

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: September 25 – October 2, 2016

Lectionary Readings: Habakkuk 1:1–4; 2:1–4, Psalm 37:1–9, 2 Timothy 1:1–14, Luke 17:5–10
Prayer of the Day: *Benevolent, merciful God: When we are empty, fill us. When we are weak in faith, strengthen us. When we are cold in love, warm us, that with fervor we may love our neighbors and serve them for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.*

This week's references come from the following sources. The appropriate resource will be referenced at the end of an entry by using the letters preceding each resource listed here.

- BB: Brendan Byrne, *The Hospitality of God" A Reading of Luke's Gospel.*
- BPS: Brian P. Stoffregen's commentary notes (Pr, Faith Luth, Yuma AZ) Crossmarks.com/brian
- DT: David L. Tiede, *Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament: Luke*
- JS: John Shea, *The Relentless Widow (Luke)*
- L: Lectionary.com
- LTJ: Luke Timothy Johnson, *Sacra Pagina: The Gospel of Luke.*
- NISB: *New Interpreter's Study Bible"*
- WP: WorkingPreacher.org (Luther Seminary)
 - David Lose (2013), *Dear Working Preacher*, now President, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia.
 - Lois Malcolm, Assoc. Prof. Systematic Theology, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN
 - Audrey West (2016), Adjunct Professor of New Testament, Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago, IL

Background information on this text:

- "17:1-19 The instructions for the disciples no longer concern initial conversion but ongoing life in the community faith. They particularly address community leaders. First (vv. 1-2) there is a severe warning about providing occasion for 'little ones' to stumble. Then (vv. 3-4), since there will inevitably be instances of misbehavior and injury, structures of correction ("rebuke") and reconciliation must be in place. When the offender repents, forgiveness must be ample and overflowing--even though the pattern be repeated seven times.
In reaction, it would seem, to this demanding teaching, the apostles ask Jesus to increase their faith (v. 5). His response (v. 6) does not imply that the disciples have no faith but that the little faith they have ("the size of a mustard seed") is enough to work outstanding miracles if only they exploit its possibilities to the full. To take the risk of faith seriously is to clothe oneself with the power of God." (BB, 154)
- 17:1-10 "Our passage is framed by the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, on one side, and the Samaritan leper who returns to give thanks, on the other. It constitutes the second half of a four-part series of loosely connected teachings related to discipleship, which may be summarized thus: (1) Don't be the cause of another's sin (Greek *skandalon*, stumble); (2) Forgive, again; (3) Miniscule faith is sufficient; (4) Discipleship is not about reward: Just do it!"
". . . It is a sobering thought to recognize one's capacity to cause another's stumbling, despite intentions otherwise. Plus, it is hard enough to forgive, even once. But seven times in a single day?! No wonder the apostles ask Jesus for a transfusion of faith (literally 'Add faith to us!')." (West, WP)
- 17:1-10 "This section consists of a number of independent sayings that Luke has put together. The sayings (and parallels):
 - Lk 17:1 'Scandals' will come (// Mt 18:7)
 - Lk 17:2 Causing a little one to be 'scandalized' (// Mt 18:6 // Mk 9:42)
 - Lk 17:3 Rebuking, Repenting, & Forgiving (// Mt 18:15)
 - Lk 17:4 Seven times (// Mt 18:21-22)
 - Lk 17:5-6 Faith of a mustard seed (// Mt 17:20; Mk 11:23; Mt 21:21; ...)

Lk 17:7-10 A slave's job (no parallels)

The first four verses are addressed to 'disciples.' At v. 5, the 'apostles' make a statement to which Jesus responds.

This section assumes a community where the possibility exists of sinning against one another or causing another believer to sin. The term *mikron* ('little ones' v. 2) probably refers to new converts or perhaps those weak in their faith to use a Pauline phrase. The term *adelphos* ('brother' v. 3) refers to 'another disciple' as the NRSV translates it." (BPS)

