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## *Grow as a Steward through Faith*

### *Love through Faith*

**Theme verse:** *“If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it will obey you.”* Luke 17:6

**W**hat is it that precedes the disciples’ request of Jesus to increase their faith? It is Jesus’ command to count others so precious as to avoid putting any kind of temptation in their paths.

How is this possible? If we are honest with ourselves, we must admit that, in and of ourselves, we cannot follow these commands. Then we, like the disciples, must ask of our Lord, *“Increase our faith.”*

How does Jesus respond to their request? He assures them that even faith as small as a mustard seed can accomplish great things. It is God who gives the faith, and it is God who gives us the ability to act on it. It is God who gives us the love through faith that sacrifices our own desires for the good of others, love through faith that knows no limit, love through faith that serves instead of asking to be served.

It is faith that gives us such love for God and our neighbor that we serve and help and give without thought of reward, so that *“when [we] have done everything [we] were told to do, should say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.’”* (Luke 17:10).

**Prayer:** *Dear heavenly Father, certainly, in order to measure up to your standards, we must ask you to increase our faith. Still we fail, for we do not love you with our entire beings, nor do we love our neighbors as ourselves. Therefore, we thank you for the gift of your Son who has met your standard of perfection and has lived that standard in our places. Forgive us, Lord, for our failures. Teach us to depend on you. Give us grace to be obedient to your command to love others as you love us. Through Christ we pray. Amen.*

## *Grow as a Steward through Love*

### *The Father's Great Love*

**Theme verse:** *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”* John 3:16

Those days between Good Friday and Easter Sunday had to have been long, dreary, hopeless days for Jesus' followers. Sometimes we go through days like that: someone we love is battling a terminal illness; we don't get the promotion we had been promised; the kids are rebelling and having trouble at school; we don't think anyone understands what we're going through.

Never, though, are we beyond hope, for those days between Good Friday and Easter Sunday have passed. We know that the victory has been won. We know our troubles are but *“light and momentary”* (2 Corinthians 4:17). When we focus on God through his Word, we get a different perspective. For example, meditate on these words from 1 John 3:1: *“How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!”* Examine the word “lavish.” Without limit, God has given his love; he gave his Son to show us the depth of his love and to take away the wall that we built between him and us with our sin. And now he calls us his children! He doesn't just call us children – he has made us his children!

Easter brings us another promise – that, just as Christ has been resurrected from the dead, we, too, will be raised to spend eternity in his presence. And there *“we shall be like him”* (1 John 3:2). In the meantime, let us keep focusing on Christ and use the gifts our Father has given us in order that more souls might join with us before his throne of grace.

**Prayer:** *Lord, please open our eyes and hearts so we can better see your love at work in our lives. Help us to understand that we exist only out of your love and grace. Keep us resolute and firm in our love for you. In your precious name we pray. Amen.*