

10/5/25
17th Sunday after Pentecost
For Group Meetings from September 28th – October 4th

OUR MISSION: As a missional congregation we *celebrate* Christ's presence, *invite* people into a growing relationship with Jesus, and *equip* them to *serve* in a broken world.

Prayer of the Day: Benevolent, merciful God: When we are empty, fill us. When we are weak in faith, strengthen us. When we are cold in love, warm us, that with fervor we may love our neighbors and serve them for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

BIBLICAL EQUIPPING TOGETHER

Share: How did last week's scripture (Luke 16:19-31) work in your life this week?

Mission:

- What was most satisfying about your ministry last week?
- Where do you see God at work?
- How did you participate in God's missional activity?
- How did inviting go last Sunday?

Hear: Luke 17:5-10

Explore Questions: (Use these or develop your own.)

1. Why do you think the disciples ask Jesus to "increase their faith"?
2. What does Jesus teach the disciples about the nature of faith in verses 5 and 6?
3. In verses 7-8, what job does Jesus say the servant has been doing all day?

Connect Questions: (Use these or develop your own.)

1. When have you asked God for more faith?
2. Can you think of a time when you took a leap of faith and the results were overwhelming?
3. What spiritual disciplines help nurture your faith?

Memorize this verse: The 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. (Luke 17:6) When have you experienced or witnessed the simplest thing done in faith having a huge impact?

BIBLICAL EQUIPPING APART:

Obey: During this week follow through on your intentions.

Meditate: Meditate on Psalm 37:1-9. How does this speak into your life?

Reflect: What have I learned in my week of living with this text? What can I share with my group when we next meet?

Notes for ChristCare leaders:

I have to admit that I feel for the disciples. Even more than usual. In recent passages, Jesus has been asking some fairly extraordinary things of them – to give away their possessions, to forgive those who wrong you...countless times, to take up his cross, and more. No wonder then, they ask for more faith. They feel inadequate to the tasks around them, insufficient to the challenges, unable to imagine accomplishing any of what he is asking. But then something interesting happens. Because when the disciples recognize their need and ask him for help, for more faith, you'd think Jesus would both welcome and grant their request. But he doesn't. Instead, he almost seems to rebuke them. "If you had even a speck of faith...", he begins, implying that they actually don't have faith even the size of a mustard seed. What kind of way is that to respond to the disciples' earnest, even heartfelt question? But what if the question the disciples ask isn't only earnest and heartfelt, but also problematic, even a little wrong-headed? Maybe then Jesus' sharp retort was just what they needed to orient them to the miraculous presence of God all around them and the totally sufficient faith they already have. Here's the thing: servants aren't invited to the table with the landowner; they eat when their work is done. Nor do they deserve great thanks simply for doing their job; they just do it. That's more what faith is like, Jesus seems to say – simply the willingness to do what needs to be done. Faith is not some kind of scarce resource that needs to be saved, spent, added to, and all the rest. Moreover, faith isn't always heroic. Instead, it is simply and humbly doing what needs to be done, big or small, great or mundane, just because it needs doing.

This isn't the first time Jesus has hinted at this. At this point in Luke's Gospel, Jesus has already named as faithful a woman's desperate confidence that if she only touches him, he will be healed (3:48), a centurion's concern for a sick servant (7:9), and a woman's gratitude at being forgiven (7:50). Soon he will also call faithful a Samaritan leper who returns to thank him for healing (17:19) and the plea of a blind beggar for sight (18:42). And so, it shouldn't surprise us that Jesus challenges the disciples' perception about faith by pointing them to the noteworthy hard work and service of a servant performing his duties. Faith is found not in the mighty acts of heaven but in the ordinary and everyday acts of doing what needs to be done, responding to the needs around us, and caring for the people who come our way. Do we know and believe this? That Jesus would call so many of the unnoticed things we do each week faithful? Showing up for work and doing a good job. Listening when someone needs to talk. Getting the kids off to school. Volunteering at a local homeless shelter. Balancing the books for your business or community group. Writing a thank you note to someone who has done a kindness. Cooking supper. Praying for a neighbor who is having a hard time. The list could go on. And that's the point. None of these is any big deal, and yet it is just these kinds of acts that occupy so much of our lives. And I suspect it wouldn't cross our minds that they are acts of faith.

Somehow, an "act of faith" seems like it needs to be significant or costly or even extravagant to merit God's attention. And that misperception isn't really new. Martin Luther, writing 500 years ago, once even extolled the virtue of a father changing diapers (emphasizing father because that was so extremely rare, and probably considered unbecoming, at the time): "When a father goes ahead and washes diapers or performs some other menial task for his child, and someone ridicules him as an effeminate fool...God with all his angels and creatures is smiling". I realize that we may wonder what difference such "small" things make in light of the major challenges and problems in front of us. But every day, ordinary things are acts of faith. They are honorable, God-blessed, and important. Because when we see that our everyday and ordinary acts of faith have significance, we have renewed energy to do even more.

Thanks be to God,

Pastor Thadd (tbook@desertcross.org)

Traditional version:

Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come,
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from
evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power,
And the glory, forever and ever. Amen

Contemporary version:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,
your will be done on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those
Who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial
And deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
Now and forever. Amen