

Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:1-4
Psalm 37:1-9
2 Timothy 1:1-14
Luke 17:5-10

Sermon October 2nd, 2022

God Is at Work Within Us:

Even With Faith the Size of a Mustard Seed!

Throughout the gospels, we see examples where the disciples struggle to follow Jesus. Whether it is the disciples sitting on a beach doubting that Jesus can feed thousands of hungry people with just a few loaves of bread and fish. Even after they witnessed Jesus perform several miracles before this event. Or not being able to heal everyone they encounter when sent out into the villages to do what Jesus has been doing in front of their eyes the last several months. Whether it is preventing Gentiles from coming towards Jesus even after Jesus has welcomed Gentiles at past encounters. Or getting frustrated with Jesus for having a theological conversation with a woman even when many who choose to follow Jesus are women. Whether it is deserting Jesus when the soldiers come to arrest him (**Image**). Or hiding behind locked doors after Jesus' death instead of going out and continuing his ministry. There are several examples where we hear Jesus say "oh you of little faith" to the disciples.

In the few verses leading up to today's gospel, Jesus challenges the disciples to be good examples to all those who become believers. To live out their discipleship with fervour. To believe that with God anything is possible. To be a healing presence to those in need. To be welcoming to those outside their inner circle. To create an environment where everyone has a voice and is being heard. To continue proclaiming God's love through Christ Jesus even when they face resistance. To stand with the marginalized people in their society.

Jesus goes on to tell the disciples that no matter how many times someone wrongs them, if that someone repents, the disciples are to forgive. To believe that somehow God is working in this someone to change them so they don't continue to hurt the disciples. I can't imagine this call to forgiveness being easy.

Being a disciple, following Jesus, is challenging. Is overwhelming.

So much so, that in our gospel this morning, the disciples ask Jesus for more faith. More faith to believe that with God anything is possible. More faith to believe that they can forgive, heal, welcome, and stand up for people even against fierce resistance. More faith.

Like the early disciples, we too, struggle to live out our calling to be disciples. For example, God invites us to be generous and cheerful givers to the ministry. And yet, how often do our financial insecurities make it hard for us to live out this invitation? How often do our busy schedules make it hard for us to dedicate time to volunteer for the ministries of the church (**Image**)?

Or, God invites us to dwell on God's word, so that this word will shape our thoughts and our actions. Helping us be reflections of God's love in the world. And yet, how often do we struggle to find time to open up this book and read? How often do we struggle to attend worship where we have opportunities to hear the word fleshed out through preaching and singing?

Or, God invites us to believe that anything is possible with God when we find ourselves in situations where there is suffering. And yet, how often do we doubt God's presence or ability to heal, to breathe new life into people in the midst of suffering?

Or, God invites us to be a welcoming community where everyone who encounters us feels safe and welcome. And yet, how often do we feel uncomfortable around certain people (**Image**)? How often do we give off vibes that make this person or people feel unwelcome?

Or, God invites us to be a community where everyone has a voice, and is being heard. And yet, how often have we silenced or ignored certain voices in our church?

Or, God invites us to stand with the marginalized people in our community. And yet, how often do we fear the resistance we will face for standing with these people?

Being a disciple, following Jesus, is challenging. Is overwhelming. The apostles knew it. Disciples throughout the history of the church knew it. We know it.

Like the apostles, sometimes we find ourselves asking Jesus to give us a little more faith.

Well, in response to the apostle's request, in response to our request, Jesus affirms us. Jesus states that we already have enough faith to live out this invitation to be his disciples. We don't need anymore faith.

Jesus has given us all the faith we need for God to work in and through us to feed the hungry (**Image**), to heal the sick, to welcome the outsider, to give voice to everyone who participates in our community, to stand with the marginalized.

Jesus has given us the grace to forgive ourselves, to forgive others when we fall short of this challenge. To believe that God forgives us, and loves us when we fall short of this challenge. So, our guilt doesn't turn into shame, where we stay in this perpetual state of feeling that we lack faith, that we will never be good enough.

It is through this feeling of being loved despite our failures and imperfections that moves us to keep trying. To keep facing the challenges that come with living out our discipleship. To believe that we do have enough faith to grow into a mulberry tree (**Image**). To believe that despite our imperfections and failures, that we still can touch people's lives with God's love. That there are moments where we see God at work in and through us, healing people, welcoming people, empowering people, standing up for people. There are moments where we see God at work in and through us, helping us find the resources we need to support the ministries of the church. Helping us find the time to devote to scripture, to worship. There are moments where we see God at work in and through us, helping us forgive one another. There are moments where we see God at work in and through us. Thanks be to God!

Let us pray, loving God, thank you for forgiving us when we fall short of your call to be disciples. Help us trust in the faith you have given us. So, that we can be witnesses of your work in our lives, and in the lives of the people we meet. **Amen.**

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