

"Increase our faith!"

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[0 : 00] And turn again to the portion that we read together in the Gospel of Luke. And look at the small account that is there from verse 5 through 6.

The apostles said to the Lord, increase our faith. And the Lord said, if you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, be uprooted and planted in the sea, and it would obey you.

It's comforting to know that we are not alone in our experiences. In the experiences of our life and the experience of the Christian life.

And here in this small section we have the voice of the apostles exclaiming to their Savior, increase our faith.

And let us not forget who these men are who are asking for an increase of their faith. These are the same men who have followed Christ through.

[1 : 11] They have seen the miracles that no other eye had ever seen. Miraculous sights, miraculous healings. And still they felt a lack of faith.

Great faith and little faith are biblical truths. But these apostles declare to increase our faith.

And it's a comfort knowing this. The men that walked alongside him and talked with the Lord, our Lord, knew a need of faith.

And how do we feel tonight? We could be saying in our hearts that we lack faith in the situation that we are in. We may feel that our faith is so weak.

But rest assured that you are not alone in these thoughts. This was a joint voice of the disciples. This was a voice essentially of the church of its time.

[2 : 26] Commendably, they did not ask for anything else. It wasn't people nor equipment. But firstly, more faith. It was a unified voice.

A voice they could all agree on. Each of them felt some sort of a lack. Each felt some sort of a weakness.

And the cry made before Jesus may be as personal in your soul. But it's most likely found in each of us that is sitting here tonight.

We may cry, increase our faith. We know by our experiences that the Christian life is not as the wearing of silver slippers, as Bunyan put it.

We often say to ourselves that there must be something wrong with me, being so lacking in faith. But we must be aware that the devil will employ such things that arise in our minds.

[3 : 35] It is good to talk. It is good to hear the experiences of each other. Others who have been on this path for maybe a lifetime.

And often it is a relief to know when you hear of someone of experience speak of how they felt or how they are feeling.

And how reassuring it is as believers to know that we are not alone in the experiences and our feelings. The believer will cry the most profound prayer of their lives in as little as three or four words.

Towards the shepherd who knows us. It's a healthy cry, increase our faith. But where does it stem from?

You can scoff back over the passages prior to what we read. We can probably see why. There was a forgiving of each other seven times as we read.

[4 : 47] There's a parables of teaching of the rich man and Lazarus, the dishonest manager, the servant who cannot serve two masters. The salt that loses its taste is thrown out.

There is much teaching in this section that is hard. There is much teaching in this section that is hard. We can see who can keep all these teachings.

No wonder these men are saying increase our faith. Because on the other hand, they are saying we need help to do all these things.

We need help to be the people that Christ wants us to be. And often that is our cry.

Through the impossibilities of life. Things that we don't understand. Things that we can't understand.

[5 : 49] These hard things that we experience. We often find ourselves saying we need help. It's healthy for the Christian to say he needs help.

The Christian has a hunger for more. A hunger for an increase. You know, maybe it's just in our nature to want more.

The world keeps claiming more. Wanting more. The world wants more riches. The world wants more things. More possessions.

More fame. But the Christian wants to be enriched by the spirit of Christ. They want to know Christ better. They want to serve Christ more.

They want to love Christ beyond the love that they currently know. They want to be a better Christian. And we are left saying, I need help.

[6 : 56] Maybe even such as its apostles say, I need more faith. My faith is, sometimes I've heard it explained of getting on a plane.

You know, there's some knowledge and some trust exercised. You don't understand everything of getting in the plane. You exercise some sort of faith in getting into it.

But it's far more than that, I feel. You know, that faith, just the faith of having a faith in a plane will not help us when our world falls apart.

When it's beyond all understanding. When it's beyond all possibilities. And it is beyond all reason.

Yes, there's a trust element and a knowledge element. But our faith in Christ is deeper than the faith of jumping on a plane.

[8 : 03] Faith is the assurance of things hoped for the convictions of things not seen. Hebrews 11. Following that is the hall of faith of the faithful servants of God.

And they're not there because they got there with ease. Increase our faith can easily be something maybe fearful to ask for.

That assurance does not grow easily within us. And James spoke something like it on Sunday night. Of the plant that had to be planted and then put outside.

And it was challenged by the winds of conflict. And it grew. Faith is often nurtured but often tested. That we grasp whole.

We have a firmer grasp on that faith. A faith that is tested and proven will grow strong roots. The deeper the roots of the tree, the stronger it stands.

[9 : 10] That faith grows deep within the Christian. And the growth of the depth from the heart of the Christian will show itself on the surface of their lives.

But the Lord responds to them. In verse 6. With the words, If you had faith like the grain of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, be uprooted and planted in the sea.

