

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. Scripture text: **Matthew 17:14-20.**

And when they came to the multitude, a man came up to Him, falling on his knees before Him, and saying, [15] "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is a lunatic, and is very ill; for he often falls into the fire, and often into the water. [16] "And I brought him to Your disciples, and they could not cure him." [17] And Jesus answered and said, "O unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him here to Me." [18] And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon came out of him, and the boy was cured at once. [19] Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" [20] And He said[^] to them, "Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it shall move; and nothing shall be impossible to you.

- B. The edge can be a scary place to live. An edge says that you are close to having something change.
- C. The thing is--you can't stay on the edge for very long. You will go one way or the other. This is true in our Xian walk. We are always living on the edge, and must decide which way we are going to go.

II. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE COMMON AND THE GREAT.

A. Some people seem to have greatness written all over them. Others work hard and don't get anywhere. What's the difference?

- B. Let me suggest that the difference is: a mustard seed full of faith.
- C. Look again at the Scripture text and see why the faithless disciples could not cast out the epileptic demon (Mt. 17:14-20; esp. 20).
- D. The disciples were living with greatness (JC), but remained common due to their lack of faith.
- E. Life is lived on the edge until you begin to walk by faith. It's time to get off the edge and live for X.

III. BIBLE PEOPLE WHO WERE LIVING ON THE EDGE.

A. Look at the following examples of people , who were living on the edge spiritually:

1. David slew Goliath with a sling, a stone, and a mighty faith in God (1Sam. 17:45).
Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted.
2. Levi was a tax-collector but responded to the call of X (Mt. 9:9).
And as Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man, called Matthew, sitting in the tax office; and He said[^] to him, "Follow Me!" And he rose, and followed Him.
3. The rich young ruler was a religious person, trying to please God according to the Law, but when Jesus told him what he lacked he did not change (see Mk. 10:17-22).
4. Apollos was a talented, educated, and religious man who needed to know more than he knew. But he responded to further teaching (see Ac. 18:24-28).
5. Agrippa knew a lot about the prophets of the OT and when confronted with the fulfillment of the Law in X did not respond to the truth (see Ac. 26:24-29).

- B. Some of these men responded to the edge by living a life of faith. Others did not respond in faith and we can only wonder about their spiritual condition.

IV. WHEN OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS.

But what do we do when opportunity knocks about our living on the edge?

A. Make excuses. Remember the three in Lk.14:18-20:

1. Material possessions. Sorry, life does not consist of the things we have (Lk. 12:15).
And He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not *even* when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions."
2. Work. Sorry, put first the kingdom and God's righteousness (Mt. 6:33).
"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.

3. Family. Sorry, we must have a greater love for God than family (Lk. 14:26).
 “If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.”
- B. Rationalize by saying:
 1. “I’m not talented enough.” Sorry, Moses tried that one and it didn’t work (Ex. 4:10).
 Then Moses said to the LORD, “Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither recently nor in time past, nor since Thou hast spoken to Thy servant; for I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.”
 2. “I don’t have enough training or education.” Sorry, Peter and John proved that’s not a problem (Ac. 4:13).
 Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John, and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were marveling, and *began* to recognize them as having been with Jesus.
 3. “I don’t have enough money.” Sorry, God said He will meet all your needs (Phil. 4:19).
 And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.
 4. “I’ve never, done anything like that before.” Sorry, there is no better reason to try it!
- C. Get confused:
 1. About the immediate and the important.
 Martha did, while Mary took the better portion (see Lk. 10:40-42).
 2. About the temporary and the eternal. Those who are dead will one day rise again (Lk. 9:59).
 And He said to another, “Follow Me.” But he said, “Permit me first to go and bury my father.”
 3. About our family and our faith.
 Family is important, but following X is more important (Lk. 9:61).
 And another also said, “I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home.”

IV. ON TO GREATNESS.

-  A. How does one get that mustard seed of faith to stop living on the edge and start living for X?
 1. You already have the power to change (Phil. 4:13).
 I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.
 2. The power is at work within you (Eph. 3:20,21).
 Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, [21] to Him *be* the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.
 3. With faith, nothing is impossible (Mt. 17:20).
 And He said^ to them, “Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it shall move; and nothing shall be impossible to you.”
-  B. A 3-step plan to greatness:
 1. Ask God. You have not because you ask not! (Mt. 7:7,8).
 “Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. [8] “For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened.”
 2. Test God. Gideon has his fleece, Malachi his tithe, and Jesus His Gethsemane (Mal. 3:10).
 “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this,” says the LORD of hosts, “if I will not open for you the windows of heaven, and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.”
 3. Trust God. God’s will, will be done; let us be patient as He works in us (Phil. 2:13; 1:6).
 (Phil 1:6) For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.
 (Phil 2:13) for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

V. CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

-  A. Are you living on the edge--not knowing what to do with your life?
- B. A mustard seed full of faith is all you need to do all things.
- C. Get off the edge and live for Jesus.
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians.