

Mustard Seed Faith

Functional faith

Faith and its mode of operation is the most important subject in the life of the believer. It must be understood properly otherwise believers in Christ become frustrated and discouraged. Much of the reason for slow and limited spiritual growth or failure to follow Christ is rooted in teaching and preaching incorrect or incomplete biblical doctrine. Only with correct, complete and anointed biblical teaching of the Word of God and a crucified response will we experience spiritual growth in the Church.

First, I draw your attention to the incorrect teaching concerning "Mustard Seed Faith" and the generally accepted equation with "little faith." Little faith, therefore, has come to be understood as faith that is as small as the size of a grain of mustard seed. Even the NIV bible "translation" adds the word "small" to the text in Matt. 17:20 and leaves out Matt. 17:21, which is the key Scripture in understanding Mustard Seed Faith. This understanding has resulted in ineffective and a non-functional faith or dead faith, James writes, "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone" (Jam 2:17), and, "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" Jam. 2:20. From these Scriptures we conclude that having functional faith is directly related to the product. Functional faith is able to move mountains and all the rest of satan's road blocks and oppositions. It is for this reason that Jesus continually reprimands His disciples for exhibiting little faith.

Secondly, The apostle Paul teaches that we need all faith to move mountains. (1 Cor 13:2). Jesus teaches that moving mountain faith can't be mixed or associated with doubt in the same heart. (Mark 11:22, 23). When humanly impossible problems need to be addressed Jesus makes reference to have Mustard Seed Faith, meaning that they need functional faith empowered by the Spirit and not according to the law. Jesus wants us to live by functional faith, "... without faith it is impossible to please Him (God)" (Hebrews 11:6).

It is faith through which God is able to impart grace (Rom. 4:16)

It is faith through which God is able to impart mercy in time of need (Hebr. 4:16).

Faith that is able to forgive and forget (Luke 17:3).

Faith that is powerful enough to cast out demons (Mat. 17:21)

Faith that is able to ask and receive (Mark 11: 23)

When it comes to pleasing and walking in living in fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ unmixed faith is required. All through the Old Testament it is clear that God does not approve of mixture when it relates to Him He wants singleness of spirit and mind.

Leviticus 19:19 Ye shall keep my statutes.

You shall not let thy cattle gender with a diverse kind:

You shall not sow thy field with mingled seed:

neither shall a garment mingled of linen and woolen come upon thee.

In this verse the Lord speaks to Israel through Moses that they have to keep His statutes and in keeping with his Word they are warned about mixture. Linen stands for service without perspiration while wool indicates service in ones own strength causing perspiration. Linen equates with service in the Holy Spirit, wool indicates service in the flesh. (Ezek. 44:17)

The message of God to His people is one of unmixed worship as is seen throughout the whole of the Old Testament

God cannot be worshipped when there is a mixture of faith and works in the hearts of the believers. To bless us God, our Father, must have our single-minded adoration in and through Jesus Christ as the Source and Subject. God the Father can only be reached through His Son to whom He delivered all things (Matt. 11:27; John 13:3; John 16:15; 17: 1,2,3; Hebr. 1:2,3) who reveals the Father to whomsoever He wills, (Matt. 11:27).

The secret of the mustard seed

Looking at the mustard seed we see a beautiful picture of God's grace in solving the biggest problems in the world with the least of all the seeds of the earth. (Mark 4:31).

What then are the qualities of the mustard seed that translate into faith that accomplish the impossible with God?

Why is continuous forgiveness only possible with mustard seed faith? (Luke 17:3-6).

What have we been missing concerning the mustard seed?

Have we misapprehended what the mustard seed represents other than its little size?

Have we been looking at the reference to "a grain of mustard seed-faith" from traditionally conveyed perspectives?

First we must agree that Jesus is correct about the mustard seed being the smallest seed. (Matt. 13:32; Mark 4:31). To get a revelation about the hidden meanings not directly familiar to us one must understand how and when faith works. The need for us to look at it in the context of the passage, how Jesus values little faith whether He really appreciates it or not. Through this inductive study approach we will find our answers and confirms Jesus reactions to little faith.

Jesus isn't looking for performance, but for action through the faith of the Son of God in the heart of the believer, (Gal. 2:20).

EXAMPLES OF WHAT LITTLE PRODUCES IN THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER:

1. God promises provision but little faith results in poverty and ANXIETY

Matthew 6:30--Wherefore, if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith. (Anxiety is evidence of little faith because it lacks God's revelation that He will provide for us at all times, (Rom. 8:32).

