

Faith Part 3 – Size Matters (3-24-2019)

New Series: Faith – Seeing our way Home

Key Verse: For we walk by faith, not by sight. (2 Corinthians 5:7)

Review:

Week 1: God sees us & believes long before we do, and He is with us!

Week 2: The Importance of living with a Vision & Aim, and having faith to look to God’s Word for that Aim.

This Week: “Size Matters”

1) Proper Aim leads to Faith in Action

Hebrews 11:6 (ESV)

And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

- First – A total change in perspective: That I would become more concerned with pleasing God, then pleasing myself, or falling into the co-dependent trap of living to please someone else (impossible & won’t bring me or them pleasure).
- It’s an act of faith to believe this is the right aim, and that it’s for my benefit!
- “Whoever would” draw near to God. This is about choosing a proper aim, making a change in direction.
- Must Believe conceptually: In God & His goodness (that he exists & rewards)
- Must Believe enough to act: That belief moves into action as I “seek Him”

So we see how we start with proper aim - repenting and looking to God – as He is!

Then, we pursue Him as faith and action begin working together . . .

2) Aim leads to Faith leads to Aim leads to Faith

Matthew 17:20 (ESV)

(Jesus is speaking to His disciples) . . . “For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.”

To understand this verse fully, we need some proper Context . . .

Matthew 17:14-16 (ESV)

(14) And when they came to the crowd, a man came up to him and, kneeling before him, (15) said, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and he suffers terribly. For often he falls into the fire, and often into the water. (16) And I brought him to your disciples, and they could not heal him."

Notes: They are facing an overwhelming obstacle. It’s intimidating, beyond their control and ability to fix.

Jesus' response to the situation . . .

Matthew 17:17-18 (ESV)

(17) And Jesus answered, "O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him here to me." (18) And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him, and the boy was healed instantly.

- **Pay attention to what he says:** You have twisted thinking
 - **Twisted:** distorted, misinterpreted, crooked, and turned. Therefore . . .
 - You don't see accurately
 - You don't look to God, so that you could start to see accurately
- **Pay Attention to what he does:** He heals – instantly. He backs up what he is saying with action!

Matthew 17:19-20 (ESV)

(19) Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" (20) He said to them, "Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you."

Notes: Let's follow Jesus' logic . . .

- You know why you fail? Your faith is too small
- How are you going to succeed against the biggest possible obstacle? With your faith that is too small.

Our whole life we will face some accusations:

- "You don't have what it takes"
- "This problem you are facing, and maybe even your whole life, is beyond you. It's too big & overwhelming"

These accusations sting so much, because they are true (sort of).

Most often, we respond like Gideon (who we looked at 2 weeks ago):

- We fight really hard in our own strength against them, and work really hard to make little progress.
- We hide in fear, just looking to barely survive, and often give up all together. We settle.

These accusations hit us so hard: "the mountain is too big" "you don't have what it takes"

Except they aren't the final story: To understand the power of what Jesus means when he says, "**You will say to this mountain, be moved**" we need even further context . . .

This passage actually opens with several disciples having a powerful experience with Jesus before encountering this boy in need of healing . . .

Matthew 17:1-6 (ESV)

(1) And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. (2) And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. (3) And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. (4) And Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." (5) He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." (6) When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified.

Notes: When Jesus points and says – you can say to this mountain be moved. He is pointing to the mountain he was just transfigured on!

He is reminding them that he is king of the mountain!!!

- Peter's response – Can we just live up here on the mountain top?
- Jesus' response – Nope. We have to go down and face the realities of the valley – but not alone!

Matthew 17:7-8 (ESV)

(7) But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and have no fear." (8) And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

Notes: They saw no one, but Jesus only!

- The cycle of faith: Aim leads to Faith leads to Aim leads to Faith . . .
- We Walk by Faith not by sight, and Faith comes by hearing the Word of God
- Faith Grows: Bring the little you have, put your trust in Him – and watch Him deliver & your faith grow!
- Faith may be like a small seed, but when planted in the right place & cared for it grows!

Isaiah 26:3-4 (ESV)

(3) You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. (4) Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD GOD is an everlasting rock.

Notes: Aim leads to faith, leads to aim, leads to faith - When our eyes are fixed on Him, We learn to trust, and it produces peace in our minds, because we are trusting in the everlasting rock!

3) Faith in Action

So if God can do it all, then why all this drama? Why am I even involved in this mess?

Let's look at the story of Gideon found in Judges chapter 11:

- The Midian army has been enslaving, raiding, and stealing from Israel (Their army is 120,000 strong)
- Gideon has been hiding in the cave, but God has called him to be a warrior
- Now they are preparing for the fight – Gideon rallies the troops: 32,000 (that's like 4 to 1)
- God tells Gideon – let the ones who are scared go home – new count: 10,000 (12 to 1)
- God tells Gideon to whittle the group down again– leading to 300 troops (that's 400 to 1)

God is showing Gideon the exact same thing as the accusations that we hear all the time:

- You are too small & The obstacle is too big

The only difference is that God is also saying: "You are right where I want you!"

This seems like impossible odds! Guess who's scared? **Gideon**, but that's not the full story. God let's Gideon in on a secret . . .

Judges 7:13-15 (ESV)

(13) When Gideon came, behold, a man was telling a dream to his comrade. And he said, "Behold, I dreamed a dream, and behold, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian and came to the tent and struck it so that it fell and turned it upside down, so that the tent lay flat." (14) And his comrade answered, "This is no other than the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel; God has given into his hand Midian and all the camp." (15) As soon as Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, he worshiped. And he returned to the camp of Israel and said, "Arise, for the LORD has given the host of Midian into your hand."

Notes: A man who is following God scares the crap out of our enemy!

So, here's the plan . . .

Judges 7:16-18 (ESV)

(16) And he divided the 300 men into three companies and put trumpets into the hands of all of them and empty jars, with torches inside the jars. (17) And he said to them, "Look at me, and do likewise. When I come to the outskirts of the camp, do as I do. (18) When I blow the trumpet, I and all who are with me, then blow the trumpets also on every side of all the camp and shout, 'For the LORD and for Gideon.'"

Notes: God doesn't need my power, but he wants my participation. Why?

The same reason I involve my kids, and want them to help me when I work around the house . . .

- I want to be with them
- I want them to grow

Imagine what God is thinking: This is so cool!!! Gideon is actually willing to go fight 120,000 soldiers with 300 men armed with torches & trumpets!

Conclusion: Micah, UT basketball game & bike riding!