



## *Increase Our Faith*

*Scripture - Luke 17:5-10*

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

*October 2, 2016*

## **Thoughts for the Week**

Scripture: Luke 14

A popular author and Pastor recalled the day when a Church member approached him after the Sunday service. "I wish I had half as much faith as you," the member admitted. The clergyman said he felt like laughing and quickly explained that while he may serve as Pastor, his faith is at times as rickety as Doubting Thomas. "Like so many," he said, "sometimes I find it challenging to maintain any level of real trust in God, in the church, or in my own decision to follow Christ." And then he added, "Sadly, living in this insane asylum we call planet earth is enough to grind the truest believer into the dust."

I found this to be an honest yet upsetting assessment to which many of us can no doubt relate. So how do we do it? How do we keep the faith when it is sometimes so hard to believe? Well consider this, we believe because we have chosen to believe. It's as simple and complex as that. We will never understand all there is about Christian spirituality, about following Jesus, or how faith is best expressed in the world. But we do not have to understand it all. Because when we believe, we begin the life-long (eternity-long) journey toward understanding. As we anticipate, with faith, the day that is before us, God opens our eyes to His reality, to see what actually is.

In the chapters of Luke's Gospel leading up to the episode in Luke 14, Jesus challenged the faithfulness of His disciples in a number of ways. He told them that if they were going to be His followers, they would have to practice humility: "For every one who exalts himself will be humbled, and the man who humbles himself will be exalted".

He told them that if they were going to be His followers, they would have to bear their own cross: "Anyone who does not carry his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple".

He told them if they were going to be His followers, they would have to "work out the cost".



## **Our Faith Can Make a Difference in the World**

Doing the right thing isn't always easy nor do others easily recognize it. Too often our good intentions are misunderstood, and our acts of mercy are misinterpreted as being selfish acts. However, I believe that the majority of us want to add value to others' lives and make a difference in the world with our faith. And we must not allow other's criticism and cynicism deter us from helping, caring and giving to others.

Mother Teresa embodied an amazing spirit of love, grace and compassion for all human beings, especially the poor and outcast. While recovering from tuberculosis and teaching at a high school in Calcutta, she heard a call from the Lord. The request from the Lord was to live and work among the poor.

Uncertain of how she would accomplish this, Mother Teresa still obeyed. Four years later, she was back in Calcutta, not working at the school but working and living in the slums. Her endless love and generosity not only impacted everyone around her, but the whole world

No, we are not expected to be Mother Teresa, nor would the Lord want us to be anyone other than ourselves, but we must aim to do what is right in the spirit of Christ. And we mustn't allow anything or anyone to distract us from the spirit of Christ who has taught us the meaning of love, grace and compassion.