

June 16, 2024

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

Title: "The Power of Little Things"

Talk about delivering newspapers...my first steady job. Dogs and those delivering newspapers had a long and difficult relationship with dogs. Seems like it was always the small dogs that raised the biggest ruckus when I dropped the newspaper by the front doors. Our theme for the day is the power of little things.

Jesus compared the kingdom of God to a mustard seed which he called the smallest of all the seeds on earth. But when it grows up, the resulting plant is taller than any of the other plants in the garden, with branches so large that the birds of the air make their nests in its shade.

Another time in the gospel of Luke (17:6), he told his disciples that if they "...had faith the size of a mustard seed, they could say to this mulberry tree, 'be uprooted and planted in the sea and it would obey you.'" Obviously there's more power to even a little bit of faith than you or I may have ever thought. The power of little things.

It's interesting. The message of Jesus seems to have a preference for the seemingly small and insignificant things becoming great. Bethlehem was a small town. Nazareth was too. Calvary was a tiny spot on the globe. There was nothing particularly significant about the profession of carpenter or fisherman or tax-collector. None of the disciples or even Jesus himself held positions of power and significance. The tiny mustard seed called "the church" that they planted 2,000 years ago showed little promise at the time, but today, of the 7½ billion people on

earth, 1 out of 3 bear the name Christian.

Don't ignore the power of little things. Someone has said the sweetest music comes only from the smaller birds. True. You don't hear many beautiful notes from turkeys, or ostriches or eagles. But you do hear it from goldfinches, and warblers and sparrows. Little things can pack a big punch of power.

A school had a food drive for people in a part of Appalachia. A man was going through the proceeds to pack the shipment. As he was organizing all the cans, he came upon a little brown paper sack. In it was a peanut butter sandwich, an apple, and a cookie. Apparently one of the kids had given up their lunch for some hungry person; a small gesture, yet when word got around of this child's gift, it was a big boost to the giving for this project. One little lunch made a big difference. It touched lives.

The story of the feeding of the 5,000 is also like that. One person's loaves and fishes somehow became enough to feed a huge crowd. A little bit offered to Jesus goes a long way. Think about that! Don't ignore the power of little things. Don't ignore the power of a single voice to change the world. But of course, for that one voice to change the world, it has to be used. There has to be an action taken, however small to start the ball rolling.

Little things can make a big contribution to achieving a successful outcome in any undertaking. I read about a basketball coach that always made a big deal with his players about showing up to practice and to games with their socks on correctly. Yes, there's a correct way to do it. Apparently, if don't properly smooth

out wrinkles in the socks around their heels and little toes, these wrinkles can cause blisters it affects a player's performance at crucial times.

Maybe you feel like a little thing, a person of little consequence. If so, the message is, "put your life in God's hands and you can do great things." When Jesus spoke of the mustard seed, he was explaining the kingdom of God. How does the kingdom come? One person at a time through people who are willing to give to God whatever small gift they might have and this is the secret of the mustard seed: whatever you place in God's hands will be multiplied many times more than the level of ability or influence you think you have (exponentially bigger). It's been proven time and time again.

Don't think, for instance, "I'm not very important or needed in this church." You would be wrong if you feel that way. The ministry of our church is really, a bunch of little things (examples) but the sum of those little things can have a tremendous impact for good for all of us.

Has God given you some gift you can place in His hands to watch Him multiply it? Remember, the thing about seed is that they takes time to grow. You can't forget about it. You gotta stick with it, water it. They may show no promise for a long time but suddenly something sprouts and, lo and behold, it's a giant Sequoia. God loves little things that He can use to His glory--little things like you and me. Amen.