

Reading the Text

Read Luke 17.5–10 aloud slowly. Invite a second person to read it again in a different voice or translation. Afterwards, allow a moment of quiet. Listening to the Text: Luke 16:19

Wonderings

- I wonder what word, phrase, or image caught your attention
- I wonder what it feels like to hear the disciples cry out, “Increase our faith”

Icebreaker

Share a time when you felt overwhelmed, by a responsibility, a decision, or a situation beyond your control. What helped you to keep going?

Scaffolding questions into the Bible Text

Reading in Context

Before:

Jesus warns about stumbling blocks and calls for endless forgiveness; the disciples feel overwhelmed.

Here:

Jesus reframes faith as small but transformative, and service as humble, not self-rewarding.

After:

A story of healing and gratitude reminds us that discipleship is marked by mercy, humility, and readiness for God’s kingdom.

Wonderings

- I wonder why Jesus talks about forgiveness before speaking about faith
- I wonder what the disciples were feeling when they asked for “more” faith

The Mustard Seed (v. 6)

Jesus tells them that faith as small as a mustard seed can uproot a mulberry tree and plant it in the sea. It’s an absurd picture—but that’s the point. Faith isn’t about size or certainty. Even fragile trust opens the way to God’s possibility.

Wonderings

- I wonder what feels like a “mulberry tree” in your life—something impossible to move
- I wonder what it means that even the smallest trust in God can open a new future

Activity

(5 minutes):

On a scrap of paper, write one thing in the world or in your own life that feels impossible. Fold it into the shape of a seed. Hold it in your hand as a prayer: “God, I place even this tiny seed into your care.”

The Slave Parable (vv. 7–10)

This part feels uncomfortable. Jesus uses the world of slavery to make a point about service without expecting thanks. For early Christians under Roman rule, it reminded them that

discipleship was not about privilege or reward but about love lived out in humility.

Wonderings

- I wonder what feelings this image stirs in you
- I wonder how we can hear this passage today without endorsing slavery or worthlessness
- I wonder if Jesus, who “took the form of a servant” (Philippians 2.7), is pointing us towards his own way of love

Reflection on this Monologue: “Even This Seed”:

Read as a group

I can’t take much more of it.

Every time I turn on the news it’s the same—wars grinding on, children starving, people fleeing for their lives only to be turned away at borders. And then the climate: floods here, fires there, warnings about the future. And that’s before I even think about my own mess—family worries, bills piling up, the daily grind of just getting through.

It’s overwhelming. It’s paralyzing. And I find myself saying what the disciples said: “Increase my faith, Lord. Please, just give me more.” Because whatever I have feels so small. Too small to cope with all this. And then I hear Jesus’ reply in church today, about mustard seeds and mulberry trees, and it unsettles me.

I wanted comfort. I wanted a spiritual top-up. But he doesn’t hand out “more faith” like fuel for a car. He says it’s not about quantity at all. Even the tiniest faith— even the kind that feels like nothing – is enough to do the impossible.

Really? Enough to imagine peace in Gaza? Enough to believe that forgiveness is possible even when wounds are raw? Enough to keep loving when no one says thank you? My faith feels like a whisper, a threadbare prayer at bedtime.

And yet maybe that’s what he means. Maybe it’s not about me holding the world together with my faith. Maybe it’s about daring to place even this tiny fragment, this seed, into God’s hands. To trust that God is at work in ways I cannot see. It’s not about certainty. Not about being strong enough. It’s about starting, however small.

Perhaps my task is not to fix the world, but simply to take one step of love, one act of forgiveness, one prayer for peace. To trust that God can take even that and plant it in impossible soil.

So yes, I’m still overwhelmed. But maybe my prayer can shift, just a little. Not “Lord, give me more faith,” but “Lord, teach me to trust that even this seed – this tiny, fragile seed- is enough.”

Wonderings

Choose a few of these to talk about

- I wonder what overwhelms you most when you hear the news or look at the world around you.
- I wonder how it feels to admit, "my faith feels too small."
- I wonder what it means that Jesus doesn't give "more faith" as fuel but speaks of a seed already within us.
- I wonder if you have ever discovered that a very small act of faith- a quiet prayer, a simple kindness- turned out to be enough.
- I wonder what "mulberry tree in the sea" moment you are longing for in your own life or in the world.
- I wonder how it feels to shift the prayer from "increase my faith" to "teach me to trust that even this seed is enough."
- I wonder what tiny step of trust God might be inviting you to take this week.

Going Deeper (Optional)

Explore the historical setting: Luke's communities were small, fragile, often persecuted. Faith did not need to be vast to sustain them. How might that mirror small church communities today?

Reflect on the contrast: disciples are not to expect thanks for serving, but they are to live with gratitude (the story of the healed Samaritan leper follows immediately).

Wonderings

- I wonder how we balance service without reward and gratitude for God's gifts
- I wonder how gratitude might transform the way we live out our discipleship

What would you like to share with your worship community from this discussion ?

Insights for today in your context

What photos, hymns, worship songs, stories, examples and practical outcomes of living out the gospel would you share...or pray about when your wider worship community comes to worship together

Closing prayer

God of hidden seeds,
when we feel overwhelmed,
remind us that even
small faith is enough.
Give us courage to forgive,
to risk love,
to serve without seeking reward.
Through Christ, who came among
us as servant and friend.
Amen.

Photo: Lucas Chizzali, Unsplash



HeartBeat

Overwhelmed

Sunday 5th of October

Lectionary Reading:
Luke 17.5-10

Gathering and Prayer

Begin with a short time of silence.

Prayer

God of mustard seeds
and mulberry trees,
we bring our small
and fragile faith.
Breathe your Spirit upon us.
Stretch our imagination.
Strengthen our trust.
Teach us to walk
in humility and love.
Amen.