

3 Lessons From the Mustard Seed for Your Modern-Day Faith

I remember when I was a little girl, one of my Sunday School teachers gave me a heart necklace made of clear stone that had a mustard seed inside. I remember looking at that mustard seed, thinking, *My faith is tiny, like this little seed, but I want big faith to believe in God for the impossible.* Through the years, God has grown my faith—but honestly, sometimes I pray that same prayer and feel as though my faith hasn't grown nearly as much as I would like.

Jesus told a story about a mustard seed (Matt. 13:31-32). The audience likely busted up in laughter because mustard plants were outlawed in Israel, because they were such a mess and took over the whole garden. Jesus used the mustard seed as an illustration for His kingdom. While the world admires fast and furious, big and bold, the way of Jesus is usually slow and steady with patience and perseverance.

Ahh, that's where the rub comes in for us. Our culture impacts us, and we find ourselves impatient and antsy, wanting God to hurry up. We admire the big and beautiful and disregard the tiny but triumphant work of God. I see it in my own life all too often. Give me a choice between a speaking engagement of thousands or an engagement of 25 or 50, and I'll go for the bigger. But the Holy Spirit faithfully reminds me not to despise the small things where God's work may run deeper.

I read recently that Alan Kreider, a church historian, wrote about the early church, describing it as having a "culture of patience." Early Christians were marked not only by their love for one another, but also by patience and perseverance. They recognized that God's purposes were both unhurried and

unstoppable. They understood the power and potential of the mustard seed.

What are the lessons for us, living in this present culture, from the mustard seed?

Don't despise the small things. God's work in the heart of a tiny child is as significant as God's work in a church of 10,000. God's work in a tiny village in Africa might have a larger impact than that of a huge Western church. Invite God into both the big and the small areas of your life. He desires to do deep work in both.

Don't be in such a hurry. We tend to get impatient with God when we don't see Him moving fast enough. We wonder, "Does He care?" Yes, absolutely He does. But He is never in a hurry. His deepest work is slow and steady. Are you praying for a wandering child, wondering if God will ever answer? God values perseverance. Keep praying. Are you impatient because you're not seeing old patterns change fast enough? Keep pressing. The Holy Spirit is more than able; He is simply moving according to His timetable and not yours.

Do cultivate a heart of resting trust. God's kingdom is alive in you. Rest in the fact that He is transforming you into the image of his Son. When you don't see progress, praise Him that He is always working in love. His plans are always good, and He is always faithful.

Lord Jesus, my attitude is often shaped by the culture around me. Remind me today that I belong to you. I long for my spirit to be in perfect unity with Your spirit, living in the rhythm of your timetable. Teach me to patiently persevere, trusting that everything you do is good. Amen. {eoa}

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