- 17:1-10 "*He Encourages Faithful Obedience*: Luke rounds out the second major section of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem (13:22-17:10) by collecting the diverse sayings in these verses into a brief discourse **to his disciples**...Clearly these sayings circulated independently of each other. They are still easily separated, and they appear in quite diverse contexts in Matthew and Mark. But in Luke, these sayings mark the resumption of Jesus' counsel to his disciples (16:1-13) which has been interrupted by a sharp exchange with the Pharisees (16:14-31). Now, taken together, they constitute a discourse on faithful obedience or at least an exchange with the disciples/apostles...And Luke's Jesus counsels his followers: (a) 'Beware of sinning, especially if it causes another to sin!' (vv. 1-3a), (b) 'Be quick to forgive!' (vv. 3b-4), (c) 'Have faith!' (vv. 5-6), and 'Do not look for recognition for simple obedience!' (vv. 7-10)" (DT, 292)
- 17:1-10 "Having castigated the Pharisees for their commitments and behavior, Jesus turns to his disciples in this subsection with a message that might be summarized as, 'Do not be like the Pharisees!' This comes in critical reflection on practices generally identified with Pharisees thus far: lack of regard for little ones and sinners, faithlessness, and a heightened concern with recognition and status. That Jesus must warn his disciples in this way reminds us that disciples are ever in need of further formation." (NISB, 1886)

Day 1

Luke 17:5-10

⁵The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith!' ⁶The 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.

⁷Who among you would say to your slave who has just come in from ploughing or tending sheep in the field, "Come here at once and take your place at the table"? ⁸Would 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"? ⁹Do you thank the slave for doing what was commanded? ¹⁰So 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!"

Read through the entire Gospel lesson and the verses preceding it (17:1-4):

- We invite you to journal as a part of your devotional/meditative time.
- Jot down any words or phrases that stand out to you.
- What do you think God might be saying in this story? Record this in your journal.

Day 2

Luke 17:5-6

⁵The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith!' ⁶The 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.

Background:

- 17:1-4 “In these verses, Jesus sets forth the dangers of tempting others (vv. 1-2) and the requirement to forgive the repentant sinner (vv. 3-4).” (L)
- 17:5 “The demands of verses 1-4 are harsh, and the disciples wonder how they can ever meet them. They recognize faith as a gift from God, and ask, ‘**Increase our faith!**’” (L)
 - “Why do the apostles make the request: ‘Increase our faith?’ Does their request indicate that one can have more or less faith? What was the clue that they had an inadequate faith? Earlier Jesus (9:1-6) had sent them out with power over demons and diseases. They preached and healed. They went about without any supplies of their own. They had the faith to trust God for their necessities. They had the faith to heal the sick and cast out demons. They had the faith to proclaim the coming Kingdom of God. Why do they now ask for more faith? Did they need more faith to stand up to temptations to sin? To cease from causing others to sin? To rebuke those who had sinned against them? To forgive one another? Perhaps moving mulberry trees (or mountains as in the parallels) into the sea is an easier act of faith than moving us to ‘rebuke’ and ‘forgive’ people who have sinned against us.

Culpepper (*Luke*, NIB) writes on this verse:

The disciples' plea in this context conveys the recognition that on the one hand faith is a dynamic process and one can grow in faith. On the other hand, the disciples ask that the Lord add to or strengthen their faith, thereby recognizing that faith is not just a matter of their own strength...” (BPS)

- 17:5 “...**faith** is not so much a possession as a disposition: Faith leads to faithful behavior; lack of faith leads to anxiety and fear (5:20; 7:50; 8:25, 48). If for Luke faith manifests itself in faithfulness, then the request of Jesus' followers, ‘Give us faith,’ is tantamount to saying, ‘Make us faithful people!’ Taking seriously the location of their request in immediate proximity to vv 1-4, we understand that the apostles thus look outside themselves for help so that they might comport themselves appropriately via-à-vis ‘little ones’ and ‘sinners.’ Implicit is the contrast that surfaced in 16:10-13, between those who align themselves with the inbreaking kingdom of God (and thus are regarded as faithful) and those whose lives are determined by the old aeon (and are thus regarded as unfaithful).” (JG, 613)
- 17:5 “...In Luke, **faith** is always faith in God or God’s Messiah Jesus...and it is closely correlated with the presence of the Holy Spirit...Faith is a power because it is the link to the power of God. It is God’s means of healing and forgiveness...”

