

CONNECT! SUNDAY REFLECTION

27th Sunday in Ordinary Time | For Sunday, October 6, 2019

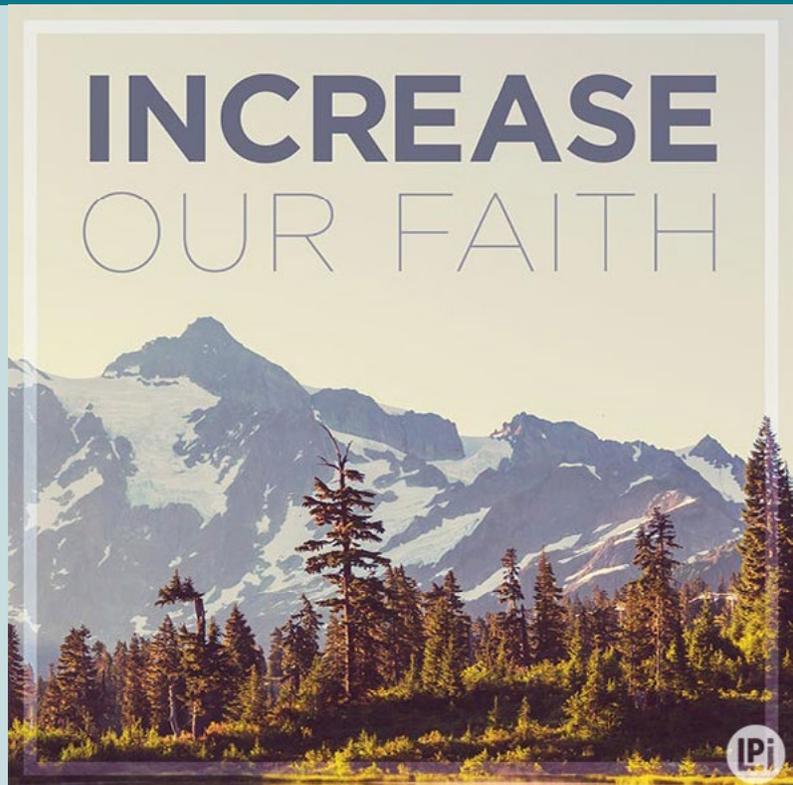
Big Things In Small Packages

Rev. Mark Suslenko

Habakkuk 1:2-3; 2:2-4

2 Timothy 1:6-8, 13-14

Luke 17:5-10



“Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and clamorous discord.” These words, uttered by the prophet Habakkuk, are as relevant today as they were the day they were first penned. It almost seems that every day we are exposed to another act of violence or display of discord in our world, nation, and even our Church. We are becoming increasingly polarized and find it more and more challenging to live on common ground. “How long, O Lord? I cry for help but you do not listen!”

As people of faith, we mistakenly believe that if we pound the door of heaven long and hard enough, God will produce some tangible results. Whether this takes the form of using His strong arm to counter violence with peace, bring wisdom to the minds of the perpetrators, mete out some measure of justice, or simply end the world once and for all, it doesn't matter. We want to see results! After all, doesn't it make sense that if I work hard enough to merit some kind of Divine favor that I should get something in return? This may make some sense through human eyes, but not God's.

God tells us to wait. The vision will surely come. Wait. We don't like to hear that. If we are looking for more dramatic results, we can easily find ourselves getting discouraged. We may even find ourselves asking, “If God is not going to do more about this mess we are in, then what's the point?” We lose faith. Waiting is difficult as it requires patient endurance without substantial immediate gratification. We tend to think that we are more profitable in God's eyes if we go above and beyond in our relationship with Him. But, it doesn't work quite like that.

Humanity has caused its own mess. Yet, we want God to fix it. This line of thinking misplaces responsibility. Wanting God to be the “cleanup guy” is just a form of cowardice because we are afraid or unwilling to do the job

ourselves. So, if God is not the One who is responsible for straightening things out, where does that leave us in terms of faith?

“If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you.” The request the disciples made of Jesus ought to be on our lips each day. “Increase our faith.” While the dynamics of human life are complex and difficult to resolve, the matter of faith is really quite simple. All one really needs to do is ask one very basic question about him or herself. Do I believe that I am intentionally here because of a loving God who carefully fashioned and formed every element of my being into the incredible gifted person I find myself to be? If the answer is no, there is no need to read any further. If the answer is yes, then you possess the faith the size of a mustard seed and incredible things await you!

We cannot just sit in our rooms and expect God to deal with what is going on outside our windows. We have to go out the door and chip away at it ourselves. We have the faith to do so. What we are asked to do in prayer is to create space so that God can do His work in calling us back to Him and reminding us of who we are. That is why the Our Father is such a perfect prayer. It says all that needs to be said.

Regardless of what the future holds and how long we have to wait to achieve God’s vision, it all really doesn’t matter. We have today, and as each moment unfolds into the next is where we touch the holy and wonderful presence of God. Seek this first and the rest shall follow.

If we keep going back to the fountain of faith and taking up the task of discipleship, then at the end of the day, we will be simply doing what we were obliged to do and find ourselves to be good and faithful servants. Whether we

do more or less than our brother or sister in faith doesn’t matter. We are being faithful lovers of the Divine Source of love itself. Much of the dramatics of life are outside of our control. But our opinions, thoughts, proposed solutions, reactions, ideologies, philosophies, and long-range planning are not. We have control over these. We also have control over the day-to-day comings and goings of our lives. Maybe if people saw us living life a bit differently, it would trickle over and produce good fruit in other places. That’s what the whole business of sowing seeds is all about.

Don’t worry about tomorrow. The agenda for today is sufficient. Remember that you are loved and that the God who loves you is with you. Love as profoundly and deeply as possible. Keep your eyes fixed on the One for whom you long, and do what needs to be done. You may surprise yourself and find that in doing all these things, a mountain or two may actually be moved!

Rev. Mark Suslenko

PRAYER

Lord, you have searched me and know me.
You know when I sit and when I stand;
you understand my thoughts from afar.
Even before a word is on my tongue, Lord,
you know it all.

Behind and before you encircle me
and rest your hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
far too lofty for me to reach.

Where can I go from your spirit?

From your presence, where can I flee?

If I ascend to the heavens, you are there.

If I lie down in Sheol, there you are.

If I take the wings of dawn

and dwell beyond the sea,

even there your hand guides me,

your right hand holds me fast

— *Ps 139:1-10*