



GOOD NEWS

for the unsaved WORLD!

(#112)

Defective faith: Small in its expression.

DEFECTIVE FAITH

⇒ Is this my FAITH?

- Genuine fact-based living FAITH is a saving faith.
- But what if my faith is...

<p>✓ Defective in its FACT foundation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ False (= deception) ✓ Rejected (= unbelief) ✓ Missing (= ignorance) 	<p>TODAY</p>	<p>✓ Defective in its LIVING expression?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Small (= "little faith") ✓ Wavering (= doubt) ✓ Absent (= not there)
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NOT MUCH OF A LIVING EXPRESSION. (If any.)

"LITTLE" faith is dangerous to have.


"LITTLE" FAITH?

MAYBE I CAN FIND IT WITH A MICROSCOPE!

- This has to do with the littleness – or perhaps close to non-existence of faith.
- In Scripture, this concept always has a **NEGATIVE** connotation.

Here is a better concept:


- Scripture also mentions "mustard-seed faith." This has a **POSITIVE** connotation.



"LITTLE" FAITH AND "MUSTARD-SEED" FAITH MAY BOTH BE SMALL...

But their focus is in **OPPOSITE DIRECTIONS**.

- LITTLE FAITH** emphasizes its smallness or perhaps non-existence, when there should be more.
- MUSTARD-SEED FAITH** emphasizes its existence and quality. (Just like genuine faith, mustard seeds are alive and they grow.)



The contrast between the two is seen in **Matthew 17:19-20**.

- BACKGROUND:** The disciples ask the reason for their failure.

Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and asked, "Why couldn't we force the demon out of the boy?"
Matthew 17:19 (GW)
- Answer: Because of their "**LITTLE FAITH**," they were powerless.

He told them, "Because you have so little faith."
Matthew 17:20a (GW)
- To be powerful, they needed: "**MUSTARD-SEED FAITH**."

"I can guarantee this truth: If your faith is the size of a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."
Matthew 17:20b (GW)

★ "**LITTLE**" FAITH (= powerless). ★

"Faith approaching zero." OR "Where is it?" faith.

✓ THIS "**FAITH**" HAS A MINIMAL EXISTENCE – IF EVEN THAT MUCH.

Consider these three passages that describe the same event, but describe the "lacking faith" issue in slightly different ways:

THIS TYPE OF "LITTLE FAITH" ...	"...you of little faith?" Matthew 8:26b (CSB)
IS NEARLY THE SAME AS "NO FAITH" ...	"Do you still have no faith?" Mark 4:40b (CSB)
AND IT LEAVES US ASKING, "WHERE IS IT?"	"Where is your faith?" Luke 8:25b (CSB)

✓ THIS "FAITH" IS ASSOCIATED WITH SIN AND WEAKNESS.

• Fear ... instead of trust.

He said to them, "Why are you afraid, you of little faith?"
Matthew 8:26a (CSB)

• Doubt ... instead of trust.

Immediately Jesus ... said to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?"
Matthew 14:31 (CSB)

• Worry/anxiety ... instead of trust.

[God will provide] for you—you of little faith? So don't worry ...
Matthew 6:30b-31a (CSB)

"... you of little faith ... don't be anxious."
Luke 12:28b, 29b (CSB)

(Worry and anxiety are mentioned several times in these two passages.)

7

✓ THIS "FAITH" SHRIVELS-UP OUR ABILITY TO RELY ON GOD.

It robs us of godly thinking, and prevents an accurate understanding of life situations.

• Distracted from understanding Jesus' teachings.

"You have so little faith! Why are you arguing with each other about having no bread? Don't you understand even yet?"
Matthew 16:8b-9a (NLT15); see vs. 5-12.

{ The parallel passage in Mark 8:14-21 describes them as having hard hearts, and inability to see, hear and remember. }

JESUS was warning the disciples about the corrupting influence of the Pharisees and Sadducees, comparing it to yeast (which spreads throughout the whole piece of dough).

The APOSTLES thought Jesus was hinting about their failure to bring food for the journey. Yet they has just seen Jesus miraculously provide food on two occasions. Jesus had also taught them about trusting God for their needs (Matthew 6:25+); but they did not yet fully believe it.

