

The Garden Service

~~You~~ We Can Do It!!

February 8, 2009

The inspiration for the service today came from Tina Fey's monologue that we saw at the beginning of the service when she hosted SNL and the original title was "You Can Do It". As I was doing research for the message, I found that I was worrying about the economy, my former retirement account, the future of our company and all kinds of problems and responsibilities that I was unsure if I could do. I found in the Bible that Jesus tells us that God is always there and wants to help us. So the new title for the message today is We Can Do It, together with God. What I learned is that there are two qualities that are vital to us in achieving and accomplishing anything in life. Those two things are Faith and Prayer. Now the first of these, Faith, is such that we have faith that God does in fact have a plan for us and that God fully intends for us to achieve success with our lives. What is success? For everyone here there is a different answer. It could be accomplishing something that lies unfinished before us; it can be something very small or routine or it can be one of the most significant challenges that fills us with doubt and fear and may change our lives forever. And it's important to understanding that as we face this challenge that we know that all things work together in our lives for good when we depend on God. And it's when we visualize a successful outcome that we're well on our way to achieving victory.

The bible scripture today comes from the Old Testament and it is part of a fairly famous story that I think most of you have heard before. It's about the confrontation of David and Goliath. It's found in First Samuel the 17th chapter verses 37 thru 40 and David says to King Saul,

*"God has rescued me from the claws of lions and bears and will keep me safe from the hands of this Philistine".
"Alright" Saul answered, "go ahead and fight him and I hope that God will help you."..... So David picked up his shepherd's stick and went to the stream and picked up five smooth rocks and put them in a leather bag then with his sling in hand he went straight toward Goliath.*

Now the history behind the story of David and Goliath is that Goliath a huge Hulk like soldier challenged the Israelites saying "If one of you has the courage to fight me and defeat me, then the battle is over and you win. However, if I beat your soldier, then all of you will be our slaves." We see this today with the enormous financial and environmental problems in the world, when huge company acts irresponsibly or with the abuse of discrimination.

Then one day a shepherd, David, went to King Saul and said "Look, I'll take this guy on" and the king said "What? You're just a shepherd you're not even a soldier" and that's just like what happens to you and me when someone tells us we're not qualified or we don't have the proper credentials and couldn't possibly make the tryout. David's response to King Saul was "I have faith in God That I Can Do It." So Saul without really any other options said "OK go ahead and do it" but Saul didn't have a lot of faith in the outcome, just like some of our friends and loved ones respond negatively and don't have faith in us when we confide in them about our dreams or intimidating challenges we're facing.

As the story continues, Goliath was talking trash to David. David's answer was "Today, God will help me defeat you and everyone here will see that God doesn't need swords or spears to save people. God always wins and will help us defeat you." And then David ran towards Goliath, he put a stone in his sling and began swinging it over his head. When he released the rock it struck Goliath squarely in the forehead, he went down and David was victorious. And we too can be victorious when we start with Faith that God will help us when we go back and get that degree or get recertified or tryout for the team or audition for the lead in school play, find that new job or go for the big sale or even make that next payment when.

Truly, what I gathered from this story was that there was never a question of Faith or doubt in David's mind. In fact the Bible says that David ran towards Goliath fully intending on being successful. That is such an example on how we too run our life. To live our lives with expectancy, that God will help us achieve whatever we want to do. It's vital to our success that we keep our minds on the positive outcome especially when as we work towards something and suddenly things don't go the way that we've planned. One of the things that I've discovered in my life is that sometimes the plans that I have, are not necessary the plans that God has for me and sometimes the timing in achieving those things is not on the schedule I had in mind. We talk about things happening in God's time and they truly do. And the sooner that we can realize that, and not be disappointed, but instead to continue to have the Faith that God is behind us, the more confident and peace filled we will be.

The second tool available to help us is Prayer, and many of you know that I am a firm believer that prayer works. I have seen the result of it in other people's lives and I have personally felt the comfort, confidence and reassurance that comes with prayer. It's when we truly are able to rely upon prayer and turn to God regularly that we can continue to strengthen the Faith that we have and appreciate that God truly believes in us and wants us to succeed.