...Jesus has warned his disciples of the grave consequences of causing others to sin (vv. 1-3a), and he has commanded an impossibly high standard of the practice of forgiveness (vv. 3b-4). Their plea, ‘**Increase our faith!**’ is understandable, but Jesus’ response is a word of assurance. There is no need for desperate quests for ‘more’ faith, as if it could be quantified or possessed. It is God’s Spirit and reign working through the means of faith which makes all things possible, and this community of faith (or even of ‘the faith,’...) is called to sustain such faith ‘on earth’ confident of the abiding presence of the Spirit and the kingdom of the Messiah.” (DT, 294)

- 17:5 “Today we would call this request a cry for help. What triggered the outcry were Jesus’ strong instructions on how his followers are to behave toward one another. He told them the ‘little ones’ should not be made to stumble...As if this deference toward ‘little ones’ were not enough, Jesus also told them they must be endlessly ready to forgive whoever offends them.

This must have shocked them to the core. It is social foolishness and goes against the primal instinct to protect and defend oneself. Revenge and retaliation are the accepted way. These new behaviors of deference and forgiveness may be hallmarks of the kingdom of God, but they are unrealistic fantasies in the world where most people live...

...They [the apostles] need a power that will enhance their ability to be sensitive to the weak and to live without harming others and to forgive whatever harm is done to them. In their minds they need an increase of faith.” (JS, 278)

- 17:6 David Lose (*Dear Working Preacher*): “No they ask for more faith -- they wonder who in the world can live up to Jesus’ expectations. . .

It’s in this sense, then, that many of our people may feel a lot like these disciples: Overwhelmed by the demands they feel placed on them to be ‘good Christians,’ not sure they are up to the task, and wondering what they signed on for. No wonder, then, that some of our folks feel like being a disciple is beyond them.

And so it’s our job to remind them that faith doesn’t have to be heroic.

Faith, as Jesus describes it, is just doing your job, just doing your duty, not because of any sense of reward but simply because it needs doing. Faith, in other words, is doing what needs to be done right in front of you and this, Jesus says, the disciples can already do. Folks who feel daunted by discipleship need to hear that sometimes faith can be pretty ordinary. That’s what Jesus means, I think, by saying that if they had the faith even of a mustard seed, they could uproot and move a mulberry tree -- that it really doesn’t take all that much faith to be, well, faithful.

At the same time, there are a whole lot of people in our congregation who may feel absolutely nothing like the disciples. It’s not that they’re overwhelmed by the tasks of Christian discipleship, it’s more that they don’t even think about it. For them, going to church and perhaps generally being a good person is pretty much what it means to be a Christian. It would never occur to them that being a good friend, or working at jobs to keep food on the table or keep the world running, or paying your taxes and voting for people who spend those taxes well, or any of the other ordinary stuff we do every day has anything to do with the Christian faith. It just doesn’t occur to them. . .

And so it’s *our job to remind them that even the simplest things done in faith can have a huge impact.*” (Lose, *Dear Working Preacher*)

- 17:6 “. . . the Greek grammar of Jesus’ response to the apostles’ request in Luke 17:6 presents difficulties for translation. . . So then, is Jesus chastising the apostles for a complete lack of faith? Or, rather, is he encouraging them not to worry about the smallness of their faith? Greek grammar or no, Jesus’ answer seems to be a mixed one.” (West, WP)
- 17:6 “In his response Jesus contrasts the meager dimensions of the mustard seed with the deep- and strong-rooted sycamore [mulberry], both proverbial in antiquity. In this way he suggests that just a smidgen of faith would be sufficient to give rise to practices even more extraordinary than those he has just outlined. In addition, though, Jesus’ reply casts doubt on whether his apostles have yet even this much faith.

... By raising doubt concerning the apostles’ faith, the faith of those previously most identified with Jesus’ mission, he raises perhaps even more sweeping questions about the wider circle of Jesus’ followers. At least the apostles understand that it is to Jesus that they must turn for faith. By way of contrast, the Pharisees (and legal experts) murmur against his practices and scoff at his teaching (15:1-2; 16:14); indeed, as a group the Pharisees have repeatedly set their perception of faith and faithfulness in opposition to the person and ministry of Jesus.” (JG, 613-614)

