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When Less Moves More

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“So the Lord said, “If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you.” (Luke 17:6)

It is not how much faith you have but what you have your faith in that makes the difference. On May 15, 1997, Amazon was listed on the Nasdaq Stock Market. If someone had invested \$10,000 in Amazon stock, they would not have to worry about college tuition since their investments would have grown to over \$300,000. However, if someone invested \$1,000,000 in WeWork, a previously popular company among entrepreneurial millennials, they would have tragically lost their investment, with the company recently filing for bankruptcy. It appears that when it comes to investing, where you place your financial resources is more important than how much resources you have. Could the same principle also apply to our faith?

In the Gospel of Luke, the disciples make a surprising request from Jesus: they ask Him to increase their faith. After being with Jesus, one would think the disciples possessed great faith. However, seeing Jesus' faith seems to have caused them to question their own. In response, Jesus speaks to their want of faith and redefines how they measure it. He says, "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. "

In ancient Palestine, the black mustard seed was familiar and could grow up to 10 feet in height. What is unique about this seed is that it is the smallest seed of plants cultivated during Bible times. Here, Jesus lovingly affirms the disciples by focusing on the faith they possess rather than concentrating on the faith they lack. He turns their measuring scales upside down and gives them a lesson in Messianic math. Messianic math works differently from mortal arithmetic. Messianic math declares that less has the power to move more in God's hands, it believes the size of one's faith does not diminish the strength of God, and it confesses all things are possible even when things seem improbable. For Jesus, it is not how much faith the disciples have but what they have their faith in that makes the difference. When faith is placed in the hands of Jesus, even small faith can accomplish amazing things, not always by removing difficulty but by giving believers the strength to face it.

Like the disciples, we can often get discouraged when we see the size of our little faith. Doubt can creep in, causing us to worry and question God's goodness and power. However, we do not need to despair because of our deficiency. Ellen White writes in the *Desire of Ages*, "when the mustard seed is cast into the ground, the tiny germ lays hold of every element that God has provided for its nutriment, and it speedily develops sturdy growth. If you have faith like this, you will lay hold upon God's word, and upon all the helpful agencies He has appointed. Thus your faith will strengthen, and will bring to your aid the power of heaven." May our small faith take hold of God's eternal word today as we trust in Him.

REFLECTION:

1. Consider the example of investing in stocks versus investing in faith. How does this metaphor challenge your perspective on the significance of where you place your faith rather than the quantity of faith you possess?
2. Have you ever felt discouraged by the size of your faith? How does Jesus' object lesson of the mustard seed challenge your perspective on how you measure faith's size?
3. Think about areas in your life where you may have placed your faith in the wrong things or misplaced priorities. What lessons did you learn? How might you shift your faith toward God's word if you are in a similar situation?
4. How can you apply the "Messianic math" concept in your daily life? How can you recalibrate your understanding of faith to focus more on what you place your faith in rather than its quantity?

PRAYER REQUESTS AND RESOURCES

- Join us tonight for Vespers with Pastor Greg and Kim Taylor from the Southern Union Youth Department at 6:30 and 8:30 in the University Church.
- Find a meaningful sense of belonging by joining a student or faculty/staff LifeGroup today: [click here](#).
- Follow @ministryandmissions on Instagram for updates on events and programs, and it is also a place where you will find encouraging messages. Also, [check out our website](#) for many new resources.
- Talk with Chaplain [Anna Bennett](#) or [Joseph Khabbaz](#) if you need someone to pray with or have a desire to grow spiritually.