

**McCabe United Methodist Church**  
**Increase our Faith!**  
**Luke 17:5-10: October 5 & 6, 2013**  
**Pastor Rick Fossum**

In our reading today from the Gospel of Luke we heard Jesus' disciples asking him for a favor. The favor was this: **"Lord, increase our faith."** Some translations put it this way: **"Lord, make our faith stronger."** It's the same thing. **"Lord,"** they're asking, **"we want stronger, better, bigger faith. Help us out."**

Do you remember what Jesus said to them? He said something like this: **"You already have enough faith! God is with you. God is working through you. God can take whatever faith you have, however great or small, and uses it if you're willing."**

In other words, the disciples had all the faith they needed. Jesus said, **"If you have faith as small as a mustard seed (and by the way, the mustard seed is a tiny, tiny seed) you can say to this mulberry tree (and Jesus points to a nearby mulberry tree) 'Mulberry tree move from here to there and it will obey you.'"**

Did you hear that? Whatever faith you have, however great or small, God can use it to do great things.

For Jesus, it isn't the amount of faith we have that matters. It's what we do with the faith we have that's important. It's a matter of taking our faith, again however big or small it is, and using it. The more we use it, the greater it grows.

Paul Harvey told a story about a 3-year-old boy who went to the grocery store with his mother. Before they walked into the grocery store the mother said, **"Now we're not going to buy any chocolate chip cookies, so don't even ask."** She put him in the shopping cart and started down the aisle.

The little boy was doing just fine until they came to the cookie section. He saw the chocolate chip cookies, stood up in the cart and said, **"Mom, can I have some chocolate chip cookies?"**

She said, **"No! I told you not even to ask. We're not going to buy any cookies."** So he sat back down.

They continued down the aisles and somehow they ended up by the chocolate chip cookies again. **"Mom,"** he said. This time with a little more passion. **"Mom, can I please, please have some chocolate chip cookies?"**

She said, **"What part of 'no' don't you understand? Now sit down and be quiet."**

Finally, as they were standing in line at the checkout lane, the little boy sensed that his window of opportunity might be closing. This might be his last chance. So he stood up in the cart again and shouted in his loudest voice, **"In the name of Jesus, may I please have some chocolate chip cookies?"**

Everyone around the checkout lane laughed. Some even applauded. By the time that little boy and his mother left the store that day, the other shoppers had bought him 23 boxes of chocolate chip cookies.

The little boy had faith or maybe he was just smart or just lucky or all three, but he got the chocolate chip cookies.

We have all the faith we need to serve God. Whether we're at work or in church or playing a game or sitting in our homes, we have all the faith we need. Our job is to use our faith.

This is why our *Servant Catalog* is so important. In this catalog we have listed many opportunities for us to serve. From the obvious to the not-so-obvious. From serving coffee on a Sunday morning to singing in the choir to working in the kitchen during funerals and weddings. It doesn't take a lot of faith to serve Jesus. Just the faith we have right now.

In the back of the church and in the narthex, you'll find copies of our catalog. Take a look at it. Bring one home. How can you serve God using the faith you have right now?

Another way to use our faith is through a program called *Family Link*. Last year we started this program at McCabe Church. It's designed to help us use and grow our faith.

I know many of you participated in *Family Link*. I hope you still are. It's a program for all people: for moms and dads, for grandparents and single folks. It's a program that will bring us closer and closer to each other and to God.

You'll need to set aside fifteen minutes a day. If you have children, the best time is bedtime. A lot of studies have been done that show the positive habits that can be created and the lasting memories that can be made when children have a consistent and positive bedtime routine.

If your children are grown or if you don't have children, you can participate in *Family Link* with your spouse or with the neighbor who lives down the hall or with a friend.

This is how it works: First, comes **SHARING** or **SOCIALIZING**. You gather your family together or a neighbor or a friend and you share. What were the highs and lows of your day? What went right? What didn't? Be open. Be honest.

Second, **READ**. In our bulletins, newsletters and web page, we'll have selected passages from the Bible that you can read. In today's bulletin you'll find a *Family Link* section listing the scripture readings for this coming week. Or, you can tell a story from the Bible that you remember. Make the passage you're reading interesting. Put some feeling into it.

Third, **TALK**. What does this passage say to you? Why is this passage important? How does it relate to life? Can you see how this might influence your children as they hear you talking about issues of faith and life?

Fourth, **PRAY**. If you believe that God is alive and well. If you believe that Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior. If you believe that God's Spirit is with you always, what better way to teach that to our children than to pray.

Finally, **BLESS**. "*May you grow strong and loving and wise.*" Or, "*may the Good Lord bless you and keep you.*" Some families told me they came up with a standard blessing they used each night and they all said it together. Some families sang a song for their blessing. It could be a song like '*Jesus Loves me*'. Another family did this: The mom kissed the tip of one finger and she used it to trace a cross or sometimes a heart on her child's forehead and said special words like "**God bless you.**" Or, "**We love you.**"

**SHARING. READING. TALKING. PRAYING. BLESSING.** The only tool you'll need is a Bible and fifteen minutes a day. It's an investment that will last a life time.

This year we're hoping to add a new element. We'll be asking everyone who participates in *Family Link* to come together once a quarter for a mission project of some kind or a service project. I'll be asking our Mission Team to help us develop those projects.

*The Great Commission* is found in Matthew 28. It's a passage where Jesus gave us this command, "**go out and make disciples.**" This is our mission. This is our goal. This is the reason why we exist as a church. It's to go out and "**make disciples for Jesus Christ.**"

**Making disciples** doesn't require a lot of faith, just the faith we have right now. That's all and that's enough.

During communion this morning, as you walk down the aisle, instead of asking Jesus to increase your faith like the disciples asked, ask him to show you how you can use the faith you have. Ask him to show you the servant opportunities that you can do to help make the Kingdom of God a better place.

Like Jesus said, you don't need a lot of faith to make disciples. You just need to use the faith you have. It'll be enough.