



Growth Group Questions
October 13, 2024
“Lessons from a Mustard Seed: Cultivating Faith”

Context:

Matthew 17 is the second time when Jesus compares faith to that of a mustard seed. (see Matthew 13:31-32) It is also found in Luke 17:5-6.

The sinapi seed was either one of two types of seed. One is that of a wild mustard seed, *brassica nigra*, that would spread over a hillside. The other definition which is *nicotiana glauca*. This seed is smaller and fits the description by Jesus that it is the smallest of seeds. It grows up taller and would be suitable for birds to nest in.

Whichever definition of the seed you choose, the point is not missed. Jesus is taking a small example and comparing it to a mountain and saying that it could move it. This imagery makes a point, that we need to realize that the rules of the world do not apply to the rules of the Kingdom of Heaven because God is so much bigger than what we can understand.

When we understand that the faith of the disciples after they were unable to heal the child needed to grow, we remember that they did grow and were able to heal and have faith once Jesus was crucified and resurrected. Because of this, Jesus was able to grow their faith.

Faith is the cornerstone of all human relationships and we see that it is a common theme of the teachings of Jesus. We see the argument made in Hebrews that it was not the lineage of Abraham that made him a follower, but only his faith.

God desires to restore relationships through Christ so that there is trust that allows for closeness. (See James 4:7-8) When Jesus warns His disciples about their faith, He is showing them the potential which they had not yet believed.

Scripture:

Matthew 17:14-20

¹⁴ At the foot of the mountain, a large crowd was waiting for them. A man came and knelt before Jesus and said, ¹⁵ “Lord, have mercy on my son. He has seizures and suffers terribly. He often falls into the fire or into the water. ¹⁶ So I brought him to your disciples, but they couldn’t heal him.” ¹⁷ Jesus said, “You faithless and corrupt people! How long must I be with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring the boy here to me.” ¹⁸ Then Jesus rebuked the demon in the boy, and it left him. From that moment the boy was well. ¹⁹ Afterward the disciples asked Jesus privately, “Why couldn’t we cast out that demon?” ²⁰ “You don’t have enough faith,” Jesus told them. “I tell you the truth, if you had faith even as small as a mustard seed, you could say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it would move. Nothing would be impossible.”

Matthew 10:38-39

³⁸ If you refuse to take up your cross and follow me, you are not worthy of being mine. ³⁹ If you cling to your life, you will lose it; but if you give up your life for me, you will find it.

Matthew 25:1-13

²⁵ “Then the Kingdom of Heaven will be like ten bridesmaids^[a] who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. ² Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. ³ The five who were foolish didn’t take enough olive oil for their lamps, ⁴ but the other five were wise enough to take along extra oil.

⁵ When the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep. ⁶ “At midnight they were roused by the shout, ‘Look, the bridegroom is coming! Come out and meet him!’” ⁷ “All the bridesmaids got up and prepared their lamps. ⁸ Then the five foolish ones asked the others, ‘Please give us some of your oil because our lamps are going out.’” ⁹ “But the others replied, ‘We don’t have enough for all of us. Go to a shop and buy some for yourselves.’”

¹⁰ “But while they were gone to buy oil, the bridegroom came. Then those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was locked. ¹¹ Later, when the other five bridesmaids returned, they stood outside, calling, ‘Lord! Lord! Open the door for us!’” ¹² “But he called back, ‘Believe me, I don’t know you!’” ¹³ “So you, too, must keep watch! For you do not know the day or hour of my return.”

Acts 8:26-31

²⁶ As for Philip, an angel of the Lord said to him, “Go south^[a] down the desert road that runs from Jerusalem to Gaza.” ²⁷ So he started out, and he met the treasurer of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under the Kandake, the queen of Ethiopia. The eunuch had gone to Jerusalem to worship, ²⁸ and he was now returning. Seated in his carriage, he was reading aloud from the book of the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹ The Holy Spirit said to Philip, “Go over and walk along beside the carriage.” ³⁰ Philip ran over and heard the man reading from the prophet Isaiah. Philip asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” ³¹ The man replied, “How can I, unless someone instructs me?” And he urged Philip to come up into the carriage and sit with him.



Isaiah 53:1-6

53 Who has believed our message? To whom has the Lord revealed his powerful arm?

² My servant grew up in the Lord's presence like a tender green shoot, like a root in dry ground. There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance, nothing to attract us to him. ³ He was despised and rejected—a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care. ⁴ Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows^[a] that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins! ⁵ But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed. ⁶ All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the Lord laid on him the sins of us all.

Questions:

1. In this week's sermon, Pastor Chad spoke about faith. What is faith and where does faith come from?
2. What does the Bible tell us about faith?
3. In Matthew 10:38-39, Jesus says, "If you refused to take up your cross and follow me, you are not worthy of being mine. If you cling to your life, you will lose it; but if you give up your life for me, you will find it." What does it mean to give up your life for Jesus? Can you restate this verse in your own words to more clearly describe what you believe Jesus is asking each of us to do?
4. Pastor Chad told us that to have faith like a mustard seed we must first sacrifice our will to the will of God and then we must wait expectantly. What does it mean to wait expectantly on God? Why is this important?
5. What lessons about faith can we learn from the story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch?
6. Why do you think acting obediently helps to grow our faith?
7. Several times during this week's sermon, Pastor Chad said "faith is a process." What does that mean to you?
8. Why do you think so many people struggle with a lack of faith?
9. What can each of us do to cultivate our faith?

