

LUKE 17:5-10  
WHO DESPISES THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS?

Helen did a small thing; she told her three children about Jesus. One of these three children, Betty did a small thing (well she did lots of small, but significant things, but this one in particular); she told me about Jesus so that I could believe in Him. Betty was my mother and Helen was my grandmother though I never met her. They didn't see this as significant; it was a small thing to do, to share something precious with your children, putting into practice the faith that was important to them. A small thing, putting into practice the faith that was so important to them, so that my mother learned her faith from her mother and the church that she loved and in turn I learned my faith from my mother and from the church that she loved dearly. These may seem small things but to me they are really significant things because my life was shaped by that faith and a ministry has been exercised because of these small things done by my mother and grandmother.

Lois did a small thing; she shared her faith with her daughter Eunice. Eunice did a small thing: she shared her faith with her son Timothy and Timothy believed, he became Christian and spent his life living by that faith and sharing that faith with others in the company of the apostle Paul. They didn't see what they did as world-shattering; they were simply doing what came naturally to them as believers, a small thing, to share their faith with their children, telling them the stories of God, telling them about Jesus. Timothy went on to exercise such a significant ministry, which started with this small thing that his grandmother did!

*"Who despises..."* (Zechariah 4:10) The question was asked by the prophet called Zechariah; the people had returned from exile and had begun to rebuild the temple. Some weren't sure; it was a big project; could they cope with it? Would they finish it? Did they have enough faith to make it happen? The prophet asks this question: *"Who despises..."* – they have started and it is small, and some have their doubts, but he has confidence in God, that it will get bigger and even something small will become significant later. They are encouraged by the prophet to see that even these small things are the work of God and the Spirit is at work in these small things; so don't despise them.

*"Give us more faith!"* Jesus' disciples ask for more faith! Is this not a good request? A sound request? It is a solid thing to want surely! It is a place where we have maybe all been at some stage; we see our faith as too small to deal with the challenges of life or the demands that the Bible makes on us! *"Increase our..."* (Luke 17:5) We would imagine that Jesus will applaud that request and grant the disciples what they want, what they see that they need; surely it is a good idea! Then they would be better equipped to deal with life and service and mission. But Jesus says something different: *"If you..."* (Luke 17:6) Small faith: that's all you need; small faith can achieve great things; faith the size of a mustard seed will achieve great things when it is used to serve Jesus.

That's whole point of picture Jesus paints of the servants. It seems harshly said, or slightly grumpy, but the master expects the servants to serve – that is their job! *"Would he..."* (Luke 17:9f) The servant is doing what is expected of him; the master owes him no debt because the servant is simply doing what the master expects him to do and employs him to do! We are Jesus' servants and by putting our faith into practice we are simply doing what Jesus expects us to do. We don't always do it very well, but that's our challenge. *"We don't need more faith; we need to put into practice the faith that we do have."* (Word Live 11/6/09) That's so often where we fall down: our faith remains in a cupboard marked "Sunday" and isn't allowed to touch any other parts of life, so it is not practiced as much as it should be; we need to let it out of the cupboard and let our faith touch every part of life, every day of the week, putting into practice what we believe. So we will be good servants of Lord Jesus.

"Small things": here are some examples.

- Don't despise the small things of prayer, by means of which God changes people's hearts.
- Don't despise the small things of service in the local church, by which God is glorified and people encouraged.
- Don't despise the small things of working in the seemingly insignificant place like the church parent and toddler group, by which you reflect Christ-like love and compassion; or the church garden showing that Jesus is important.
- Don't despise the small things like daily bible reading, by which your heart is transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Don't despise the small things like working hard at your job or school everyday, in these things you show that there is something more profound about life.
- Don't despise the small things like speaking of Jesus to others, by which unbelievers may come to trust and treasure Him.
- Don't despise the small things of Sunday worship, week by week singing songs and preaching and listening, through which there is an announcement of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus!  
(after The Gospel Coalition)

Small things done with love in our hearts, done to put faith into practice, matter. Small things will say much more than we know. Small faith moving mulberry trees? Small faith in a big, powerful, amazing God, can change the world. Do we need more faith? It is a good thing to grow our faith, to understand more, to be better equipped for life and its challenges; I'd love to encourage you all to nurture your faith and make it stronger. But small faith, with Jesus, can do great things; put that faith into practice every day. At the end of each day this week, look for the small ways by which your faith has made a difference to your life, how you have behaved or responded; use that to be more faithful tomorrow!