**“Mustard Seed Faith”**

Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:1-4

2 Timothy 1:1-14

Luke 17:1-10

 Pentecost 17, Oct. 1/2, 2022

“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.”

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Bridge**

“Temptations to sin are **sure to come**”, Jesus said. “**Pay attention to yourselves**!” But, also, “**woe to the one through whom temptations come**” … to the **one who “causes one of these little ones to sin**.” And, then, there’s **sins of omission: “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 survive and thrive (and not be the target of the “woes” that Jesus spoke of) requires “**faith**”. Apostles recognized it. Jesus acknowledged its necessity. And He (Jesus) commended **enough of it to any one of us to whom He’s attached promises through baptism and the hearing of His Words** to **accomplish whatever needs to be done**: … (“**If** you have faith **like even** a grain of mustard see, you actually **could**” **survive** and **thrive** **and realize benefits and accomplish much**).

**Text**

“Jesus **loves me, this I (and I hope you all) know, for the Bible tells us so**”. **Knowledge and appreciation of that** **is “Mustard Seed Faith”**. Why that is is because it **takes hold of God’s promises**. It’s a**wareness and joy at the news of it**, so **confidence and security since God says that we can have that**. It’s **wonderful gift (faith is)** … **hearers and believers (faith holders) couldn’t be happier with that news / those Words**.

In **Habakkuk’s** experience, **he begged to hear more of it**. I keep telling my youth confirmation class that, when they have children one day, please (someone) name their son “Habakkuk” so that I can have a “Habakkuk” to baptize and help teach and nurture (such a disappointing **under-utilized name “Habakkuk” is these days**). But “**he” was faithful and listening … listening carefully even and begging (again) to hear more from God**. He **knew and** **saw**, of course, the challenges existing on this planet so unsustainable without God’s voice and grace and favor he knew was undeserved by mankind and, yet, available through God who forgives and redeems and loves. “Jesus **does** love me, and this I know, for that’s what the Bible tells me of”. The Southern Kingdom of Judah was on the cusp of an enemy invasion … and they’d been warned. They had “made their own situation”, prime for a fall, and prophets like Habakkuk knew that the results would be bad … that **God would (once again) to save if saving was an option for them** …

… and it **was**. Saving and returning to the blessings of Godly supremacy was **always Israel’s foundation**. Even with kingdoms crashing down, stock markets suffering, social issues confusing literally everyone, factioning and fake security and angers and hatreds and stupidness and just living for the day and skipping any foresight upon the future, still **God provided a way to return and repent and be restored and renewed and re-powered with** **“faith’s” “faithfulness” that really could “mustard seed” move massive trees and mountains**.

**Application**

It’s a picnic weekend, so we’re enjoy the “day”. However, we all recognize that this world is on a messed-up plan (Russia invades Ukraine, North Korea threatens everybody, Putin threatens nuclear usage, the U.S. is as divided as it ever has been, kids can change their gender body parts without parents even knowing they’re being taken to a medical team to do such things, Democrats skirt dangerously close to hating Republicans and Republicans skirt dangerously close to hating Democrats back and often first, and inflation’s climbing and housing’s becoming unaffordable, and “temptations” abound). And parents try to be their kid’s friends more than parenting. “Little ones” are left to decide for themselves on truth and we offend each other. Rather than “rebuking” to **win our brother or sister back to our friendship**, too many just walk away. We hardly “forgive” … society rarely “**repents**” … and “**forgiveness seven times** is challenged to, ever, be forgiveness one time”.

“Increase **our faith**”, and we join the “apostles” in asking for that necessary and powerful thing. And we know what it is: the “waiting for the Lord”, the “listening to His voice”, the hearing what God says when He says “the vision” of Gospel things coming and happening and promised in their “appointed time” (Christ’s incarnation by Mary and death without having, Himself, sin and resurrection as we’re given to look forward to and our “waiting” as God’s Goodness “hastens to the end” as Habakkuk writes for God of it: “the righteous shall live by **[that] faith**” / patience with impatience, anxious and desperate for every Word from God, doing right but taking no credit for it , **that** just “our **duty**” and our **use in the meanwhile of God’s time**.

“Faith” is “**faithfulness**” in listening and reacting appropriately, it itself a “**good deposit**” that **you know it is** according to Paul’s 2nd letter to Timothy.

I’d like to leave it at that other than **prayer**. What the apostles did was **petition Jesus for the faith that He said was available … in quantity and quality**. Let **us** **(like them)** ask for its fullness ourselves:

“Lord Jesus, You’ve called faith but a “grain” that blossoms to immense confidence and security as our trust is in You. We are among those who “**await all Your appointed times**”: most specifically, Your work to redeem us by Your birth, perfect life, innocent death, then glorious resurrection and ascension in flesh, but also as “**Your appointed times**” are our adoption into You by baptism and the regular hearings of Your Words and the coming Kingdom perfect in the Paradise of Heaven and the resurrection of all flesh. “**Increase our faith**” where “**faith comes from hearing and hearing Your Word**”. **Keep us** **in Your Word**. For all our challenges, and the challenges this world addresses us with, help us to **do our “duty”**. Let us never be any cause for “temptation” and the “sins of another”. Let us “repent” where (and how often) we must, and “forgive” with abundance and readiness. Lord, let us “**guard the good deposit of the Holy Spirit entrusted us**” … and “**live by faith**”. All this we ask / petition / plea for in Your name, Jesus. Amen.”