

Monday, October 11 *“Love Through Faith”*

“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” (Luke 17:6).

In the verses before this verse, Jesus had told His disciples to avoid putting any kind of temptation in the path of others. How is this possible? In and of ourselves it is not possible to obey this command or any of God’s other commands. Then, we, like the disciples must ask of our Lord, *“Increase our faith”* (Luke 17:5).

How does Jesus respond to their request? He assures them that even faith as small as a mustard seed can accomplish great things. Faith accomplishes great things because faith is in the God of the impossible. It is God who gives faith and the ability to act on it. It is God who gives us love that sacrifices our own desires for the good of others. Love as this know no limits; love serves instead of asking to be served.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, in order to measure up to Your standards, I must ask You to increase my faith. Still I fail, because I do not love You with my entire being, nor do I love my neighbors as myself. Therefore, I thank You for the gift of Your Son who met Your standard of perfection and lived that standard in my place. Forgive me, Lord, for my failures. Teach me to depend on You. Give me grace to love others as You love me. Through Christ I pray. Amen.

Tuesday, October 12 *“Faith Empowers God’s Stewards”*

“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in Me will also do the works I do; and great works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father” (John 14:12).

The writer of Hebrews defines faith: *“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen”* (Hebrews 11:1). Faith enables you to be God-pleasing stewards or managers. *“And without faith it is impossible to please Him”* (Hebrews 11:6). In Hebrews 11 there is a long list of the “heroes of faith”, listing their accomplishments, but each accomplishment is preceded with *“by FAITH”*.

Through faith, we understand that our stewardship is God working in and through us. It is not what we do, not what we give, not how we serve – but what God does, what God gives, how God serves, and our response to His love and gifts to us. God tells us His plan for our lives in Ephesians 2:10: *“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them”*. This is the definition of stewardship: doing the good works which God has prepared for us to do. God chooses, empowers and equips us to be faithful stewards.

Prayer: Lord, You are the Creator and Source of all good things. I thank You for the privilege and opportunity to be a steward of Your creation. I thank You for faith you give me which enables me to carry out Your will. In the name of Christ I pray. Amen.

Wednesday, October 13 “Being a Faithful Steward”

“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace” (1 Peter 4:10).

What if your pastor asked you to give a testimonial about your life as God’s steward? If you were asked to share how you manage and care for God’s property, what would you say? Have you considered what a faithful steward is expected to be and to do?

Stewards acknowledge that God is the Creator and source of all things, that He owns all things, and that His property is on loan to us. We glorify and honor God with our faithful lives of service and faithful use of His gifts. We live lives saying “thank you” to God for His love and mercy.

To help us to evaluate our faithfulness, take a look at your calendar, your diary, your use of resources, how your time is used for others, for worship, for Bible study, for service to others. Take note of these activities you have planned as well as those that spontaneously appear as opportunities.

May God grace us grace to be the faithful steward He has called us to be.

Prayer: Lord, I praise and thank You for who You are and all that You have done for me through Your Son Jesus. Help me to respond as a faithful steward to Your love, goodness, and mercy. May all that I do and say give You praise and glory. In Jesus’ precious name. Amen.

Thursday, October 14 *“Faithful in All Things”*

Jesus said: *“One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much”* (Luke 16:10).

In this verse Jesus is saying that faithful stewards will handle God’s gifts faithfully regardless of whether they have few or many gifts entrusted to them. What we do with what we have shows our faithfulness. One day a young man went to a bank to apply for a job. After the interview, as he was leaving, he noticed some trash on the floor. He picked it up and put it in the waste basket. Seconds later, he helped an elderly lady with the door. Unknown to the young man, the man who had interviewed him was watching him. He was promptly summoned back and given the job. The employer’s comment: *“Anyone who pays attention to the small things as you just did needs to work here.”*

Sometimes maybe we incorrectly think that small things aren’t important to God. We may think that God isn’t concerned with the small amount of money or other small blessings that I have which allows me to give only small contributions or gifts. But in the Bible God used the widow and her two mites to teach us a lesson about sacrificial giving. He used the small amount of flour and oil that the widow of Zarephath had to demonstrate that great things can result from faithful obedience. Jesus used the loaves and fish of a young boy to reveal how God can magnify a small gift. God commends our faithfulness with small things, and He doesn’t overlook what faithful people do with small things.

Small things do count. We might ask ourselves how we are handling the seemingly small things in our lives. Are we handling small things well in our homes, job, and church? With God’s help we can be faithful with ALL that we’ve been given. And in our faithfulness God will be glorified.

Prayer: Lord, please give me faith to be faithful with small things so You can trust me with more and bigger things. In Christ’s name I pray. Amen.

Friday, October 15 “Faith That Pleases God”

“And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6).

The first gifts which we read about in Scripture are the offerings made by Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam and Eve. In Genesis 4:2-4 we read, *“...Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground. In the course of time Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions.”* Both men brought offerings or gifts to the Lord. One worked the land and the other raised animals, and so their gifts were different.

There was a different attitude in their hearts. Abel gave the *“firstborn”* of this flock, while Cain wasn’t concerned about giving the first or best of his crop. God looked with favor upon Abel’s offering given in faith. God looked into the hearts of both Cain and Abel as He looks into our hearts. He saw Abel’s humble faith and gratitude. And apparently did not see that in Cain’s heart.

We need to understand that it’s not the size of our gifts and offerings which makes them acceptable to the Lord, but rather it is the attitude of our hearts toward God. God wants our gifts to be an expression of our love for Him. He wants us to give cheerfully rather than grudgingly. He wants us to give our love through faith. As noted about in Hebrews 11:6, without faith it is impossible to please God.

Knowing this story of giving by Cain and Abel will help us examine our attitude toward giving. Are you giving your first and best out of love to the Lord?

Prayer: Lord, thank You for giving me the ability and desire to give to You. Help me to willingly give my first and best to You. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.