

Luke 17:1-10

Now Habukuk would not accept the silence and so he said, "I will stand at my watch and station myself on the ramparts! I will look to see what he will say to me, and what answer I am to give to this complaint.

Then the Lord ~~answered~~ replied, "Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it. For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it will certainly come and will not delay. See, he is puffed up ~~and~~ his desires are not upright - but ~~he~~ the righteous will live by his faith.

~~That's~~ a strange answer, the righteous will live by his faith, yet God's answer.

Jesus said, 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.

Imagine it, trees popping up out of the ground like popcorn in hot oil and dancing over into Lake Erie and standing up straight in rows. If we had even the smallest amount of faith, Jesus says, we could do it. Oaks and Maples whose roots have grasped the earth for a century or more, suddenly letting go and by faith transported to grow where they have never grown before.

With just that much faith would wars cease? With faith as small as a grain of mustard seed would the hungry be fed, the homeless housed, the unemployed employed? IF THERE WERE JUST THAT MUCH FAITH IN THE church, could the people of God actually live together in peace and harmony?

But I have never seen a tree take flight, have you? Not even a little twig of a tree have I seen uprooted by faith.

And though ^{we} I give money to feed hungry people, ^{still} always there are more who are hungry. And though we use our votes and our time and talents to see the homeless are housed and the unemployed employed, before we can turn around the problems have become worse once again. And in the church, from the very beginning until now there have been troubles and conflict, people hurting people.

If your brother sins abainst you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, "I repent" forgive him.

These were the words that led the disciples to ask for more faith. ~~Forgive for every sin, forgiveness.~~ *Jesus said forgive, and they said Increase our faith!*

There is no clearer command of God. ^{through Jesus.} Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us, we were taught by Jesus to pray. He also said, If you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive you your trespasses.

Yet again and again and again I have heard Christians say, I can't forgive I will never forgive. If she was really a Christian she could not have done that. No Pastor, I cannot forgive.

It is no wonder the disciples asked for more fatih, they needed more and so do we. We need faith enough to forgive.

With even the smallest faith, Jesus said, trees will take their flight. But what about forgiveness.

Well, it is the mark of the Christian faith, to be forgiven, to forgive. Truly the Christian faith is not about being Good. Christ did not need to ^{come into world} die so that people could know right from wrong. Pagans and atheists know as much about being good as do Christians. And often are able to do it just as well. As St. Paul makes so clear in the letter to the Galations, Christ did not need to die so that people could be saved by the law, he died so that we might be forgiven.

Forgiveness in Jesus Christ is the power of God. What he could never do through a flood that wiped out a whole world, God is doing through forgiveness. What he could not accomplish through plagues and marching aries and the law, God is doing through the forgivenss in Jesus Christ. For forgiveness means a new beginning, a fresh start.

God forgives you and there is no past, to bind and chain you. God forgives you and the tree that is your life is torn free from every failing

