

Mustard Seeds

We have doubts. It can be difficult to trust in the teachings and promises of God. It is even more difficult to do all Jesus has called us to do. We frequently cry out in desperation for God to increase our faith. We tend to forget God has given us all we really need. The smallest amount of faith is enough to make miracles happen.

Luke 17:5-10

The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" He replied, "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you. "Suppose one of you had a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. Would he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, 'Come along now and sit down to eat'? Would he not rather say, 'Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink'? Would he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.' "

Reflections

Now that it is September, school is back in session. Sports, bands, and other activities require us to learn and develop skills. New classes give us a stronger foundation for dealing with the world. Practice develops our skills so we can compete at higher levels, and take on more challenging tasks.

Our human nature teaches us and compels us to do better, to have more. A Masters degree is better than a Bachelors degree. A Doctorate trumps them all. We strive to do better, be better equipped. We hold off doing things until we are fully trained, really ready to face the challenges of our lives. Oh, the things we could do with just a bit more education, a bit more experience, a bit more faith.

Then comes Jesus. All this human wisdom is stood on its head when it comes to that which matters most to all of us: our faith. The

apostles were just like us: 'Give us more of this faith stuff Jesus and we can do more for you'. With one simple line our Savior tells us that it is God who counts; God who gives us exactly as much as we need; to boldly use our faith as it is given to us in big ways.

What ever portion of faith that we have is given to us by a loving God, and we need to know in our hearts it is enough. He cares for us, requiring us to use that faith always and without seeking acclaim.

I think of the youth here at St. John and draw important lessons from them. Through the power of the Holy Spirit they reach out to their friends and draw them to the Lord. Their faith is fresh, exciting and still developing in their journey.

Yet they do not hold back, waiting until they 'get it better' before inviting their friends to join with them and live in God's love.

Watch them, learn from them, tell their story as you *walk across the room* and share God's love with someone in your day. What ever portion of faith that we have is given to us by a loving God, and we need to know in our hearts it is enough. He cares for us, requiring us to use that faith always and without seeking acclaim. And remember with whatever level of faith you think you have, you belong to God through that faith. Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes in his prison poem, Who Am I, "Who am I? They mock me, these lonely questions of mine. Whoever I am thou knowest, O God, I am thine". Begin this fall season knowing that the faith God has given you He gives knowing it is enough for you to do the work He needs you to do in His Kingdom.

— Karl Berland

Readings
Reflections

SEPTEMBER

Readings

Sunday, September 9

Luke 17: 5-6

How can you grow in confidence that the faith God has given you will be enough to let you do His will in the world?

Monday, September 10

Matthew 4: 18:20

Here is the story of 2 men doing their daily work. As fishermen their world was about instinct, knowing where the fish are. Yet Jesus calls Peter and Andrew knowing that they would take on the most powerful leaders of the day. God had given these brothers just enough faith to learn from Jesus, live in His love and then to proclaim Him as Savior to the establishment. How will this story of 2 regular guys encourage you in the faith you have to step forward in His name and do His will?

Tuesday, September 11

Nehemiah: 1-2: 1-10

We don't hear from servants too much these days. But we do have people who have no position of power and influence. We often feel that way about ourselves. Today's reading is about a servant, Nehemiah, the cupbearer to the king. Hearing of the great sorrow of the collapse of Jerusalem, Nehemiah prayed for the strength to ask of his king to let him go to Jerusalem and try to rebuild the city. How can this action by a cupbearer help you find strength to step out of your position to work in God's Kingdom?

Wednesday, September 12

Philippians 2: 1-11

Paul writes this letter to the church at Philippi. Here he describes how Jesus humbled himself and became like a servant (v 7). This image of being a servant is used consistently to describe Jesus. Servants possessed little; no property, no rights. But Christ, as servant, took the least of the gifts of God and walked confidently in the world to fulfill His Father's will. How does this image of Jesus Christ as servant help you fulfill God's role for you?

Thursday, September 13

Psalms 13

Sometimes we face tasks that seem to overwhelm our faith. We go through dark times, feeling abandoned. But the psalmist's words provide us comfort, telling us to 'trust in (God's) unfailing love.' How can prayer to the Lord help you feel cared for through your dark times?

Friday, September 14

Exodus 3: 11-12

Moses did not want the job. He felt unqualified. He questioned if he had enough faith. How does God answer him? How can you let God's words: "I will be with you" overcome your fears about your own faith and ability?

Saturday, September 15

Luke 22: 39-44

Jesus knew he was to face His death. He prayed, looking to God, His Father, to help him to allow God's will to be done, and on that Jesus would place all His faith, love and hope. How can the power of prayer strengthen you in your times of trial when you doubt that your faith is strong enough?

Don't have a Bible? Access these scriptures at biblegateway.com.