

MOUNTAINS MOVED BY FAITH

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Lesson: Matthew 17:14-21

When the Lord was in the world, He taught His disciples and many other people who heard Him many wonderful truths that astonished them. Our lesson from the Word tells of one of these wonderful truths.

The Lord had gone up into a mountain taking Peter, James and John with Him, and leaving the rest of the disciples at the bottom of the mountain's slope. When the Lord and the three disciples came down the mountain, as you remember, He found the rest of the disciples with a multitude, that is, a crowd of people, with them.

A man came to the Lord, and humbly kneeling, begged Him to have mercy on his son who was possessed by an evil spirit. This caused him to act like a mad person who harmed himself by falling into fire and into water. The man said he had brought his son to the disciples but they had not been able to help the son.

The Lord cast out the evil spirit, and the son was made well.

Later, when they were alone with Him, the disciples asked the Lord why they had not been able to cast out the evil spirit. The Lord told them it was because they lacked faith, for if they had faith as a grain of mustard seed, they could say to the mountain beside them to move from where it was to some place else, and nothing would be impossible.

This is truly astonishing. For a grain of mustard is very small indeed, only a little larger than a speck of dust.

Can so small an amount of true faith really do so great a miracle as to move a great mountain of ground and rocks?

Well, yes and no.

No matter how much faith you think you have no mountain will move an inch by your telling it to move. If you have true faith you would not want to do that, for that is only wishful thinking, and that is not what the Lord meant. Yet great things have been done by people who believed enough that they could be done.

In ancient Egypt, Egyptians built great pyramids of stone, which are still among the wonders of the world. They had neither the tools nor machinery we have today. But somehow they fashioned the great stones and fitted them together into pyramids, because they believed it could be done and they worked at it.

Not so long ago, within the last hundred years, men who believed they could do it and did something about it built the Suez Canal and the Panama Canal despite many difficulties and discouragements. And only within the past twenty years men who had faith and worked at it, built a tunnel through the Alp mountains to make it possible for people to travel between France and Italy without having to climb up and down the steep mountain slopes by narrow and dangerous roads.

Then, not too many years ago, the most tremendous mountain of difficulties was finally moved by people who had faith that it could be done through their hard and careful work. This was to explore the moon. First, they had to build something that could travel in space where there is no air, as we know it. They also had to build a rocket to get it into space.

When they found out they could do this, they had to build a space ship big enough to carry people, all the different things they would need to live in space and then return safely to earth, and a rocket strong enough to send so heavy a weight into space. When they were sure they could do this, they sent a man to circle this earth and to return to earth. After they had done so with success a number of times, they worked on how to get men to the moon. They had to build a space ship big enough to hold three men, a rocket strong enough to get it started far enough into space to get to the moon, they had to work out how to get men on the moon and back again, and how to steer the space ship safely to the moon and back again. They did all this. Men landed on the moon and came back safely, not only once but a number of times, so that they knew for sure that the great mountain of difficulties had indeed been moved out of the way.

There are many other wonderful things that have been done on earth by people who had faith it could be done and did something about it.

But the mountain the Lord was really speaking about was not an earthly mountain. It was the mountain of selfishness and bad habits.

If you think about it, I am sure you will realize that whenever you wanted to stop being selfish or to get over bad habits it seemed to be something too big for you to do. And because of that you gave up. It seemed like a huge mountain that stood in your way to heaven, that you were helpless to remove.

But as the Lord tells us, if we really have faith that it can be done and keep on trying, it will be done, and you'll stop being just selfish and begin to think of others. And you'll find your bad habits can be overcome.

It will not happen right away nor easily. But if you keep trying it will surely happen, and you will realize it is truly a miracle of faith.