- 17:6 **Faith the size of a mustard seed:** “In Greek there is a ‘future conditional clause’: ‘If you were to have the faith of a mustard seed ...’ -- implying that you don’t have that faith now (Matt 17:20). There is also an ‘according to present reality conditional clause’: ‘If you have the faith of a mustard seed (and you do) ...’ (Luke 17:6). Luke is affirming that they have the faith to do what is expected of them (the theme of vv. 7-10). If they would believe and act on the faith that they already have, then they can rebuke and repent and forgive within the community, it will happen. In essence, he seems to imply that they don’t need more faith, but to make use of the faith that they already have.” (BPS)

- 17:6a “The **mustard seed** is one of the smallest seeds. Jesus chooses this tiny seed to set up a contrast with the large *sukamino* [mulberry] tree — engaging in hyperbole to demonstrate the great power of even the smallest bit of faith. It is the same kind of exaggerated language that he will use later to describe a camel going through the eye of a needle (18:25)” (L)
- “They need to be reminded about what faith is and assured they have all they need to do what Jesus has enjoined them to do. Faith results from people opening to and responding to God’s initiating action...Faith is the way humans cooperate with divine creative energy to make obdurate situations obey new commands.” (JS, 279)
- 17:6b “Matthew’s version, the more familiar one, speaks of moving a mountain instead of uprooting a tree. In Luke’s version, Jesus speaks of uprooting a *sukamino* tree — probably a large **mulberry tree** — and planting it in the sea. The point is that faith, even in small quantities, has great power. The person of faith taps into God’s power, which makes all things possible — even moving trees (difficult) and causing them to grow in saltwater (impossible). It is not our faith that works these wonders, but the God who stands behind our faith.” (L)

Reflection Question:

- When in your life have you ever asked God/Jesus for more or stronger faith? For what reason did you make this request of God/Jesus? Journal.
- When in your life have you found that in deed you had more faith than you thought you did? Recall how this faith manifested itself in your story. Journal.
- What is faith to you? Faith is . . . As a challenge, for each “Faith is” you write, tell about a story in your life that represents this.

Day 3

Luke 17:7-8

7 ‘Who among you would say to your slave who has just come in from ploughing or tending sheep in the field, “Come here at once and take your place at the table”? ⁸Would 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”?’

Background:

- 17:1-10 “Jesus is not so much inviting an allegorical reading of master-servant roles as drawing on a well-known reality of village life to teach something about faithfulness. Envisioned is a small landholder/farmer whose one slave performs the various outdoor and household duties that would be divided between slaves in a larger estate. The household, master/slave analogy has become a regular fixture of the Lukan narrative, providing the basis for important instruction on kinship, faithfulness, and status-seeking (e.g., 12:35-48; 16:1-9; cf. 22:24-2.” (JG, 614)
- 17:7-10 “The final warning rests on an image from the everyday practice of slavery. . . Once again Jesus is making a point from an aspect of life familiar to his audience without necessarily approving or disapproving the practice itself; we ought not to press too much out of the image in a moralizing kind of way. The point is simply that community leaders should not think they have a right to rewards or perquisites simply because of their office or status. To serve others in God’s name is a privilege; it requires no further reward.” (BB, 155)
- 17:7-10 “If desperate pleas for ‘more faith’ are excluded on the one side, boasting at obedience is forbidden on the other. These words of Jesus are used by Luke to fill out the discourse, and they assume particular force in this context. This is not a denigration of **the servant** or a pronouncement of human worthlessness. The Jesus who is among his disciples

as 'one who serves' (see 22:24-27) is not 'putting them in their place.' But the exclusion of boasting is the obverse of the assurance that the power to do the impossible comes from God.

The general theme was well known in Jewish piety...

...But in the context of this discourse, these words reinforce the assurance Jesus has just given his apostles. The question has been, 'How can we do what has been commanded?' The answer is, 'Through the power of God at work in faith.' Thus those who do **what is commanded** cannot boast of their own achievement. Not only have they only done what was commanded ..., but they are dependent on God all the while...The servant has no 'rights' or independent authority over against the master and no cause for self-justification for obedience. But the faithful servant may all the more have faith in the power of God to accomplish what would otherwise be impossible." (DT, 295)

