

# An Impossible Situation Was Turned Into a Glorious Possibility by the Presence of the Lord Jesus

by T. Austin-Sparks

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*Jesus can turn impossible situations into glorious possibilities through His presence.*

**Scripture:** John 2:1

**Topics:** "Transformation", "Miracles of Jesus"

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## Description

T. Austin-Sparks emphasizes how the presence of the Lord Jesus transforms impossible situations into glorious possibilities, using three New Testament feasts as examples. At the wedding in Cana, Jesus turned water into wine, showcasing His power to change despair into joy. Zacchaeus, a despised tax collector, experienced a radical transformation when Jesus dined with him, illustrating that no one is beyond redemption. Finally, the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead demonstrates Jesus' authority over life and death, affirming that He can bring hope even in the direst circumstances. Each feast serves as a testament to the miraculous work of Jesus in our lives, turning our impossibilities into testimonies of His glory.

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## Transcript

Well, it is very good to be here tonight, and we want to thank our dear friends for inviting us. And what we have just listened to forms a very good background to what I have to say to you.

In thinking about this feast today, and about a little word that I might say to you, there came to my mind three feasts in the New Testament; and every one of them had an unnaturally impossible background. It was an impossible situation naturally in every case. BUT THE CENTRAL FIGURE OF EACH OF THOSE THREE FEASTS WAS THE LORD JESUS. And because He was at the center, what was impossible was made possible. The situation was changed from one of absolute impossibility to one of actuality. I think you are wondering what feasts I am referring to.

Well, one was the marriage at Cana in Galilee. All of you remember that story. There was a marriage feast in Cana of Galilee. Jesus and His disciples were invited. When they got to about the middle of the feast, all the wine failed. I do not know which of all these many dishes is the most important. I do not know which one, if it were to fail would let the whole feast die, and make our friends who provided it feel very

embarrassed. But in that marriage feast at Cana, the wine was the most important thing, and the wine failed. The most important thing of the feast failed. And the mother of Jesus, full of consternation, turned to Him and said, "They have no wine." Well, you remember the rest of the story. That was a naturally impossible situation. Nothing could be done. No one could do anything about it. There it was; all the wine had gone, and the feast was not halfway over.

But Jesus was at the center. That made all the difference. He commanded that they fill the big waterpots with water. Now, those waterpots were not filled with water to drink; they were not there for that purpose. The water had been used up, but not by drinking. It had all been used up in washing the feet of the guests. They were empty. They were quite big vessels. Jesus said, "Fill the waterpots with water." The servants would have been very surprised at this. They would have said, 'We used all the water for washing the feet. Why wash their feet again?' But the mother of Jesus said to the servants, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it." So, they filled the waterpots with water, wondering what this meant and what was going to happen; perhaps wondering if they had to wash all the people's feet a second time. Well, they filled all the pots with water, and you know what happened. Jesus, with His heart lifted to His Father, probably lifted His hand over those waterpots, and the water immediately turned to wine. An impossible situation was turned into a glorious possibility by the Presence of the Lord Jesus. It was so remarkable that the master of the feast said, "The best wine has been kept to the last." It is usually like that when Jesus does anything. We have to say, 'Well, this is better than anything before.'

We leave that one and go to the next feast. It is a feast of a different kind. There was a little man, a little man in every way. Not only in physical stature, but in every other way he was a little man. He was a little man morally and spiritually. Of course, you all know his name. The story is this: When the Romans came and took possession of Palestine, they imposed taxes upon the people. All the people had to pay taxes to Caesar. But there was one difficulty. It is the same difficulty as we have here tonight. It was the language difficulty. The Romans could not speak the Jew's language. What were they to do? The only thing to do was to get some Jews to work for them; some Jews to go and collect these taxes. Now that was something that was a very very low-down sort of thing to do. Everybody despises people who do that sort of thing. People who not only work for an enemy in occupation, but those who take advantage of the opportunity to get a lot for themselves as well. And these men who lent themselves to that kind of thing not only exacted the tax for the Romans, but they put something extra on for themselves, and they made themselves very rich in that way. Therefore, they were the most despised people. They were regarded as the low-down moral people.

