

“Making the Impossible Possible”

Wanangwa Nyirongo, Preacher

Presbyterian Church in Leonia

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Sunday School Appreciation Day

Genesis 18:1-15 and 21:1-7

Matthew 9:35-10:8

In today's scripture reading, Sarah did not believe that she could have a child in her old age, and the Lord responded, "is anything too wonderful for the lord?" God made something Sarah and Abraham thought was impossible possible. I realized that the impossible is possible, and that through God even I could make it happen. I want to explain this to you using two examples in my recent experiences as a student and as a person.

The first concerns my time in High School. In my first year of High School, I was thrown into a new environment yet again. I had no idea the dynamic would be so different from Middle School to High School. I had an english teacher who I could only describe as an emotionless robot. I won't say her name because some of you may know who she is. Most conversations with her were like talking to a machine. Even the way she graded our essays and papers was like she were a computer. I didn't quite like the class at first for that reason and my grade was nothing to be proud of. I then remembered something that my parents told me. They said that if I learned to adjust to my teacher's methods and understand their point of view, I could get on their good side. I was very sceptical at first because they were asking me to do something I hadn't learned yet. I thought that the only way I could understand her was if I could read her programming. It was very complicated.

One day, I told myself that from then on, I'll do all my work exactly the way she wants me to, on time, sometimes ahead of time, to show her that I was at least trying. I even did all her pop quizzes and flash essays without any complaints and that taught me a valuable lesson. I asked her why her requirements are so strict, and I found out that she doesn't care if our work was perfect, all she wanted to see was that we were putting in maximum effort. As I got to know her more, I started to see her more sarcastic, human side. We would always exchange jokes now and then, until it was time for us to flip the switch and get back to business as usual. I started liking the class more as time passed. The rest of the year went smoothly from then on, and my grade in the class was almost as good as my math grade, which was my best subject. At that point I realized that I had just done something that I didn't think was possible even though it is not the same as Abraham and Sarah's case. I became friends with someone that nearly everyone thought was impossible to reason with or talk to, but all it took was for me to understand her point of view and to put in a little extra effort.

I am very thankful for that teacher because she taught me many valuable lessons. One lesson she taught me was that you can make time for everything. There is time for play and a time for

work, and doing both at the same time will only slow you down. The reason I believe she was constantly in cyborg mode was to teach us that lesson, but of course we were too caught up in our own judgments, and made her life a nightmare. This is why I now sympathize with high school and middle school teachers.

What's happening and has been happening for years in America is, to me, the second scenario in which I see God making the impossible possible. I think that understanding each other is essential for us to grow as a community especially now that there is so much anger and frustration in the atmosphere. I still find it surprising that there are people that don't believe that discrimination and racism still exist in America. But at the same time I can understand that if you are not a black person you might not see the discrimination that happens everyday in the world around you because you are not part of the group that is being frequently targeted.

I did not know that I was a black person until I came to America. I was well aware that my skin color is different from white, hispanic, and asian people but in my eyes everyone was slightly different in one way or another. It was only when I moved here, and experienced what racism was in my first year of middle school, that I realized that I am looked at as someone who is truly different from everyone else. It's very scary and saddening to see over and over, more innocent and mainly black people falling victim to discrimination and worse, when done at the hands of those meant to protect us. I am glad that I came into a church full of very welcoming and loving people, because in times like these, when I question God why the world can be cruel to His people like this, the church becomes my refuge where I am accepted despite the color of my skin. I can only imagine how being born black in America and living with that constant fear feels like. From a young age, black children learn that they are different and that they can easily be a target. They are told that at any moment, if someone decided to use their power to call the authorities for no good reason, their lives could be in danger. But I know that change is not impossible to achieve, like I did with my teacher. No matter how many lives have been robbed, families broken and freedoms stripped away, our spirit will remain strong, and with God on our side, we can make anything possible. In times like these, we all need to stand together and let our voices be heard because something definitely needs to change.

Still, I am happy to have finally graduated from high school but there's a part of me that is still unsatisfied. Mainly because as a sophomore and junior, I always pictured myself walking across a stage with all my friends and family there to cheer me on. I pictured going to prom with my prom date and having the typical senior year. It was all planned out in my head. However there was no senior week, no prom or any trips this year. I had a clear image engraved in my head of what senior year was supposed to be like, because that's what happens every year after all. But, I am overjoyed because of all the love and support that I received from my family, friends and many of you in church. Quarantine has brought us closer together, and I'm glad that I got to spend so much more time with my family than I would have otherwise, before I go off to college. I have been more productive with my school work, and I've really gotten to appreciate going outside to ride my bike with my younger brothers and to exercise more than I did before the pandemic. It has taught me not to take for granted many of the freedoms that we have today.

