In the Gospel passage that we just read from Luke, the disciples made a request asking Jesus to “increase their faith”. Prior to this, Jesus had a teaching moment with his followers about forgiving those who have sinned and have come to ask for their forgiveness.[[1]](#footnote-1) The disciples perhaps felt ill equipped, inadequate, or not good enough to do what is required of them. It’s too much to ask of them when they said yes in following Jesus as his disciples. But that’s OK. Jesus knew that…no one would ever have enough faith to make a “perfect” disciple. That’s exactly why we need to place our trust in Jesus and not trust in our own human abilities.

 It appears, however, that the disciples were totally missing the point about what faith is and what faith isn’t. **Faith is not something that we can quantify. It’s not something that you can go and get some more of in order to better ourselves. But faith does qualify and empower us to do what is beyond our human imagination.**  As one theologian defines **“Faith” as an inward conviction that prompts for an outward expression and action.**

But where does our faith come from? The disciples did acknowledge that the source of our faith comes from God and not generated by ourselves. Often times we think that if we have faith, then WE can do anything we want and everything will be done according to OUR commands and OUR desires. Or if we simply have faith, then God will bless us and reward us in the future. But that is NOT what faith is and how faith works.

**To have faith in Jesus simply means that we let go of our own human desires, our own insecurities, and rest our dependencies and trust upon Jesus.** The size or the amount of our faith does not matter, but our approach and allegiance do. Even if our faith is as small as a mustard seed, God will magnify and increase it, if we are simply willing to let God do what God needs to do.

Very often the result of our faith may not be evident through our eyes or within our lifetime. **Our faith is measured by the fruits that our faith bears.** When the disciples asked Jesus to “increase their faith”, they were asking out of their personal inadequacy, fear, and personal doubt. They feared that they were not able to carry out what they were ask to do. Their feared of their failures instead of hopes. Jesus never promised them that being his disciples would be a walk in the park. In fact, it’s often the opposite…that being his disciples means that we may face trials and even persecutions because of our faith. We are NOT exempt!

Jesus used the metaphor of a mustard seed to illustrate if our lives were planted in the right soil with proper nourishment, it too can be grown into a mustard tree and bear much fruits for the Kingdom of God. It’s not about the amount of faith one must have but rather about one’s obedience in receiving and being entrusted with such gift of faith from God.

By the grace of God, all of us already have this seed of faith implanted in our hearts. Some may have buried it or have let it fall by the wayside. Some may have to dig a little deeper in order to find it once again….but that seed of faith is still there.

 **Cultivating our faith is an act of obedience and a declaration of our allegiance towards God.** As God’s faithful disciples, we strive to live a lifelong commitment honoring our individual and collective callings from God. Whenever we find ourselves standing at the crossroad of faith facing various trials and challenges in life, we must ask ourselves, **do we depend upon our own strengths and abilities, rather than trusting in God’s grace, mercy, and strength**?

 Even if our faith is as small as a mustard seed, it opens us up with the greater potential of what God sees in us. As the gardener, God will cultivate this seed of faith in order to fulfill God’s ultimate purpose and plan. **Even the smallest of faith has the power to perform the greatest of all miracles.**

 Later on this afternoon, I will be going out to Chinatown to attend the funeral service of yet another great man of faith. Mr. Roy Eng, whom many have adopted as their godfather, uncle, or even their father. Roy was a man of great wisdom and of faith. I’ve come to know Roy ever since I was 18, when I first participated in an inter-church conference among many English speaking Asian-American Christians in the NY/NJ area. That conference has been on for 65 consecutive years…and Roy has been there for all, with the exception of 1 or 2 since 1951. The fact that he has attended 64 out of the 65 years of the same conference speaks volume of his faith, dedication and commitment of his heart towards God. But his legacy goes far beyond that. A number of us, including Margaret and Ginger, had the chance to get to meet him and his wife, Mary in person at the farm house, in Blairstown, NJ. Roy would always have a story to tell and good advice and wisdom for us to chew on.

As a young boy growing up in Chinatown in the 1940’s, Roy managed to overcome many challenges of racism and stereotype while trying to live up to his own parents’ expectation as well. Roy valued the importance of education as a path to one’s future. He earned his way through undergrad and graduate studies in at top-notched higher institutions such as Bucknell and Columbia. He was also man of vision and developed a compassion heart towards others.

I think it’s fitting that our passage of the mustard seed came up today because if anything, Roy would probably consider himself as a humble tiny mustard seed, who’s trying to help others dream their “American” dream and reach their fullest potential, and to create a better opportunity for themselves and for others. Roy was not afraid to speak up when he saw injustices happening and because of his ability to speak and write English and his generous helping spirit towards others, it was natural for him to do whatever he could to help others, especially those who are new immigrants….from fighting traffic tickets, translating official documents, appearing in courts and helping others applying for various kinds of services. He always thought of other people first before himself.

Without a doubt, Roy’s testimony of faith speaks volume and has inspired many whose lives have been transformed through Roy’s ministry. A tiny mustard seed of faith was planted in this young man’s life 89 years ago when the Heavenly Father embraced him and took him in, and began the miracle transformation work through his life. Roy allowed himself to be used by God in order to inspire others. Well done, good and faithful servant Uncle Roy.

In the same way, each of us are also gifted with this planted seed of the Gospel. Through our faith, even as small as a mustard seed, we too can be developed, nurtured, and worked wonders by the grace and the love of God, as long as we surrender ourselves and allow the Holy Spirit to work in our lives. God’s faithfulness and steadfast love never ends.

 On this first Sunday in October every year, we stand united with the universal church worldwide by joining in the celebration of the World Communion Sunday. It is a day of reckoning and proclamation of the unity, faith, and hope that are shared amongst our fellow Christian sisters and brothers, regardless of our denomination and traditions. It is a day in which we recognize our common unity in Christ, a collective tiny seeds of faith that enables us to do greater kingdom works that Christ has started and commissioned us to carry on to the ends of the earth.

We share this common faith together in furthering the Kingdom of God for the reconciliation of the world and we look forward to the day when Christ returns once again. The bread that we break and the cup that we drink signify the unity, the faith and the forgiveness that we must share with one another as sisters and brothers in Christ, with Christ and for Christ.

**Jesus has already given us everything that we need along this life-long journey of faith. The *Seed of Faith* has already been planted in our lives, now it’s up to us fulfill its purpose and to live it! The only thing that God is asking us is to simply obey and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. God will nurture and water that *Seed of Faith* in us.** It is God who would enable us to do God’s work among others and to be the ambassadors and agents of God’s love in this world.

Even with the faith of a mustard seed, a mountain can be moved.[[2]](#footnote-2) For nothing is impossible with God.[[3]](#footnote-3) In the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, Amen.

1. *Luke 17:4* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Matthew 17:20* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Luke 1:37* [↑](#footnote-ref-3)