

**THE QUESTION OF THE WEEK**

“Increase our faith! If you had faith the size of a mustard seed you could say to this mulberry tree, be uprooted and planted in the sea and it would obey you.”

Luke 17: 5

I ask Our Lord all the time to increase my faith. For a long time I thought that I had really good faith, that my faith made sense to me and that it came rather easily to me. But as I lived more of my life I began to reassess that early understanding of my faith. Did I really believe or did I limit my faith to certain believable things but not allow myself to be challenged to believe in things that were bigger or over-the-top or out of the possibility of life? Would I dare to ask for something that was really important but seemed impossible? Would I dare to ask and would I dare to believe that God would hear my prayer AND that God would do what I asked?

If I limited my asking to the things that were pretty readily doable or attainable then was it really faith? Was there really trust in God present? What Jesus says in the gospel today is that if I had the tiniest bit of faith I would be able to look at a mulberry tree, speak to it, give it an order to be uprooted and replanted. Where? In the sea. Right. So, immediately I am thinking to myself that I would never do that. It would never occur to me that that was even a remote possibility. Is Jesus just speaking metaphorically here? Is it just another instance of hyperbole? Exaggeration which is not meant to be taken literally?

Or is there really something to what he is proposing? I have come to a different understanding of what he says. If I really wanted to uproot the mulberry tree and have it transplanted in the sea then I would have to say to it “Mulberry tree, I am going to find a way to have you leave your comfortable home in the soil here and start growing over there—right in the sea. I don’t know how that can happen. I don’t know if it is even possible for that to happen. But I have come to know this—if I really want that to happen. I could find a way to make it happen. It would take a lot. I would have to learn a lot. I would have to consult all kinds of knowledgeable people but you know what? I bet I could make that happen. If I believed it should happen. And then I started to realize that what Jesus is really saying is—faith finds a way. Faith finds a way to make things happen. But it doesn’t operate on its own. Faith asks for God’s help. God’s enlightenment, God’s strength, God’s ingenuity, God’s steadfastness, God’s persistence, God’s fidelity to the task. But in the end faith finds a way. That’s what I believe Jesus believed. “If it takes me to die a horrific death on the cross for all of you to be saved from sin and the face of the earth truly renewed then so be it. Let it be done to me in that way.” That is what he believed. That is what he accomplished. Faith always finds a way. Do you believe that? That is the question of the week.