respond to our circumstances. When we have faith in God, continue in persistent and active prayer with the guidance of the

Holy Spirit, and offer our very best before Jesus Christ, the Triune Lord can and will move every mountain—in our congregation, in our personal lives, and in the lives of our loved ones—both today and in all the days ahead.

**In this message, I have been inspired by thoughts and material from various sermons based on Exodus 14:5-16, Mark 11:20-24, and Hebrews 11:1-3, 6, 39.*