- 17:7-10 "Through this story and teaching, Jesus tries to further strengthen and support the apostles' confidence. He has told them that they do not need an increase of faith because they already have the ability to cooperate with God in changing the enduring negative patterns of human behavior. They have what they need to live in the kingdom. Now he tells them this 'impossible possibility' is so much within the scope of their identities as servants of God, they should not expect any over-and-above gratitude or special reward." (JS, 280)
- 17:7-9 "What Jesus says about 'faith' sets the stage for what he says about being God's '**slaves**.' Here Jesus points out that a farmer simply expects a slave to 'prepare supper ... and serve me while I eat and drink' (17:7-9). Of course, stories about masters and slaves are ethically problematic for us as moderns, who no longer accept the institution of slavery. Yet in the ancient world, a 'slave' was not only a socioeconomic entity but also one wholly devoted to another." (Malcolm, WP)

Reflection Questions: Since Day 3 deals with only half the story, see Day 4 for Reflection Questions on the entire story.

Day 4

Luke 17:9-10

⁹Do you thank the slave for doing what was commanded? ¹⁰So 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!"

Background:

- 17:9-10 "This parable is difficult for several reasons. First, it seems as if Jesus is approving slavery. Second, it seems uncaring and unfair. Third, it is not our experience. We are accustomed to rewarding faithful employees (or to being rewarded), lest they find a more generous employer (or lest we find another job).

This story, however, does not commend slavery any more than the Parable of the Good Samaritan commends robbery. It simply uses a situation common in Jesus' day to illustrate a spiritual truth — that 'God owes us nothing for living good, Christian lives. God's favor and blessing are matters of grace — they cannot be earned' (Culpepper, 323)." (L)

- 17:9-10 "... the parable turns on the observation that a slave who is simply completing his work does not by doing so place his master under any obligation to reward him in some way. That is, the absurdity Jesus outlines draws on a particular, taken-for-granted social script apparent to ancient readers but easily missed by many contemporary ones. In this script, 'thanks' would not refer to a verbal expression of gratitude or social politeness, but to placing the master in debt to the slave. In the master-slave relationship, does the master come to owe the slave special privileges because the slave fulfills his daily duties? Does the slave, through fulfilling

his ordinary duties to the master, become his master's patron? Of course not! Similarly, 'worthless slaves' (v 10) refers to slaves to whom no favor is due (and not to uselessness)." (JG, 614)

- 17:9-10 "... If the apostles have the increased faith so that they can do what is expected of them: stand up to temptations, not causing temptations, rebuking and forgiving those who have sinned against them, repenting of their own misdeeds (or uprooting and moving trees) -- they have only done what's expected of them. They shouldn't expect any special favors from God for being such a good Christian. Perhaps Luke included this parable to undermine any superiority complexes that might exist within the community between the 'little ones' and the 'big ones.'

...Culpepper offers this important reflection:

Nevertheless, God owes us nothing for living good, Christian, lives. God's favor and blessing are matters of grace -- they cannot be earned. Therefore, when we assume that we can deal with God on the basis of what God owes us, we have made a basic mistake. We have rejected grace as the basis of our relationship to God and based that relationship on our own worth and merit. Grace, by definition, is a free gift. [pp. 323-324]." (BPS)

17:9 **Do you thank the slave:** "(*me echei charin to doulo* — surely he does not have gratitude or grace to the servant). The point is NOT that God does not reward obedience, but that our obedience never puts God in our debt. Our salvation is always dependent on God's grace (God's undeserved favor — God's gift)." (L)

"The point is not good manners, but social obligation and expectation. The structure of the Greek question demands the answer "no." (LTJ, 259)

17:10 "Looking for reward and thanks is not appropriate because it will continue the false consciousness that they are doing something so far beyond the ordinary that they have to be specially acknowledged. In the kingdom of God abundant service is not extraordinary. It is just how things are.

... [Jesus] is confronting their evaluation of what they need. But his powerful imagery is far from dismissing their concern. In fact, it is geared to counteract their panic...They do not need more; they need confidence in what they have." (JS, 280-281)

Reflection Questions:

- "What do verses 7-10 say about the attitude Jesus' followers should have in serving him?" (SB, p. 178)
- When you do something that is expected of you, do you think you deserve a "thanks" or a reward? Why or why not?
- When you think about God first loving us, that all that we have is a gift from God, that God pours out his grace onto us and in response we live lives of thanksgiving...how do you "see" verses 7-10?

Day 5

Reread the entire Scripture:

- Does anything significant or new stand out for you with this reading?
- After studying and meditating on this Scripture, what do you think God might be saying to you?

