

August 26 **Life Together** – **“Strong Faith”**

Luke 17:1-10 (Sin, Faith, Duty) & 1 Timothy 3:1-10 (Qualification for Leadership)

2 Weeks until our MCCI Weekend!

Prayer Shaw Dedication at all services

9:30 Celebrate Coordinators – Jack & Amy Brace
(Next Week, Linda Hathaway & Linda Smith)

10:45 Special Music: David Mawhirter

Traditional Hymns:

#145: Morning Has Broken

#152: I Sing the Almighty Power of God

#438: Forth in Thy Name, O Lord

Life Together – “Strong Faith”

Luke 17 1-10 (NIV) - Sin, Faith, Duty

1 Jesus said to his disciples: “Things that cause people to stumble are bound to come, but woe to anyone through whom they come. **2** It would be better for them to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around their neck than to cause one of these little ones to stumble. **3** So watch yourselves.

“If your brother or sister^[a] sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them. **4** Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying ‘I repent,’ you must forgive them.”

5 The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!”

6 He replied, “If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it will obey you.

7 “Suppose one of you has a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. Will he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, ‘Come along now and sit down to eat’? **8** Won’t he rather say, ‘Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink’? **9** Will he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? **10** So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.’”

1 Timothy 3:1-10 (NIV) Qualifications for Overseers and Deacons

1 Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. **2** Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, **3** not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. **4** He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. **5** (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church?) **6** He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. **7** He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil’s trap.

8 In the same way, deacons are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. **9** They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. **10** They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.

Strong Faith

We – size of a butterfly
World – the size of a monkey
God – the size of an elephant
Christ– elephant turned butterfly, gives us the spirit the size of an elephant
so we can overcome the world

We have the power to overcome the world because our Christian faith is not just about getting a free pass into heaven. Christianity is about relationship with the savior of the world.

I am living proof that relationships have the power to overcome the world. I became a Christian because my parents brought me up in the church. They told me the stories of Noah, Abraham, Daniel, and David, of Mary and Joseph, of Jesus and his disciples, and of Paul. I grew in my faith because I had Sunday School teachers, youth leaders, and friends that shared with me the truth of Jesus in their lives. I began to live into my faith because other Christians provided opportunities for me to work and go on mission projects. I began to be a Christian leader when others identified gifts in me and encouraged me to serve. I'm now a pastor because great men and women of faith have dedicated their lives to the teaching and forming of a future generation of pastors and preachers. I am here before you because of the relationships other people have with Jesus.

God's love and saving mercy are being spread, lives are being transformed because although our bodies are small like the butterfly, the Holy Spirit empowers our Christian relationships.

It's this kind of faith that the disciples thought they were asking Jesus for in the reading from Luke 17. They desired extraordinary faith to do extraordinary things. We do the same thing when we see or hear about Christians out there doing good things, great things, things that we can't even imagine having that much faith to do. We look at our lives, and since we can't commit to stepping out in faith, we ask God for more faith so we can take even the smallest step in serving Him.

But when the disciples asked Jesus for more faith, He warned them that they weren't seeking the right thing. They shouldn't have been worrying about getting more faith, they should have been worrying about their devotion to using the power of the faith they already had. Jesus explained that even a pinch of faith could toss a tree into the ocean. The thing was, the disciples weren't using the faith they already had. The disciples, as well as you and I, shouldn't seek more faith, but we should seek fidelity.

"Lord, let me have Fidelity." Sounds pretty silly, doesn't it. Well how about this: "God I want to be committed to you, I want to be a reliable servant, who is trustworthy, dependable and totally devoted to you. I want to be loyal and faithful to all the promises and vows I have made to you." That's fidelity. If you pray that prayer, again and again, and mean it, God will bless you beyond measure. He will bless you because in doing His will, you will overcome the world.

In Rev 2:26, Jesus promise, "To the one who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations"

In Rev 3:21, He vows, “To the one who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.”

And in Rev 22:12 Christ declares, “Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what they have done.”

I’m preaching this sermon from these texts today, to encourage you to be a dependable servant devoted to all that God has called you to do. This way, you may overcome the world for the sake of Jesus Christ, and also so that you may be rewarded when Jesus returns. One part of that goal is to help you to be faithful to the scriptures on Spiritual Leadership.

“Spiritual leadership as knowing where God wants people to be and taking the initiative to use God’s methods to get them there in reliance on God’s power...God wants people in a spiritual condition and in a lifestyle that display his glory and honor his name.” – John Piper

Spiritual Leadership

The goal of spiritual leadership is that people come to know God and to glorify him in all that they do. Spiritual leadership is aimed not so much at directing people as it is at changing people. If we would be the kind of leaders we ought to be, we must make it our aim to develop persons rather than dictate plans or outcomes. You can get people to do what you want, but if they don’t change in their heart, you have not led them spiritually. You have not taken them to where God wants them to be.

Everyone has the responsibility of leadership in some relationships. But the concern of scriptures is with the characteristics that a person must have in order to be a spiritual leader who excels in quality of spiritual leadership.

Luke 17 1-10 (NIV)

Don’t lead others to sin

Forgive as you have been forgiven

Serve the master humbly

1 Timothy 3:1-10 (NIV) Qualifications for Overseers and Deacons

Worthy and full of respect

Gentle and honest

Know and Teach the deep truths of faith

(mystery of faith) (the resurrection of Christ and our Redemption)

Life together – takes responsibility for relationships with others and spiritual leadership too!