

REFLECTION OF GRACE

A Weekly Reflection on Stewardship from our Members



Sunday, October 2 | Gospel
Luke 17: 5-10



The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" The Lord replied, "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.

"Who among you would say to your slave who has just come in from plowing or tending sheep in the field, 'Come here at once and take your place at the table'? Would you not rather say to him, 'Prepare supper for me, put on your apron and serve me while I eat and drink; later you may eat and drink'? Do you thank the slave for doing what was commanded? So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, 'We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!'"

GRACE: LIVING A LIFE OF FAITH By Shade Badejo

Grace: An unearned favor, God's unwavering mercy, and compassion for mankind. Faith is an expression of our belief, trust, and confidence in God's grace. Grace is made possible due to the work of Christ, and Faith is the vehicle by which we receive salvation. Faith is practiced day by day in our interactions with others. Like iron sharpens iron, our association with people of faith acts to strengthen our own Faith; at Ascension, our participation in the worship, community services, and life of the church reflect Grace and Faith.

Today's Gospel from Luke presents Faith as a relationship of trust and love; it means opening ourselves to receive another's life and giving our life to another. In the passage, the disciples seem unsure of what Faith is; they ask Jesus to increase their Faith. They feel they need more Faith, and Jesus reminds them that any amount of Faith, even if it is as small as a mustard seed, is enough to do incredible things.

In view of Jesus's response, more Faith is not really the issue; Faith is not measured by its quantity but simply by its presence. According to Jesus, the real need is for obedience and humility. A mustard seed-sized Faith will accomplish impossible things.

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The Gospel passage seems to reflect that Jesus is offering a gentle correction to the disciples' request and not a commendation. Jesus implies that the disciples should not wait around for increased Faith; instead, a small amount of genuine Faith can accomplish what is perceived as humanly impossible. The request to increase our Faith or the belief that if one had more Faith, things would be different reveals a misunderstanding of Faith and our own unfaithfulness. To have Faith means having our whole way of perceiving and responding to life transformed by the richness of God's creative justice and power.

The second part of the Gospel accentuates our discomfort with the parable concerning slave owners and their slaves. It illustrates how we should see ourselves as God's slaves who owe him simple and absolute obedience. I see Jesus using humor to make a point. Slaves do not give orders, they take orders, and slaves have to obey. The parable invites the disciples to identify with the slave owners, and later the focus shifts so the disciples can identify with the slaves. This reveals the spiritual truth that our relationship with God is based on grace rather than works. Therefore, being faithful and obedient to God does not make God owe us anything; it's just the expectation. As God's creation, we need to be more faithful, and humbly serve God and humanity without expectation of praise or recognition. Christ calls us to follow him and gives us enough Faith to be loyal followers in our community.

I know many of us have struggled with "If I just had more faith...." at some point in our lives. I know I have countless times. This passage shows that the amount of Faith will not change the circumstance. Faith does not shield us from the pain and difficulties of life, but rather it is how we confront and deal with the circumstances of life. Faith is simply the way in which we live, move, and exist. At Ascension, we feed the homeless, give voice to the voiceless, and support and serve the community. These are the things people of Faith do as a Christian community.

Question for Reflection: How does our faith and relationship with Jesus impact the way we relate with others?

Shade has been a member of Ascension for 17 years. A member the Altar guild, a reader, former Sunday school teacher, and former vestry member, she has served in various capacities in the church. Shade, an educator is an Assistant Principal at Dallas ISD. Shade is married to Kayode and both are blessed with Funmi and Latunde.