As I looked back on my life to a time where I felt that I faced an insurmountable challenge and needed help,

one of those times that quickly came to mind was when I was six years old. Some of you know that my mom died when I was six years old and my dad was left to raise three boys each of us about a year and half to two years apart and I was the oldest. Then shortly after that, my Dad's mom died. What I saw in my dad's eyes and what I felt in my heart was any incredibly deep loss of love and support. But something else I saw in my father was Faith and an incredible belief in God. A faith that God would not only help him get through it, but that God would also bring love back into his life. As I grew older I copied that same belief. I too had faith that sometime God would bring someone into my life who would fill that loss and void and provide me with love, nurturing and help to bring me closer to God. As a teenager I continually turned to God through Prayer for reassurance and guidance.

My freshman year at Purdue, three days before classes started in the early morning, our dorm, Cary Quad, serenaded one of the women's dorms with the high hopes that the girls would come out to meet us, we also brought doughnuts as a back-up plan. Eventually, small groups of women began shuffling out of the dorm some out of curiosity, most of them for the doughnuts. As they headed for breakfast I noticed one woman just watching and assessing us and she was by far the most beautiful. As I just stared at her, she impressed me in such a way that I told some of the guys that I was with, that "there was the woman that I as going to marry." Now fortunately, she didn't overhear my prophetic dream or get that creepy, being stalked kind of feeling, otherwise it might have been all over right then. But over time and over God's time we eventually got married and that was over thirty-one years ago. Sandi is a woman who has brought more love and compassion to me and our children than I ever could have imagined and that love more than fills the void that I experienced growing up with out my mommy. So again, I can tell you that through Faith and Prayer, God will bring things before you and will help you make the right things happen. *(when I practiced my message with to Sandi, she said that the dorm counselors had to pound on the girls doors twice and threatened them to go out and listen to the boys sing)*

There will be times of disappointment and difficulty and we will have doubt. But it is vitally important that we continue to keep positive thoughts in our mind and to know that God will get us through it because God already knows that We Can Do It.

It's when those negative thoughts creep in, and they will come in from all kinds of different sources, from the events around the world, from the media, and from people who are your friends and close to you. They will give you pause to doubt. But you can take charge again and tell yourself "I Can Do It" and know that God is always there. Because we've all also experienced a time when someone else believed in us and had confidence in our success and we were able to do it.

And it's important that we enjoy the success of others and to not be envious and to encourage all those around us when given the opportunity. To let them know that they are doing a great job and that they can do it.

Now for the audience participation portion of our service I would like to invite anyone who would like to show us true Faith that They Can Do It by showing us how these Hula Hoops work to come on down and have the resounding vocal support of everyone else who doesn't come here.

So much of our moving forward depends upon us maintaining a positive perspective especially when negative results occur. There was a story of a little boy who loved baseball and one day he was at the baseball field all alone. He had a ball in one hand and a bat in the other and he said, "I am the greatest batter in the world" and he throws the ball up and takes a swing, strike one. He picks up the ball and again says, "I am the greatest batter in the world" and he throws the ball up, takes another swing and misses, strike two. Once again he shouts with confidence, "I am the greatest batter in the world" and while he's saying this he points to the center field fence with his bat. He throws the ball up and we all know what is going to happen, he takes an incredibly powerful swing and he misses, strike three. He looks to the heavens and says "I am the greatest pitcher in the world".

That too is what we need to do. We need to have the confidence that the things that we are achieving are in fact what God has planned for us and occasionally, they are not going to be the things that we have in mind but overall they will be even better. God has a plan for each one of us, wants us to succeed and wants to be closer to us. And as our Faith and Belief in that single premise grows through Prayer, we'll know that We Will Do It".

CLOSE

As we leave here this morning, know that with faith we can begin that first step and through prayer we can continue with confidence and the reassurance that God is with us. Finally, be excited because God has promised that all things are possible and already knows that We Can Do It. Thank you for deciding to be here at the Garden today. I'm very glad you came and have an incredible week with God.

