



# THE PASTOR'S PEN

February 1, 2107

## More Faith (Luke 9:51)

The Gospel of Luke includes more episodes from Jesus' final journey to Jerusalem than any of the other Gospels'. Included in Luke are some of the most beloved parables, along with some of Jesus' most difficult sayings. Once Jesus has "*set his face towards Jerusalem*" an underlying urgency permeates his teachings, which compel even the passing listener to wake up and pay close attention.

And as Jesus grows in his understanding that his time is drawing near, he focuses on transmitting his core messages to his disciples. He tells them some hard things like:

*"occasions for stumbling are bound to come, but woe to anyone to whom they come! It would be better for you if a millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea than for you to cause one of these little ones to stumble. Be on your guard!"*

The disciples, who are beginning to understand the challenge Jesus presents to live by a "*kingdom ethic*" in which they would be repeatedly called upon to confront and forgive one another, beg Jesus with a mixture of fear and desperation, "*increase our faith.*" Of course, it is a legitimate request.

When the disciples understand the size of the task, they naturally want what they feel they don't have.

But the truth is, we all want what we don't have. Jesus however, tells his disciples that more faith is not what they really need. Rather they needed to understand that whatever the amount one has, faith enables God to work in a person's life in ways that defy ordinary human experience. Even "*with a grain, a speck of faith*" they (and we) can live by his teachings and discipleship.

To know "*who you have believed*" makes everything new. And because Jesus knows so completely who he is, he helps us to know ourselves.

He knows every human being wants to be about something. He knows no one is truly-deep-down satisfied with simply putting in time and merely surviving until the weekend. He knows we want more because we've been created to be more. It's in our bones, our very nature. And so, then and now, Jesus continues to teach his disciples not only how to live, but pushes the envelope and takes us further than we ever thought it was possible to go.

Look at yourself. Look at your life! You are so precious, so incredibly valuable to God! When

God looks at you, God sees God's very own child. God's grace is a gift, waiting to be shared by people like us - people who have so little faith sometimes that we can barely see the tiny seeds of it in our outstretched hands.

Any yet, isn't it amazing that the One who knows everything about us, is the very One who loves us most. Thanks be to God!

**Peace, Passion, and continued growth in Christ**

**Pastor Mark**