Reread the entire Scripture again.

- What prayer rises up in you (what would you like to say to God) after reflecting (listening to what God had to say to you) on this Scripture?

Reflection questions:

- “Jesus sees more in his followers than they see in themselves. He is continually urging them to reconceive who they are and what they can do. They must include faith among the resources they have and be able to access it.” (JS, 281)
 - How do you see this applying to you? Can you see yourself as Jesus sees you...through his eyes?
 - How do you see the role of faith in your life?
- What have you learned about faith in this Gospel lesson and Bible study? How does this apply to your faith?

From Stephen P. McCutchan, in *Water from the Rock*

“Faith, as Jesus explained, was simply doing what was normal for you to expect that God would ask of you. They were like slaves performing their duty rather than spiritual athletes achieving some great level of faith. There is a myth that great faith is some arcane secret that must be discovered. What Jesus was suggesting, and the church needs to keep in mind, is that true faith is manifested in the ordinary living of life.

Life is manifested in the ordinary kindnesses that one person shows to another or the common grace that is displayed in responding in a tense situation. We grow in faith as we nurture a God consciousness in our daily lives. As we keep an awareness of God's presence in each moment in our lives, we will receive the power to do what is appropriate at any given moment.” (page 281)

From Pastor Brian Stoffregen

“A brief prayer I read years and years ago is related to this text. It goes something like: 'O God, I don't pray for enough faith to move mountains. I can get enough dynamite and bulldozers to do that. What I need and ask for is enough faith to move me.'”

And

“WHAT IF GOD ANSWERED?

What might happen to us if and when God honors our request for more faith? I'm not positive that we really want more faith. More faith could lead us to stop doing some sinful things that we really like to do. More faith could lead us to be more forgiving towards those who have sinned against us – and we really don't want to forgive some of those mean, rotten people. In some cases, we would like to see them dead.

More faith could lead us to be more like the slave in the story at the end of our text. That is, we become more dutiful slaves of God. Doing our duties willingly: Being more dutiful in attending worship services every week. Being more dutiful in contributing generously of time and money to the church and to the needy. Being more dutiful in participating in Sunday school and committees and other church activities. Being more dutiful and doing such duties willingly, without grumbling or complaining. Could more faith mean sacrificing one's own pleasures for the sake of the needy? Could more faith mean following more closely the footsteps of Jesus – which led him to the ridicule and suffering and death on the cross?”

I'm not sure that a lot of people really want more faith. They may want more of the faith that will help them out – a faith that might heal themselves or a loved one, a faith that will help them pass a test, a faith that gives them assurance of eternal life; but do they really want a faith that will make them more Christ-like in sacrificial giving, in sacrificial loving, in sacrificial forgiving? I'm not sure if people want that.”

- *What is your response to this this reading?*

From John Shea, *Luke, The Relentless Widow*

“The Sufis have a saying about Jesus. He stands by the river selling river water. He just saw what was there and what was possible, and he struggled mightily with all the art at his command to have other people see what he saw. What he saw were mulberry trees, one after the other, on their way to the sea.” (page 283)

From David Lose, President,
Lutheran Theological Seminary In Philadelphia

“Faith, Working Preacher, isn’t an idea, it’s a muscle. And the more we use that muscle, the stronger it gets.

And so Jesus tells his disciples -- both then and now -- that we’ve got all that we need to be faithful, and that being faithful, finally, is about recognizing all the God-given opportunities just to show up and do what needs to be done: . . .

It’s all the ordinary stuff we do all the time and, taken together and blessed by God, it’s pretty darn extraordinary.

But faith is not only a muscle, it’s also an adventure. . . “

Psalm 37:1-9

¹Do not fret because of the wicked; do not be envious of wrongdoers,

²for they will soon fade like the grass, and wither like the green herb.

³Trust in the LORD, and do good; so you will live in the land, and enjoy security.

⁴Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

⁵Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act.

⁶He will make your vindication shine like the light, and the justice of your cause like the noonday.

⁷Be still before the LORD, and wait patiently for him; do not fret over those who prosper in their way, over those who carry out evil devices.

⁸Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath. Do not fret—it leads only to evil.

⁹For the wicked shall be cut off, but those who wait for the LORD shall inherit the land.