

Pentecost 20C
Luke 17:5-10
Grace, River Forest

There's a phrase we hear often from our kids in the Wegner household—

“More, please!”

As babies,

Our kids learned a little sign language,

And “more” was one of the first signs we taught them.

It was also the most frequently used.

Now that they're older,

Owen says, “More, please!”

And Caroline says, “Muh”

Over. . .and over. . .and over again,

Starting out calm but quickly progressing to frustration.

Until their request is granted.

“More, please!”

We hear a version of this cry in our Gospel this morning,

Although it's lacking the “please”

And definitely seems more like a demand.

Though it could be a cry of desperation.

The apostles exclaim to Jesus, “Increase our faith!”

“Give us more!”

“Make it bigger!”

“Add to our faith!”

I have asked God for “more” of a lot of things in my life.
I’ve asked plenty of times for more patience,
 For more wisdom,
 For more clarity and awareness of what God is up to.
I’ve asked for more help in making ends meet.
I’ve asked for more peace in the world,
 For more love shown and shared.
I’ve asked for better health for those suffering in my life.
 I’ve asked for miracles.
But I must admit,
 When I have asked God for more of something,
 It has rarely been for more faith.
And so the apostles’ succinct and clear demand of Jesus,
 “Increase our faith!”
Makes me wonder, “Why haven’t I asked for more faith?”
 Maybe it seems like a given,
 Since I’m already asking for other things.
 Or maybe. . .it doesn’t seem like enough.

Is faith enough to rid our streets and our entire world of seemingly
unending and horrific violence that plagues us?

Is faith enough to drive out cancer?

 Is faith enough to turn an illness from terminal into curable?

Is faith enough to restore our broken relationships,
 to move us to reconciliation with one another?

Is faith enough to pay our bills?

 Is faith enough to get us that new job?

Is faith enough to get us through each day while our minds battle
depression and anxiety,

 While our bodies live with chronic pain that no one else sees?

Is faith enough to live this life?
Is faith enough to face our death?

It often doesn't feel like it.

And yet,

Jesus reminds us today that faith—even if as tiny as a mustard
seed—

Can witness to amazing,
Impossible,
Unthinkable things.

Faith in Jesus Christ—

Even as soft as a whisper in our ear in a world full of other noise,
Even as dim as a dark room lit only by a small candle,
Even as hazy as a densely foggy day,
Even as shallow as a puddle,
Even as shaky as a baby taking first steps--

Faith in Jesus Christ is faith that holds amazing,
Impossible,
Unthinkable power.

And as people of God, we're really no stranger to tiny things being full
of power,

And meaning,
And miracle.

Each week when we gather in this space,

We touch a bit of water,
We taste a bit of bread,
And a sip of wine.

Tiny pieces and moments and experiences of God.

Tiny, simple things of the earth,

That God has given amazing,
Impossible,
Unthinkable power.

At this font in baptism, a drop of water combined with God's Word
becomes a downpour of drenching,
Redeeming love.

In even the smallest drop of water,
We are cleansed and refreshed.
We die to sin and rise to new, eternal life.

In a drop of water,
God bestows on us faith.
And it might be a tiny flicker in our hearts,
But Jesus says that's more than enough.

A bite of bread and a sip of wine,
A tiny piece of Jesus' body and a tiny taste of Jesus' blood,
Are combined with the words of Christ,
"This is my body and blood,
Given and shed for you."

And a tiny mouthful becomes a feast of abundant mercy.

In a bite and a sip,
We are filled,
We are nourished,
We are forgiven and we are united as one body.

In a bite and a sip,
God restores and sustains our faith.
And it might grow weary,
It might grow weak,
But Jesus feeds our faith today.

And that is more than enough.

When we look around at our broken world,
and our messy lives
and our shaken spirits,
we may cry out to God, "Increase our faith!"
Yet Jesus says all we need is a tiny seed,
Because even in that tiny seed,
We are making a bold statement that this world is not all
there is,
That this life is not all we have or all we are,
That those things that consume
and scare
and tempt
and try to destroy us
will be uprooted and have
no power over us.

As we hear in our first reading in Habakkuk:
"For there is still a vision for the appointed time;
it speaks of the end, and does not lie.
If it seems to tarry, wait for it;
it will surely come, it will not delay."

There is more to come.
Always more to come.
And so our faith--
However small,
Or shaky,
Or hazy,
Or dim--
Our faith clings to Jesus,

And to the power and promises of God shown in the
smallest things.

Listen for it,

Look for it,

Splash in it,

Taste of it.

We cry out together for “More, please!”

. . .And find that we already have it.