And it would obey you. And the first thing you might ask is, well, how big is a mustard seed? Turns out it's only about between one and two millimeters big.

And we almost ask ourselves again, is it that? How big my faith is? My faith isn't even that big because maybe we think that we cannot uproot trees.

Mark 11 says that if we had faith in God, we could tell this mountain to be taken up and lifted into the sea. But we can't move mountains by the power of our words.

[10 : 20] And I can't help wonder how small our faith is in the sight of God. No one has ever moved trees or mountains with a word.

But this, the phrasing of it, is just a common Jewish term to suggest that someone has accomplished something great or momentous.

they can say that they had moved mountains or uprooted trees with as little a faith as a mustard seed. With that little faith, the Christian is enabled to do great things.

We must remember that in our lives. We often doubt our faith. And I found the quote anonymously mentioned that some people think they need the faith the size of a mountain to move a mustard seed.

We often think that we can't do any great works with such a little faith.

[11 : 34] It's sufficient. It's not the strength of your faith that saves, but the truth of our faith, the martyr John Roger claims. Now, if you can imagine you're for a walk and you get a small stone in your shoe and you know it's affecting your walk as you keep going and it's bothering you and you can't forget that it's there.

You know, and you might stop and for else thing, I'll have to take it out. When you tip it upside down, it's not the rock that you thought was in your foot.

It's just a grain of gravel usually. And you can think, wow, that little grain of gravel, you know, affected me so much. And you know, our faith can be like that in a sense.

Not that we stop and take it out, but that the size of that little grain, like that little mustard seed, you know, it's felt in the Christian life.

We feel it working in us. You know, no one else can see it. And we walk differently because of it. Sometimes it's an uncomfortable feeling for us.

[12 : 58] And maybe sometimes we feel that it's disappeared completely. And you might think it's gone, but then it reappears, maybe coming back with a jab.

But when that little grain is your saving faith, your saving grace, it's a comforting assurance to know its presence.

You know it's there, even though some days it might be uncomfortable. That so small a grain can have such an effect on us.

It can influence our walk for good. But the Christian will value that faith like no other. It is a great grace and gift of God.

Sure, many will laugh at the Christian and say, what are you doing believing in that? What are you doing trusting in that? They think it's ridiculous to treasure that faith.

[14 : 09] Because they want to run their own lives. They see it as a hindrance. But the Christian treasures it. To be the man and woman, the men and women that Christ teaches us to be.

To be someone that would fulfill all the parables and teachings. Is it more than faith that we need?

You know, it says in Corinthians that, if I have all prophetic power, and I understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, ask to remove mountains, that I have no love.

I am nothing. Faith without love doesn't work. Even if you have all faith, it doesn't work.

You know, faith can be blind. Faith can be misinterpreted. That's what the other religions are.

They're faithful to their religion. It's almost like the Pharisees were faithful.

[15 : 25] The Pharisees had a love for the law. And righteous, and they were faithful in their law keeping. But their love was misplaced.

Their love was in the law rather than in God. So love is the driving force of faith in a sense. And you could always imagine that faith is a key that opens the door.

Gifted to us from Christ. But the key is not on its own. The key is the main element that opens the door.

But the key has a key ring attached. And attached to the key ring are all these tokens of maybe hope, strength, knowledge. But the key ring itself that holds them all together is love.

That's what binds them. That's what keeps them. They do not come apart from each other. And we can recall Luther's famous quote, which some of you may know that we are saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone.

[16 : 48] We've got the key, but it all comes together. It all comes tied together, not to be separated.

What counts as faith working through love? Galatians 5, verse 6. You know, when we feel overcome in our lives, when we don't understand a thing that is happening to us, when the world has sucked everything from us, hold to your faith.

Grab a hold of your faith. You know, it is, in a sense, your key to overcoming the world. It says in the book of John that, for the letter of John, in chapter 5, that for everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world.

And this is the victory that has overcome the world, your faith. who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?

May love drive us. May we have a love for one another, a love for Christ. May we build ourselves up in love, showing an increasing love that grows and we desire that increases and through that love increasing.

[18 : 38] It will be true of us as Paul desired for the Corinthians, that our hope is that your faith will increase together.

May these thoughts be blessed to us of the faith that we hold on to, the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, one of whom we cannot else but go to in times when we do not understand why things happen and how we are to understand things.

And we're left lost in our souls, but we cling to the faith that we have, to the love that Christ puts in us.

may we know it, may we show it to one another that we will all together increase in our faith.

Amen. May these be blessed to our thoughts in our ongoing Christian lives. Amen. Amen.