



THE MESSENGER

FEBRUARY 6, 2022

NEWS AND NOTES

Congregational Meeting
TBD

Weekly Bible Studies
Tuesdays on Zoom

Times of Service
Sunday

Bible study: 9:45 AM
Worship: 10:45 AM; 6 PM

Wednesday

Bible study: 7:30 PM
(Immediately followed by a
short worship service)

First Friday of Month
Singing

September 3, 7:30

Address and Contact

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Christ
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LIKE A SEED

We make a mistake if we imagine Jesus' parables to be illustrations designed only to clarify truth. In fact, they were meant to conceal it from the disinterested and hostile. Interestingly, his method seems to have bothered his disciples. Take a moment to read Matthew 13:10-17.

Though his disciples were blessed to receive clearer and more direct instruction, Jesus often phrased things in ways even they could not understand without reflection and/or his own explanation. (Matthew 15:15-16; 16:5-12; John 16:16-30)

Jesus was fond of comparing faith to a seed. Sometimes he used that metaphor in ways and at times that seem odd, difficult to understand, and even out of place. One such occasion is Luke 17:6. In his response to the apostle's request for increased faith, Jesus 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.* I suspect that in the moment his apostles were likely thinking what Christians today often think upon reading such statements, "Uhhh...what?"

Taking the time to reflect upon such statements, as baffling as they may appear at first glance, is rewarding and instructive. In verses 1-4 Jesus was teaching his disciples not to be the cause of temptation and to be extraordinarily liberal in forgiveness. It is easy to understand why they asked for increased faith when considering what he said in verses 3 and 4. *If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, "I repent," you must forgive him.* To be *that* willing to forgive seems impossible. It does not come naturally and will be viewed by most as naive and foolish. Enter the seed metaphor.

In another place Jesus pointed out that the mustard seed is quite small yet produces a plant larger than most. (Matthew 13:31-32) Understanding that is key to understanding *part* of

Members Needing Our Prayers

Larry Billiter, Rick Small, Jill Harrison, Ralph Fox, Benny Poynter, Janet Brundige, Joyce Bolton and family, Karen Spivey, Rhonda Boyd, Cindy Bradbury, Paul Atkisson

Others Needing Prayers

Allison Walker, Dwight Antle, Randy Cates, Larry McTeer, Charlene Michael, Ann Little, Mary Jean Snyder, Mark Nickles, Dale Lyons, Adam Fusco, Rachel and Sarah White, Duane Harrod, Grace Meyer, Meredith Nicholson, Alice and Lonnie Anderson, Glen Perkins, Ethan Shelton, Terry Daniels, Harvey Baker, Leroy Weatherholt, Robert Brundige, John Blessing, William Roberts, Paul and Marrian Lyda, Dana and her children, Shane (a relative of Cindi), Ron Harmon, Debbie Lanphear, Veronica Bowman

To Our Guests

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what he is teaching here. The seed is not meant to remain a seed. It is meant to be planted and cultivated, thereby producing something much larger than the tiny seed suggested it would become. Such is the progression of faith. It is not meant to remain static, a small thing easily blown away by the slightest breeze. It is meant to grow, gaining strength and stability through cultivation and care. (Ephesians 4:11-14)

But what about telling a tree to uproot and plant itself in the sea? Isn't that impossible? Not for God and those he empowers. Yet telling a tree to do such a thing is not the point here. If such a task is deemed impossible, is it more difficult than *truly* forgiving someone who sins against us seven times in a single day when they say they're sorry? I would argue that it isn't and point to how people treat one another as proof. But for the one whose faith is increasing the once seemingly impossible instructions of Jesus, though still difficult sometimes, are not the unachievable goals they once seemed to be. *That's* the point of our Lord's metaphor in Luke 17:6.

May we reflect deeply upon our Lord's mysterious statements and reap the benefits of doing so. Adam Litmer

Elders	Deacons	Evangelist
Troy Antle	Richard Brundige	Adam Litmer
David Collins	Adam Daniels	
	Adam Litmer	
	Frank Patton	
	Jamie Powell	
	Pat Seabolt	
	Matt Thompson	
	James Weatherholt	

