

Devotion: July 16, 2020

Luke 17:

5 The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith!' ⁶The Lord replied, 'If you had faith the size of a* mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, "Be uprooted and planted in the sea", and it would obey you.'

When it comes to thinking about faith, the twelve people Jesus chose as his Apostles were pretty much like us. Like us they tended to think of faith as the ability to believe something. Like us they tended to think that stronger faith meant fewer doubts and fewer problems, and that perfect faith meant no doubts and no problems. Jesus' little one-line parable quickly changed their minds about that idea. It said that if faith was about making things happen, then with even the smallest amount of faith their prayers could easily overcome the laws of physics, not to mention the principles of farming.

What Jesus was trying to teach them is what faith WASN'T. But it also pointed them in a different direction to discover what faith was.

With a single sentence, Jesus had helped the twelve to imagine something they had never and would never imagine on their own. And that was the real point. Faith was not about a quantity of something like belief. But rather, faith is a gift of God.

The gift of faith – and it is a gift and not something we can will or strengthen – is the gift of seeing the world transformed – of seeing that small part of our world, as it might be if it were to be joined to the kingdom of God, as though it were real, as though it existed, as though we believed.

Because unlimited faith equals unlimited power. That is what Jesus is trying to get at.

"Increase our faith, Lord!", the apostles cried out. Jesus promises us powerful, tree-moving faith, Great faith is a giver, not a getter. Great faith is an action, not a discussion. Great faith is a servant, not a superstar. Faith is the powerful ability to move mountains.

We must put feet to what faith we have before we can expect our faith to grow. And here is the remarkable truth of this text: If we start doing what we know to do-- then we will see our faith grow beyond our wildest imagination.

That's a promise from Jesus.

Let us pray:

Lord, bless your servant people, Bless us in our doubts, Bless us in our faithfulness, Guide us these next few months, As we seek to do your work, without being asked, and to do so with humble hearts.

Amen.