**The Power of a *Little* Faith**

There is no doubt or argument that *“little” faith* was used by the Lord of his disciples in a condemning way; *i.e.* that *their* faith should have, at least by then, been significantly *larger.*  Here are some examples of such: Those *anxious* regarding *food, drink,* and *clothing,* Matt.6:30-31; the disciples were *timid* and *afraid* of a *great storm,* Matt.8:24-26; upon seeing *the wind* and *water* (and the *impossibility* of the situation) Peter *doubted*, Matt.14:29-31; and, the disciples when they *took no bread,* Matt.16:5-8. Now think about it: Have you been *anxious, timid* and *afraid, doubting,* or *concerned* about what you *didn’t have?* Even those closest to Jesus were, at least at times! But in each case, what *problem* did Jesus identify? He didn’t talk about *physical necessities,* the *storms,* or the *wind* and *water* (seemingly *impossible obstacles*) of life. Instead, He spoke of *faith-* in fact, *little* faith.

But it is also true that at other times, He encouraged those with *no* or something *less than* “little” faith toward that as a goal, cf. **Matt.17:19-20** and **Luke 17:6**. If they had *even a “little” faith,* they, through it, could accomplish great things for the kingdom of God- both in their own lives, and in the lives of those whom they *could* influence for truth and righteousness. If they, or **we,** had just a *little* faith!

So, if you would, please think with me about **The (Inherent) Power of a *Little* Faith.** What could we/you accomplish in your life and the lives of those around you for the Cause of Christ with even just a *little* faith?

**A Closer Consideration of Luke 17:1-6**

* The *disciples* (the *Twelve*, not everyone) were concerned with two things: 1) *Causing Offence-* being a *stumblingblock* to others, vv.1-2; and, 2) *Forgiving* a *repetitively sinning brother,* vv.3-4.
* They correctly understood that they needed *more faith* to accomplish (or conversely avoid) the requirements Jesus placed before them, v.5. *Faith* comes by *hearing* the *word of God,* Rom.10:17. Therefore, if God *commands/requires* it, it *can be done*… with *sufficient faith!*
* We should note that the verbs are ***passive***in this verse. This is significantly important. Though the disciples would say to the *mulberry* (literally, *sukaminus-* a tree with the form and foliage of the mulberry, but a fruit resembling a fig; it was very *deep-rooted,* which is probably why it was chosen for the point here), the ***passive*** form of the verbs indicate that they (the disciples *commanding*) are **not actually the ones doing the *uprooting* and *planting-*** obviously, **God is *power* or *acting force****,* cf. Matt.17:20 (the *mountain “shall” move*).
* Now get this: *God* issues the requirements/commands; *God* is the *source* of the faith required to obey; and *God’s power* does the actual *work* to be done rather than the one who has the *faith* to *act.* Think about it: when “Peter” *performed a miracle* (cf. Acts 9:32-42 regarding *Aeneas* and *Dorcas*), he simply had the *necessary faith* to act, but ***God did the healing,*** Acts 9:34,42.
* Vv.7-10 further illustrate the *disciples’ role* (what was *required/commanded* of them) and *how the should view* these things. Thus, in the *parable* of these verses, the *disciples* are the *slave* who *plows/sows* and *tends sheep* and the *Master* is God who *commands.* The point is that they should never forget who is the *Master* and who is the *servant!* Though they will be given tremendous power to wield, they were to do so only in the ways and for the purposes of the Master, v.10. The tremendous *power* of even a *little faith-* even that as a *mustard seed,* is to be utilized to carry out the *commands* and *will* of the Master rather than for self-interests or self-glorification.

**All of which should lead to some points of application for us:**

1. ***“Increase our faith!”* is still the right response/request to *difficult commands.*** Whether it’s *forgiving* a repetitive but penitent sin, or having been or being or becoming a *stumblingblock* to others, *increased faith* is still the answer, precisely because God will supply the strength to *overcome,* 2Cor.12:9. We **can** *overcome* by God’s power through *faith,* 1John 2:13-14; 4:4; 5:4; or, we will **be** *overcome,* 2Pet.2:19b.
2. **Like the disciples, sometimes *our problem* is too much *self-interest* and *self-will*.** We tend to think in terms of “my” *life* and its *problems* and *obstacles-* its *mulberry/sycamine* or deep-rooted issues, Luke 17:6, and its seemingly *mountainous* obstacles, Matt.17:20. Remember who is the *servant* and who is the *Master,* Luke 17:6-10! During those times when your *deep-rooted issues* and your *mountainous obstacles* seem impossible, cf. 2Cor.12:7, have the *little faith* that you *serve* and *belong to* a “God of Impossible Things” (the week before last sermon)! If we will have even *mustard seed* (a *little*) faith, and remember that life for the Christian is not about “me” and “mine” but “Him” and “His,” then His *powerful grace* through *our faith* will be more than *sufficient-* it will be *strong enough* to *uproot* and *move* so that we can *overcome,* 2Cor.12:10!
3. **So, let’s go back to where we began in this lesson.** Are you:
   1. ***Anxious* about the *necessities* of life?**Have a *little faith* and make a *priority of doing the right things* and let God take care of the rest*,* Matt.6:30-34!
   2. ***Timid* and *afraid* about the *storms* of life?**Have a *little faith* and remember what God has planned for you to do,Matt.8:18,26! Jesus *“gave orders to depart to the other side,”* v.18; He did not *give orders* to “go to the middle and drown in a storm.”
   3. ***“Seeing”* the *winds, waters,* and *waves* of life?** Have a *little faith* and focus on the Savior- He will *preserve you* if you “stick” with Him, Matt.14:27-29; Heb.12:1-2!
   4. **Concerned with what you *don’t have* or *didn’t bring* to the feast?** Have a *little faith* in Jesus’ power to provide what is lacking, Matt.16:8-10! Just bring a *little faith!*

**Conclusion:**

***“If you have faith as a mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it shall move; and nothing shall be impossible to you,”* Matthew 17:20.**