

June 13, 2021

Texts: Ezekiel 17: 22-24; Mark 4: 26-34

Title: "The Mighty Mustard Seed"

This past week I read an inspiring story about a Canadian man who picked up a new hobby when he retired. His new hobby was picking up spare change off the streets of his home city, Montreal. This man, who's name was Tony was raised by a dad who was a frugal man and who often uttered the phrase, "respect the penny." Tony's dad knew that if you save enough pennies, you make a dollar. And if you save enough dollars, you make \$100. And if you save enough hundreds, well, you get the picture. Don't overlook the value of little things because little things can add up to big things someday.

So after he retired, Tony began walking through his neighborhood each day collecting spare change he found on the ground and he would donate what he collected to charity. His neighbors noticed his hobby, and they joined in. Soon, Tony had started a "coin collectors" club for those who wanted to collect change for charities. No one has kept records on how much money they found and donated. But the indication is that after 12 years now, they've probably donated a substantial amount.

I want you to remember this man and his simple act of collecting loose change, as you consider our Bible passage where Jesus compares the kingdom of God to a mustard seed. He calls it the tiniest seed on earth but when it grows up, it's taller than any of the other plants in the garden with branches so large that the birds of can make their nests in it. Another time he told his disciples that if they had as

much faith as a grain of mustard seed, they could say to a sycamore tree, “Pluck yourself up by the roots and plant yourself in the sea and it would obey” (Lk 17:6). I know that sounds weird but the point is that there’s more power in a small act of faith or a small act of love or a small act of service than we can imagine.

So this morning, surrounded by all sorts of trees that have grown up from, at one point, a small seed, I want us to consider some thoughts about little acts of faith that may not appear to be much but ultimately are huge.

**One thing is simply that small actions can lead to major accomplishments.**

(Norristown Ministerium’s ‘big event’ evangelism) We’re so busy looking for the big calling, the big vision, the big miracle, the big ministry God has for us to do that we overlook the little opportunities all around us. If we overlook the little good works we can do, the little kindness or encouragement or hope we can offer, if we overlook the little ways we can shine God’s light in the world, then we won’t be prepared if and when there’s a big opportunities God may send our way.

Let me ask you a question: Is God waiting for you? God has placed the power of His kingdom inside of you and I so might He then be waiting for you or for me to play some very small but important role in establishing His kingdom? This is something you and I would do good to be praying about on a daily basis.

And if we are praying that God will show us a “mustard seed size” way to further his kingdom, then opportunities will grow around us like a mustard plant. But God only provides the opportunities and the power. We have to make the decision to do the good works, to display God’s character and priorities and

values to the world. Is God waiting for you and I in some way?

The gospel itself is a rather unique celebration of the seemingly small and insignificant. Bethlehem was a small town. Nazareth was too. There was nothing earth shattering about being a carpenter or fisherman or tax-collector. Yet these are the people who became Jesus' disciples, his followers. These are the people who created the early church and wrote the testimonies in the Bible. They changed the world! Look to the little things you and I can do each day. They may just be the big things in disguise.

Nearly forty years ago, no one knows exactly, there was a push to do something in our area about hunger. There were no food pantries apparently. Susan McCartney and then others at St John's church noticed that there were those in our community that were struggling and who didn't have enough to eat. That may have been hard to believe to some at the time but often hunger is a silent issue. Of course you can see how the thought has turned into reality under the leadership of Edna and Jeb Hart and how that food ministry has grown and continues to bless many who are in need and many who volunteer to serve.

So many valuable ministries and activities that bring light and life and joy to people started with a small thought. What's God placing on your heart to do. I there something that's been sitting there for awhile. It's not that it will become huge necessarily. That's not always the goal. But it will be huge for somebody.

Today we honor graduates who are already into the next steps of their lives. You like all of us here have an opportunity to be a blessing to someone around you in

some small way as you pursue your careers goals. I don't know if it will involve picking up pennies on the street but God has something valuable waiting for you. No doubt. It just might be that He's waiting on you or me to take the first step of faith towards seeing it become reality today. Amen.