



*More Faith, Please*

*5th in the Fall sermon series, "Taking Jesus Seriously"*

*Luke 17:5-10*

*World Communion Sunday*

*Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost ~ Sunday, October 6th, 2019*

*First Federated Church of Peoria, Illinois*

*The Rev. Dr. Forrest Krummel*

Text: The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith! (Luke 17:5)

How many of you had one of those little mustard seed acrylic squares or balls that contained a mustard seed?

When I was much, much younger, back when I thought that the world could be divided between good and bad, black and white with no messy shades of gray, I thought that if I only put enough time in the "spiritual gym" and "worked out" on some kind of spiritual "weight machine", I could literally move mountains. I know that this was silly and naive, but still? It's "magical thinking". Aren't we all guilty of a little magical thinking from time to time? Or, don't we, like the disciples, ask God for more faith, especially in difficult troubled times?

Now, the context may seem different, but it really isn't. Jesus challenges the apostles to live lives worthy of example, including the example of forgiveness. And they said that they didn't have enough faith.

And what was Jesus response? "If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to a mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea', and it would obey you."

A less literal and arguably more accurate translation would be, "You don't need more faith. There is no 'more' or 'less' faith ..." (The Message Bible)

Have you ever walked across a narrow stream by stepping on various rocks and stones? You begin by studying the stream and the location of the rocks. You think about where you will plant you feet, one foot after the other. You may have to consider whether or not you will need to take a slight leap. You may need to step up or down. The stream is in constant flux so you begin by carefully stepping out. Some of the rocks are dry. Others are wet. A few may have a tiny bit of water flowing over them. You hope that you do not lose your balance or slip. You are essentially building a bridge as cross. And then you are on the other side. You may have slipped. You may have gotten wet. You may have twisted your ankle, but you are across.

That is how it is with faith; taking one step at a time. You take the first step of faith and then the next, and the next; one moment, one day, one month, one year at a time. And, here's the thing. You aren't taking those steps alone. The One who is the host at this Table is there with you, walking beside you. He promised that he would be. "Lo, I am with you always, even until the end of the age." (Matthew 28:30).

This is the joyful feast of the people of God ...