

**“DO YOU HAVE THE MUSTARD?”**

**Pastor Mike Corwin**

**TEXT: LUKE 17:5-10**

**GOD’S WORD: 2 TIMOTHY 1:1-14**

**I – PAUL’S FAITH:**

I don’t think anyone would question the faith of Paul. This is a man who was a Pharisee and had life all locked up. He had studied with the best and was entrusted by the religious rulers with the task of hunting down and destroying the followers of “The Way.” Those who believed and had faith in Jesus being the Messiah. Paul’s faith was in something else. His was in the Law of Moses which he had studied and memorized and was doing his best to protect and live out.

But his faith changed on a road to Damascus. He was knocked to the ground and blinded. When he asked who was doing this to him a voice said it was Jesus himself. Paul was then taken into the city and stayed in his condition for three days until God sent someone to lay their hands on him and he was given back not only his sight, but was given a new and powerful faith. He placed his faith in Jesus Christ and from that day on followed and served him.

And what a model of faith he was. When he felt convicted to take the Gospel to the Gentiles he let nothing stand in his way and did so. Starting churches in areas the other Apostles wouldn’t even think of visiting, let alone of preaching in. He was beaten for his beliefs, and imprisoned for his beliefs, and eventually put to death for his beliefs. But he never once waived in his faith and served Jesus to the end. Over a third of our New Testament was written by him.

**II – 2 TIMOTHY:**

The letter we heard read this morning was one he wrote to the young disciple and preacher Timothy who Paul had been mentoring. In this letter you can see Paul's faith shining through. Even as he's in prison for his faith you can see it coming through. You can tell by his writing that he has not lost the faith to continue his calling to preach and teach. That no matter what happens to him he has placed his faith in the hands of God, through the Lordship and Jesus, and is counting on the power of The Holy Spirit to carry him through.

I MEAN COME ON! He's preaching and teaching the Gospel in the letter itself isn't he. He's not worried about his own personal comfort or safety. Not questioning what's coming next or worrying about anything because he has placed his faith entirely in the hands of Jesus.

And he is telling Timothy to make sure his faith is as strong and to let that Faith work in and through his life too.

### **III – TEXT:**

Jesus is teaching about this kind of faith in his teaching from this morning's text.

Luke 17:5-10 (NLT)

5 The apostles said to the Lord, "Show us how to increase our faith."

6 The Lord answered, "If you had faith even as small as a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'May you be uprooted and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you!

7 "When a servant comes in from plowing or taking care of sheep, does his master say, 'Come in and eat with me'? 8 No, he says, 'Prepare my meal, put on your apron, and serve me while I eat. Then you can eat later.' 9 And does the master thank the servant for doing what he was told to do? Of course not. 10 In the same way, when you obey me you should say, 'We are unworthy servants who have simply done our duty.'"

Jesus has just finished teaching his followers about the need to forgive and to do it numerous times. A task that seemed near to impossible for a human being to be able to do. Forgive the same person 7 times in one day, each and every day? No way! So they ask him to increase their faith so they can live out such teachings. It's then we hear one of his most

quoted teachings about faith. That if they had the faith as small as a mustard seed. They would be able to tell a Mulberry tree to go jump in the lake.

You have to understand the imagery here. The mustard seed was one of the tiniest seeds known to them at the time. The Mulberry tree was a large tree, growing up to 35' high with roots that were known for their depth and strength. They were so incredibly strong and invasive that the Jewish law forbid them to be planted within 75' of a water cistern so as not to damage the cistern.

Jesus is teaching that it's not a question of how much faith you have, a little or a lot, but of whether you have any faith at all. The simple question is "Do you have faith?" And he says even if you have just a little faith you can do a lot. In another Gospel he says your faith can move mountains. As you look at the stories of his healing people he gives a lot of credit to the person's faith as the reason they were healed.

Jesus is pointing out to the disciples that it's faith that enables us to recognize and respond to the power of God that is present and active in Jesus. With just a little faith we can tap into that power and do great works for Jesus.

And then he talks about how, when we serve him in such a way with that faith we are supposed to behave. The world is all about people having power and lording it over others. This is not the case in serving Jesus. The followers of Jesus who have faith have more power than any of those who think they have it all in the world...but we are supposed to use it humbly. Our servanthood is not something to boast about or brag about. It's not something to be held over the heads of others. This working for Jesus isn't supposed to make us rich and famous or give us prestige. It's to humbly carry out the calling of Jesus and be faithful in the ministries he has called us to do.

The other lesson here is that the servant is not free to choose whether or not to obey the master or not. You are just expected to serve. Servanthood means the faithful carrying out of one's required duty. The servant expects no reward and no thank you.

Basically Jesus is teaching us that disciples can't do more than is expected because our all is required.

#### **IV – THE LESSON:**

There are a couple of different lessons in this short passage but I want to key in on one that I think is the biggest. One that I think Jesus wants all of his followers to hear and then live by. That is that even with a small amount of faith you can achieve great things.

Sometimes when we are thinking about serving Jesus, about answering the call to serve and helping build the Kingdom of God, we balk. We balk because we don't think we're important enough for God to use. We don't think we're smart enough to do the job right. We think we have to be better than we are, be more important than we are. We think there is no possible way we can achieve the dreams God has given us to accomplish for His church. We think we are just this puny excuse for a disciple when we are held up to the likes of Paul or in our day the likes of a Billy Graham, or one of the other great servants of the Lord. Those who seem to sweat faith from every pore of their body.

But Jesus tells us something different. Jesus gives us a different lesson in Faith. He teaches that with just a miniscule amount of faith we can do great works for him. He teaches us that we don't need to have a full tank of faith...just a few fumes and we can go for miles in serving him.

Jesus teaches us that anyone with a little faith can succeed. All Jesus needs to work with is a little faith and obedience.

### **V – MUSTARD:**

So, the question for the day is simply, "DO YOU HAVE THE MUSTARD?" Do you have faith?

Do you believe in God?

Do you believe in His one and only Son Jesus Christ, who came to save you from your sins?

Do you believe that he is still active in the world today through the power of His Holy Spirit?

Do you believe that God can use even you to carry out his work?

Do you believe that through your faith and through his power he can change the world?

Then respond to the call of God in your life and let your little seed tear down the trees that plaque his creation today. Go put a little mustard on all that you see.

AMEN