Now the little man of whom we are speaking was one of them. He was a little man in every way. You remember the story of Zacchaeus. Great crowds of people were coming and Jesus was with them. Everybody had heard of the wonderful things that Jesus was doing. So the little man thought he would like to see this Jesus. Here was a big crowd, and he, a little man, even by stretching his neck, he could not see Jesus. So he climbed up a tree, and to his surprise, Jesus came out of the crowd and looked up into the tree. And He said, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for I must abide at your house today." Jesus went into his home, and Zacchaeus made a great feast, and called all his friends together. I expect that most of the people were like himself.

Zacchaeus was wonderfully saved that day. If you had asked the people before then, if Zacchaeus could ever become a true Christian, they would say: 'Impossible.' Why? 'Because that little man worships money. That little man thinks everything is a personal advantage. He will do any unkind thing to get something for himself.' You tell me that that man could be saved; that man could be so changed; that he

will say, 'What I have got, I give; everything that I have taken, I will restore.' That was a wonderful feast. When Zacchaeus gave his testimony before all his old friends, it was another impossible situation naturally. But because Jesus was there, the impossible became real.

Now we pass on to our third feast. And if the other two were impossible, this was very much more impossible. We are going to Bethany, the little town of Bethany. There was a lovely home in Bethany with two sisters and a brother, and they loved one another very deeply, and Jesus used to love to go to that home. If ever He could get away from the crowd and from the city, you would find Him at Bethany. But now Jesus is a long way up country, and something quite serious is happening in that little home. The dear brother, Lazarus, is very sick; so sick that it is quite clear he is going to die. I think they were people who were not poor. What we read of that home and those sisters and that brother would say that they did have some means. Therefore, I think that we can conclude that they got the doctor. They paid for all the help that they could get to get that brother well. But nothing made any difference. The brother was sinking to death. And they thought of Jesus, and they sent a messenger swiftly to Jesus. The message he carried was: "He whom Thou lovest is sick."

Jesus received the message. And then the writer of the story says, Now Jesus loved Mary, and Martha, and their brother Lazarus, and yet He did not then respond to their appeal. It says, He stayed where He was for two days, and then He said, 'Let us go, our friend Lazarus sleepeth, our friend Lazarus is dead, but I go that I may awake him out of his sleep.' I think you know the rest of the story. Yes, Lazarus died. Lazarus was put in his grave clothes and put in the tomb. And four days in that country was quite serious. Jesus came. Well, to make the story short, Jesus went out to that tomb. He said, 'Take away the stone from the mouth of the tomb.' They said, 'Lord, Lord, by this time he is decomposed.' Jesus said, 'Did not I say to you, that if you would believe, you should see the glory of God?' Then they took away the stone. And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." And he that was dead, and had been dead for four days, came forth. Then the next chapter tells us they made Jesus a feast. Lazarus sat at the table and Mary sat at the table and Martha, as always, served, BUT THE FEAST WAS FOR JESUS. The feast was made in thanksgiving for the One Who had changed an impossible situation into something so glorious.

Now two things are related to all three of the feasts: One thing was that in every case the situation was naturally impossible. The other thing was that Jesus took hold of the impossibility and turned it upside-down. I think that this feast tonight contains all of those three feasts. Most of us here know something about the disappointments of this life and this world. We tried to find our satisfaction in the wine of this world, and that wine failed us; it let us down. We tried to find our satisfaction in these broken systems, and they failed us. Like the wine in Cana, we were disappointed with this world, and we said, 'This life is impossible.' Then Jesus came in and changed the whole situation for us. We are all enjoying the new wine of the Kingdom tonight. That is the eternal life which Jesus gives. And we all know something about the impossibility of this natural life.

We may think badly of little Zacchaeus, but we are a poor lot ourselves. We are no better than he. We would do just as mean a thing as he. Naturally we are quite impossible people. And if it had been said that we would be entirely changed into a new creation, people would have said, 'No, I do not think so.' But Jesus has done it. He has changed these Zacchaeuses. And we were all dead in trespasses and sins. We were all dead to God. We were as dead as Lazarus. BUT THE LORD JESUS HAS COME INTO OUR LIVES, AND WONDERFULLY RAISED US FROM THE DEAD, AND MADE US TO WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE. All these things are in this feast here. Therefore, this feast is a wonderful testimony to the glory

of the Lord Jesus in our history. Our brother John has told us a little of the impossibility of the situation which the Lord changed. And we all have, I hope I can say all of us here have, a testimony to the wonder-working power of our Lord Jesus. So it is good to have a feast when it is like that. It is not just a social occasion, it is a testimony to the glory of our Lord Jesus.

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