

Let us begin with a small thing in our ministry at Faith Church. We have a great vision for establishing the kingdom of God. However, the vision begins with one step and small practice in our ministry. Our small concerns, support, and prayers for children will change their lives and make them disciples of Jesus Christ. I ask your help, support, and prayer in ministry at Faith Church and beyond. I ask you to be involved in and help one ministry.

We can taste the kingdom of heaven when we have a time for sharing our concerns and spiritual needs and praying for them. The kingdom of heaven begins with your labor for the church. The kingdom of heaven begins with your concern and prayer for our congregation. Nothing can stop the growing of a seed because the Power of God is in the seed. Nothing can prevent the leaven from spreading because The Power of God is in the leaven. In God's kingdom the smallest and the least significant things have incredible power. The incredible power affects the largest and most significant things and transforms them. God takes a seed - he plants it - and slowly, but surely growth comes - until suddenly everyone notices it. We notice it and other people notice it in us.

Jesus is counting on you. So, don't lay back or wait for someone to do it for you. Paul said, *"The Spirit comes to help us, weak as we are. Even though we do not know how we ought to pray, the Spirit himself pleads with God for us in groans that words cannot express. The Spirit will be with us when we pray together."* (Romans 8:26) As we grow from small to larger we will develop strong branches. People will find proper rest in us. People will be able to lean on us and rest with us and be made stronger themselves. We will become towers of strength for others to draw on. Our influence will teach others how to be closer to God. No matter how small you feel, your continued growth in God's word and grace will impact others. In your life they can learn of Jesus. In your example they may find the way to heaven.

The kingdom of God is depending on our positive examples. Let us begin with a small thing. Let us do small things together in our church. The small things make the difference. We can also make a difference. We can make our community as a small heaven filled with your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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NEW BEGINNING (4): The Small Things Make the Difference

Matthew 13: 31-33

Rev. Dr. Charles Yoon

As you might know most of the land in Holland is lower than sea level. Therefore, the Holland people made a fence to prevent the sea from flooding the land. They plant many kinds of flowers in the low ground and export them to other countries. Even though they had a bad environment, they changed it into the land of opportunity. I learned of a story about a Holland boy from my elementary school. But I am not sure whether it is a true story or not.

Anyway, it is said that one day a Holland boy walked along the sea fence. He suddenly found a hole in the fence which leaked water out onto the ground. He thought if the water leaked continually, the fence would be cracked and broken. Then, finally the town would be flooded. So he put his finger into the hole to prevent leaking. However, nobody ever came upon the scene to help him. When his parents and police officer found him, he had died due to starvation. The small boy saved many people and much property.

We often ignore small and useless things. We concern ourselves bigger or biggest. We seek better or best because this world requires the best and the largest.

But let's think of this: The largest man in the world starts out as a small baby. The largest redwood trees in the world start out in a small seed. The biggest ships on the sea start out as pencil lead being placed on a thin layer of paper. The tallest of buildings are begun from a single spade of dirt. All the greatest things known to man begin from the smallest of seeds. From the smallest of beginnings come the greatest in life.

Small things can become great. The greatest works of art began with just a single stroke of the brush. Great symphonies begin with a single note. The most moving poems in the world are based on the same 26 letter alphabet. The most important movement known to mankind began in a manger in Bethlehem.

Today's parables use the images of a mustard seed and yeast. In the parables of the mustard seed and the yeast, Jesus used two early pictures that open a window on the growth of the kingdom. Both describe how great things will come from small, almost invisible beginnings.

The mustard seed is the smallest seed that the gardener will plant. There is not a seed smaller than the mustard seed that would have been planted in first-century Palestine. Yet it grew into the largest plant in the garden. It would be considered a tree. The mustard plant would become large enough that it would have branches. These branches would be large enough that birds could come and nest in them and take rest from their flight. They grew to be around 10' tall according to the literature I found. From the smallest seed came the largest of plants.

Now let us look at the meaning of the leaven. Leaven was not what it is today. Today we can just reach up in the cupboard and get a package of yeast to leaven our bread. The women who cooked in those days did not have packs of yeast in a cupboard. They used a leftover lump of dough from the last bread batch. They mixed that into the new dough to leaven it. The idea here is that a small handful of leaven works through a large amount of dough. About a handful of leftover leavened bread is mixed into this new batch and the whole thing is leavened.

The mustard seed of love and the yeast of devotion grow to measureless abundance. In God's economy, no small gift offered in service to Christ is lost. Jesus says in the parables that the smallest faith, the smallest seed of God, the tiny bit of the yeast of righteousness can transform itself and those things in contact with it - and so change the world. As Jesus said at another time *"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."* (Luke 17:6)

The mustard seed is the word of the kingdom of God and the word of truth that points the way to the living reality of God in Christ among us. And the yeast is the word that grows within us, the faith that rises up and makes new, and the faith that brings to life and revives.

What makes you happy? Two weeks ago Shane Missler, a 20-year old Florida residence, won 450 million Mega Million. He told the Florida Lottery he intends to use his newfound wealth to buy a new home in Tampa, pursue a "variety of passions," and help others. "I intend to take care of my family, have some fun along the way, and cement a path for financial success so that I can leave a legacy far into the future," Missler said in a statement. "I have always been one to encourage the idea of chasing dreams and I believe life is about the pursuit of passion. I am 20 years old and my journey has only just begun." I hope he would spend that money wisely for the betterment of society, as well as for himself and his family.

But this big prize doesn't always bring happiness. I heard that in many cases the life of the big lottery winner ends up with unhappiness, conflict, fight among family, friends, and others, and even suicide. Think what makes you happy. Our happiness comes from small things. The smiles from wife, husband, children, or grandchildren make us happy. The support, concerns, and prayers from neighbors and church members make us feel happy. Our happiness comes not from our achievement, success, and having property or honor, but from a small smile, sharing, and being with others. I hope our Faith Church would be a happiness maker, a place to be and feel happy.

Think of a mustard seed. It is just a little seed. But it can grow into a mighty bush. Think of yeast. It is just a little leaven. But it can change the entire loaf.

To make that impact, the small thing must be used. If the mustard seed is not planted, the tree never grows. If the leavening lump is never mixed in, the new dough is not leavened and is useless. If Jesus does not come to the world, or decides not to finish what he started, then man is lost. If we do not continue his work on earth, then men will be lost.

We can't change the world, but we can change ourselves. Then we can start something for the world. We can change our habits and point of view in our daily lives. Let us watch a video clip and see how small things make a difference:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MBSf10JF3wI>