

LITTLE THINGS MEAN A LOT!

We are just a little church, and we can tend to feel bad or inferior about that.

It would be good to be bigger – there would be some definite benefits in that. We should be hoping and aiming to grow, as we are called to make disciples – but we can't make them ourselves; it takes God to do that. We should in every way be available to be used as tools by God for growth, and not do anything to impede that. We have to sow and scatter, but it is God who gives the increase.

In the meantime, we don't need to feel depressed or negative or inferior because we are small. Because the Bible has a lot to say about small things, little things, and God doesn't look down on them.

Let's spend some time in the sermon today seeing what God says about little things, and I think you'll find it comforting and instructive.

We'll start with an example that shows that a big miracle can have a small beginning.

Notice John 6:9 ““Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?”

Loaves at that time were much smaller than our loaves of today, and not only were the loaves small, but these were barley loaves, considered inferior to wheat.

So here was a small boy, with small loaves and small fish, but what a great miracle that caused! Thousands of hungry people were fed, and 12 baskets of leftovers were collected – one basket for each of the 12 preachers who doubted it could be done!

A little is a lot, when God is in it!

1 Samuel 15:17 “Samuel said, “Although you were once small in your own eyes, did you not become the head of the tribes of Israel? The LORD anointed you king over Israel.” When Saul was little in his own eyes, he was exalted by God.

God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. He wants us to be little – that's when He can really work with us, and we can't take credit for the big results – it is obvious they are from Him.

He chose a small nation, Israel, to work with, to marry, to call out as His special people. They weren't chosen because of their great size and power, like Egypt or the bigger nations.

Deuteronomy 7:7 “The LORD did not set His affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples.”

David was small, in comparison to Goliath.

Gideon's family was poor, and he was the "least" in his family. Judges 6:15 "Pardon me, my lord," Gideon replied, "but how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family."

But he set out to free his people from Midianite oppression. He assembled an army of thousands, but God said to reduce the number, lest they thought a victorious outcome was accomplished by their own might. So Gideon reduced the size of the army to 300, a little army, that defeated the enemy.

A little is a lot, when God is in it!

A small group of people in these days called "The Gideons," have distributed millions of Bibles all over the globe. They crop up in hotels and motels everywhere!

Isaiah 60:22 "The least of you will become a thousand, the smallest a mighty nation. I am the LORD; in its time I will do this swiftly."

Leviticus 26:8 "Five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall by the sword before you."

1 Kings 17:13-16 ¹³ "Elijah said to her, "Don't be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small loaf of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. ¹⁴ For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the LORD sends rain on the land.'" ¹⁵ She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. ¹⁶ For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the LORD spoken by Elijah." It was only a small cake the poor widow baked for the prophet Elijah, but the result was that her food supply never ran out.

1 Kings 18:44 "The seventh time the servant reported, "A cloud as small as a man's hand is rising from the sea." So Elijah said, "Go and tell Ahab, 'Hitch up your chariot and go down before the rain stops you.'" It was a cloud as small as a man's hand that signaled the end of the drought and the return of God's blessings to Israel.

1 Kings 19:12 "After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper." Sometimes God is revealed in a still, small voice: not necessarily great spectacular miracles and displays of great power.

We can see God in the big things, the sun, moon and stars, the awesome expanse of the Universe. But He can also be seen in the little things: a tiny snowflake, a leaf, a fingerprint, the human eye, down to the small microscopic world inside the atom.

Even a tiny ant is amazing: Proverbs 30:24-25 ²⁴ "Four things on earth are small, yet they are extremely wise: ²⁵ Ants are creatures of little strength, yet they store up their food in the summer;"

The other 3 small things mentioned in the passage are the conies, (rock badgers): locusts and lizards.

James 3:3-5 ³ "When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. ⁴ Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. ⁵ Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark."

Little things sure can make a big difference! “A little leaven leavens the whole lump.”

When water is heated to 211 degrees, it is very hot! But just one degree more causes it to boil. At 212 degrees it can produce steam and power a steam engine. A little thing, just one degree, makes the difference! I’m sure you can think of many things like that. A spaceship just a little off target would miss the moon by thousands of miles.

“The straw that breaks the camel’s back” is a proverb about this principle.

Micah 5:2 “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.”

Jesus had an insignificant beginning when He came to earth. A little baby, born in a little town, in a little manger, has impacted every town and city in the world, little or big!

Mark 12:41-44 ⁴¹ “Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. ⁴² But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents. ⁴³ Calling His disciples to Him, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. ⁴⁴ They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.” A little offering given by a poor woman was greater in God’s sight than huge offerings given by the wealthy.

Matthew 17:19-20 ¹⁹ “Then the disciples came to Jesus in private and asked, “Why couldn’t we drive it out?” ²⁰ He replied, “Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.” Here’s an interesting thought about little things. How much faith should we have? With just a tiny amount of faith, we can move a mountain. So you only need a small amount of faith, and that’s the same as a large amount, because faith isn’t a physical thing. When He said they had “so little faith” I think He meant they didn’t have any faith, because even if it was like a mustard seed, it would have worked. But they didn’t have the Holy Spirit at that time, and that’s how we have faith – it’s a gift of the Holy Spirit.

The mention of a mustard seed reminds us of the principle in Matthew 13:31-32: ³¹ “He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. ³² Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.” That’s how God’s Kingdom works! It is based on a little thing, which grows. A little is a lot when God is in it!

We see the same principle in Daniel 2:35: “Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were all broken to pieces and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth”. A small rock smashes the statue representing the governments of mankind, and it grows to fill the whole earth!

Matt. 10:29-31 ²⁹ “Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father’s care. ³⁰ And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹ So don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.” God looks after the little things. This should be comforting to us.

Matt. 10:42 “And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.” God looks after the “little ones,” new believers, and we are rewarded for helping them in little ways. Just a little smile, a little kind word, a “thank you” to someone can often make a difference.

In 1954, the song “Little Things Mean a Lot,” reached the top of the hit parade, sung by Kitty Kallen.

Just waiting for someone, letting them go first (even when you’re driving and they want to pull out in front of you), sending them a handwritten note – things like this can really mean a lot.

The church doesn’t have to be big. Matt. 18:20 “For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”

Luke 12:32 “Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.”

1 Corinthians 1:26-29 ²⁶ “Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. ²⁷ But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. ²⁸ God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, ²⁹ so that no one may boast before Him. ³⁰ It is because of Him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. ³¹ Therefore, as it is written: “Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.”

Matt. 25:23 “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’ If we are faithful in little things, we will be faithful in big things.

I’d like to conclude with a verse that sums this up.

Zechariah 4:10 “Who dares despise the day of small things, since the seven eyes of the LORD that range throughout the earth will rejoice when they see the chosen capstone in the hand of Zerubbabel?”

At this time, the temple was being rebuilt by Zerubbabel, but it wasn’t anything like the great structure Solomon had built. So many of the people despised it, thinking this work wouldn’t amount to anything. But God says we shouldn’t despise small things. He can make a great mountain become a plain, or a small rock become a mountain that fills the whole earth. Though the beginning is small, God can make it increase from a mustard seed into a tree. Little things are important to God. Little things mean a lot.

When God is in it, a little thing *is* a lot!