

The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!"⁶ 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.

⁷ "Who among you would say to your slave who has just come in from plowing or tending sheep in the field, 'Come here at once and take your place at the table'?⁸ Would you not rather say to him, 'Prepare supper for me, put on your apron and serve me while I eat and drink; later you may eat and drink'?⁹ Do you thank the slave for doing what was commanded?¹⁰ So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, 'We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!'" Luke 17:5-10 NRSV

All of us would like to have more faith. So when Jesus gets asked the question, you really can't blame the disciples for asking it since they have seen what Jesus has been able to do in the name of God, and would like to do some of the things. Jesus response is a bit surprising on two fronts, First he tells them even of they have the faith of a mustard seed" they can do great things. Then he implies all this comes in the context of what God calls us to do each and every day.

So in essence what Jesus may be saying is each person has faith at their disposal but they just need to use it with God's help and timing Perhaps what blinds us to this teaching is our "instant culture." This was reflected a few years back with the housing crisis. People were enticed to get the bigger nicer home they "deserved" now with out sound financing of such a home. When we were looking for a home back in 2001, one of the realtors we were connected with tried to do that to us. Luckily, the agent that eventually worked with us brought us down to earth with a home we could afford. I also remember one television ministry which became popular because of all the "instant" healings which were supposed take place.

Now when I reflect on my life I guess I could point to the one or two examples of how God worked something miraculous in short order after I prayed. But in the "big picture" of things hanging in there with my faith when the result didn't come right away also showed the power of faith. My graduating from seminary in 1984 was a wonderful event. God had answered a prayer of mine prayed many years before. We managed, my wife, my daughter and I, to get through early financial problems, a devastating fire which destroyed our apartment, as well as juggling my schedule to take care of my daughter. Faith played a huge role in those years, even; I confess when my faith was starting to be a little bit wobbly.

A little while ago I was given a very difficult task, and was having very little success with it for a couple of years. I was getting very frustrated, and felt like giving up. Somehow God "pulled me back from the brink", and I renewed my faith in God's help and the result has been very good. In this I can't take any credit, if only to say I put what faith I had in God to help me. .

I don't know of any believer who doesn't want more faith. But maybe that's not what we need. Maybe we need to use the faith that we already have firmly trusting in God's ways of acting in various situations so that end result may be we too can say to a Mulberry Tree, "Be uprooted and plant in the sea!"

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