

October 2, 2022

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

Luke 17:5-10

This is a very short reading that is packed with layers of context and meaning. Upon first reading and hearing it you may wonder what is actually going on. Trust me you are not alone. This is an odd and strange passage. Did the disciples expect Jesus to wave His hands or snap His fingers and give them more faith? Is the real issue more faith? As always, I ask myself if there is something not being actually said in the words that are recorded? Increase our faith!

Well, there actually is more things going on than what is written. When the disciples asked Jesus to increase their faith, they were asking for something else. They are asking for more status as His disciples. Either amongst themselves or within the larger society. With the increase of faith that they are asking for comes greater responsibilities. Jesus knows very well that His disciples cannot handle the responsibilities that comes with increased faith. At least not right now. The Holy Spirit will look after that on Pentecost. This is why Jesus shifts the focus to

the story of the master and slave. Jesus knows that His disciples are not prepared to go beyond what they are currently doing. They are not doing anything more than what is expected of them.

The story of the master and slave is a reality bender. No master serves their slave and prepares supper for them. That is an insane reversal of roles. However for that to happen requires great humility from the master. This master is going far beyond their expected roles and responsibilities. Jesus uses this story to challenge the disciples with the question, are you willing to go beyond your expected role and status? It is also a great reminder to us that great faith comes from true humility.

Now on to the mustard seed. This is the smallest of the seeds. It is not very big. However if you cook with it there is a lot of flavour. Just a small amount packs a whallup of flavour. I have used it in Indian cooking and it makes a great difference. In this story Jesus is saying that the quality is more important than the quantity.

That if your faith is basic, small and uncomplicated but of great quality, you can do amazing things. Sometimes bigger or more is not better. It reminds me of the saying less is more. Good things come in small packages. If the quality is great then all the better to use it. Jesus is trying to get the message across to His disciples that having more faith is not the issue. The issue is the quality of the faith you now have. Work with what you have. More is not going to help you now. That will come later.

As Christians we often forget that it is our responsibility to grow in our faith or to increase it. Our confirmation is the thing that puts the responsibility upon us to be doing continuing education. Mostly in our faith. We should always be reading, watching or listening to things that will help us in our walk of faith. The core of our faith does not change. It stays the same for most of our life. Yet our faith may lead us down some interesting branches in life. Much like the mustard plant with its many branches. That one mustard seed is responsible for those many branches as it grows. I am often amazed at where my faith leads me in life. It is a great growth process, but the core of my faith stays the same.

To recap, the issue of the story this morning is not more faith. It is working with the faith you have. Small, simple and uncomplicated faith is okay. It actually is perfect just as it is. More faith is not the answer if you cannot handle the responsibilities that come with it. Not unless you are willing to go beyond what is expected from you. Always be learning and enjoy the process. We know and trust in the destination. Try to enjoy the ride. Have a great week, Pastor D