2. God promises protection but little faith results in FEAR

Matthew 8:26--And He says unto them, Why are ye fearful? O you of little faith. Then He arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. (Little faith fails to grasp God's faith for protection).

3. God call us to do the impossible but little faith leaves us with DOUBT

Matthew 14:31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O you of little faith, wherefore did you doubt? (Little faith resulted in doubt--looking at two things at the same time, the waves and Jesus--causing Peter to sink)

4. God's Word is true and totally reliable but little faith causes the believer to rely on REASONING

Matthew 16:8--Which when Jesus perceived, He said unto them, O you of little faith, why reason you among yourselves, because you have brought no bread? (They failed to understand Jesus' teaching and began to reason).

5. Jesus commands us to cast out demons but little faith results in a "LACK OF SPIRITUAL POWER."

Matthew 17:20-21--And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief (little faith): for verily I say unto you, If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, . . . nothing shall be impossible unto you. 21 Howbeit this kind goes not out but by prayer and fasting.

(Little faith causes impotency in the Spirit, but Jesus gives us the solution to the problem: Fasting and praying causes purity it separates us from the worldly influences and draws us to God and in this union we receive functional faith, mustard seed faith or the pure God directed faith of Jesus). (Mark 11:22).

Conclusions:

From the above Scripture references it becomes very clear that Jesus disapproves of His disciples' attitude of non-functional little faith. They are not capable of solving any spiritual problem and reason according fear. We can conclude, therefore, that the small size of the mustard seed has nothing to do with the faith that Jesus is expecting from them, but as we see in Mark 4:31, this small mustard seed size refers to the Kingdom of God and not to faith. Now we know that the Kingdom of God is established through faith, so the dimension of faith enters in somewhere, somehow.

Endless preaching and writing have caused the Church to be imprinted with "small mustard seed faith = small faith and that's all you need." Jesus, however, teaches no such equation when speaking of faith He points, not to the quantity or size of the mustard seed, but to the qualities of the mustard seed. Faith is of the heart (Rom. 10:10) and then heart condition has nothing to do with quantity but everything with quality.

Jesus refers to the following qualities of Mustard Seed Faith:

1. Its Purity: the mustard seed can not be mixed or mutated.
2. Its Indestructible: even fire can not destroy the mustard seed.
3. Its Multiplication: the roots spread very rapidly in every direction.
4. It is pungent: it has power on impact

Note: It is when Jesus refers to the Kingdom of God He refers to the size of the grain of mustard seed-Mark 4:31

I. The lack of Mustard Seed Faith is primarily caused by:

- Doing your own thing, (Mat. 7:21-28).
- Wrong problem solving in fear, (Psalm 55).
- Getting involved with seeking comfort and power through occultism, etc. (Rev. 6:15-17)
- Not heading and trusting in God's Voice and God's Word, (Hebr 4:2; Mat. 12:21; Phil 3:4; 1 Tim. 6:17; 1 Thess. 2:4).

II. How do we get restored and renewed:

- Surrender and turning from a self-serving attitude to a God-serving sacrificial attitude through an obedient walk in the Holy Spirit. (Romans 12: 1-2)

Reasons for little or lack of Faith

²⁰For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.
²¹Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, *then* have we confidence toward God. ²²And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. --1 John 3:20-22

Mind-sets that cause a deficiency of faith:

1. Not seeking God according to the truth set forth in the Word of God.
2. Distorted perception of authority resulting in difficulty in submitting (Jude v. 8). Resulting in unbelief and skepticism of the Scriptures and inability to recognize the authority of Jesus Christ as Lord.
3. Feelings of inferiority, which might be caused by parental abuse, resulting in feeling of rejection and unworthiness, fear of failing and learning.
4. Fear of rejection most likely caused by broken promises, which set the stage for distrust, cynicism, skepticism and independence.
5. Feelings of pride, their own righteousness and importance causing a form of insanity. (Luke 1:51).
6. General state of depression is possibly caused by:
 - a. Past reliance on resources and involvement in occult practices in direct disagreement and conflict with the Spirit of truth and the Word of God.
 - b. Being controlled and dominated by other people and anger.
 - c. Having a chemical imbalance of the body.
7. Unresolved guilt and an inability to accept forgiveness. (Matt. 18)
8. Fear of losing meaningful possessions. (Psalm 73)
9. Escapism and Avoidant Personality Syndrome. (Ps. 55)
10. Generational curses.