8

• Preoccupied with material possessions and security.

[God will provide] for you—you of little faith? So don't worry ...
Matthew 6:30b-31a (CSB)

"... you of little faith ... don't be anxious."
Luke 12:28b, 29b (CSB)

{ For the entire teaching on this issue, read:
Matthew 6:19-34 and Luke 12:13-34. }

Though spoken in different situations, these two passages focus on our inability to "serve" both God and material things. *We can't focus on both; we can't treasure both.*

Worry and anxiety (mentioned several times in these passages) are the result of not focusing on God, but on material things.

This type of "faith" might not be 100% gone; but it's relatively worthless.

9

IN CONTRAST, this type of faith might be small, but it's of great value!

★ "MUSTARD-SEED" FAITH (= powerful). ★

"Faith that can grow." OR "There it is!" faith.

✓ THIS "FAITH," THOUGH SMALL, IS ALIVE!

WHEN THE DISCIPLES WERE HINDERED BY "LITTLE FAITH" ...

JESUS TOLD THEM THEY NEEDED "MUSTARD-SEED FAITH"!

He told them, "Because you have so little faith. I can guarantee this truth: If your faith is the size of a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."
Matthew 17:20b (GW)

10

✓ IS THE SIZE OF THE SEED THE ONLY ISSUE?

• Why didn't Jesus illustrate it with a grain of sand?

Because sand is DEAD... and seeds are ALIVE; they have power and can grow.

• This is seen when Jesus used a mustard seed to describe the Kingdom of God!

Jesus said, "How can I describe the Kingdom of God? What story should I use to illustrate it?"

It is like a mustard seed planted in the ground. It is the smallest of all seeds*, but it becomes the largest of all garden plants; it grows long branches, and birds can make nests in its shade."

Mark 4:30-32 (NLT15); see also Matthew 13:31-32; Luke 13:18-19.

* (This was the smallest of the seeds they normally planted in their gardens. Some smaller seeds do exist.)

11

✓ MUSTARD-SEED FAITH IS ALSO ALIVE, AND PACKED WITH POWER!

(On two different occasions, Jesus reminded them of its power.)

• When the apostles were faced with failure (because of their "little 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 17:20b (NLT15)


• When the apostles asked for "increased faith":

The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" He replied, "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you."
Luke 17:5-6 (NIV11)

12

✓ CAN I REALLY MOVE MOUNTAINS AND MULBERRY TREES?

- Remember that a genuine living, "power-packed" faith is fact-based, not entertainment-motivated.
- These two items are used to represent any genuine need that may seem "too big" to be accomplished.
- These two specific items won't be moved UNLESS there is a genuine need for it in the Kingdom of God. God won't do it for entertainment purposes.



- There is also human responsibility. In some situations, we need to trust God AND be willing to get involved (rather than sitting back passively).

Genuine FAITH may require our willingness to be part of the solution!

I HAVE FAITH TO MOVE THIS MOUNTAIN... AND A SHOVEL TO BEGIN THE PROCESS!



★ What all this shows us. ★

- IT'S THE QUALITY OF THE FAITH:** If we have any genuine, living faith at all, we do have power – God's power – to do God's will (which doesn't always match our will).
- THE MAIN ISSUE ISN'T "SIZE":** It's not a matter of getting faith that's "big enough."
- GROWING IN FAITH:** Our expectations of what God can do may increase as our faith grows. But with any amount of this "mustard-seed" faith, we can expect a good outcome.
- PREREQUISITE:** All this applies ONLY if we are trusting God to do his will.

SO LET'S PURSUE THIS!

Your mission: LEARN GOD'S WILL by pursuing a "renewed mind"!

Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the **renewing of your mind**, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect **will of God**.
Romans 12:2 (CSB)

THEN:

⇨ **SHOW THAT YOUR FAITH IS ALIVE** ⇩
by trusting God to do his will through you.

| If you aren't sure it's his will, then just admit it! |
| Say, "If it's your will"! (If it is... it will happen.) |

Credits

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