

# **THE POWER OF SMALL**

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### **West Valley Presbyterian Church**

The Power of Small  
(one seed)

Today I am here to tell you that  
Small things make a big difference!

I am handing out mustard seeds. These seeds are so small that I felt guilty just putting one in the bag.  
Most of them have two mustard seeds  
Jesus said if you have faith as one grain of mustard seed you could move mountains...but I didn't have faith that it was enough so I put in two...  
Just in case...

And one bag has four...if you get that bag you better bring world peace...that's all I can say

Everyone gets a bag. I want you to take this home and put it somewhere that you can see it.  
Tape it on your mirror, put it on the refrigerator, hang it off your car dash...  
When you look at the mustard seed, remember the scripture that Ryan read to you a few minutes ago...

Jesus said, The Kingdom of Heaven is like this seed...Really? When someone says "Kingdom of Heaven" I don't think of this miniscule little seed  
I think of streets of gold, and pearly gates, and thrones and temples

I can barely see this seed...especially now that I am in my 50's  
It is so tiny  
The smallest seed of all

And yet...what comes from this seed?  
Jesus said an enormous tree, with branches, where the birds of the air are able to make their nests

All week long we have been doing Vacation Bible School with your children  
And your children have been amazing

Let me just remind you however that what we do here is far more than just a fun camp event  
It is so much more than learning new songs, and making crafts  
What we do here, in the smallest ways, with the smallest of people  
Changes lives  
Makes

The tiny mustard seed of this VBS experience, is the beginning of germinating tiny seeds of faith in the lives of small children...and its this mustard seed experience that will create trees of strength and power... right here...children start sending out their roots into the soil of God's love for them in Jesus Christ

This year we had 15 children ask Jesus into their heart for the very first time ever. And 16 children rededicated their life to Christ.

I remember – and this was several years ago – the man who came to see me  
He said, “I am a businessman. I have done well in my life and I have always been able to achieve what I have set out to do. But the reason I am here, and the reason I am coming back to church with my two kids, is because long ago as a child I met Jesus at Vacation Bible School. I remember my teacher, I remember asking Jesus into my heart, and I remember it was the first and only time I felt truly loved. That is why I have brought my kids back today.

The power of small...the power of the mustard seed...faith alive in the heart of a small child changes lives and moves mountains...

Maybe some of you have heard of the book the Tipping Point written by Malcolm Gladwell which by now is a classic. The term “tipping point” has made its way into our conversations as those very small moments in history that have made a huge difference.

Just like a virus is so small you can't see it...it packs a punch

I know it...When I am sick I am down with something so tiny that infected me that I can't even see it...but it knocks the sap out of you...

And Gladwell says that just like a single sick person can start an epidemic of the flu, swine flu..... so too can a few graffiti artists fuel a subway crime wave, or a satisfied customer who simply connects with the right people...fill the empty tables of a new restaurant.  
Social epidemics that form history start in very small tiny ways....and the moment when they take off, when they reach their critical mass, is the Tipping Point  
And it changes history

Small insignificant things that are low on the value scale in my spiritual blue book... are often the very things that make monumental change  
Jesus says to us, “the kingdom of heaven is like that”.

What is Jesus saying? Why are these little, insignificant things the bricks and mortar of the kingdom of God?

Why does God use what is weak, and small, and ordinary

What appears unimpressive, not of great importance

To build his kingdom....to create his purpose...to usher in his presence?

Paul tells us why. He says it this way,

**“God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things – and the things that are not – to nullify the things that are, (WHY???) So that no one may boast before him...Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.”** (1 Corinthians 1:27-31)

I told you before that it was a mustard seed moment that led me into the ministry

God used a child from the slums of Harlem to melt the ice aged frozen will of a female graduate (Me) who was dead set against going to seminary.

This child looked at me as I was packing up our student apartment that had cockroaches and an occasional rat in it...that looked out on an airshaft where garbage was thrown down...and said "You'll forget me you know. You are going on to a better life...but we have to stay here." Right then in that mustard seed moment the Holy Spirit grabbed my heart and I had to go to seminary... so that I wouldn't forget the poor, the lowly, the weak, the children...I knew it right then. The call was as clear as crystal...

Or the mustard seed moment C.S. Lewis describes when he got a haircut he didn't need. He turned into the barbershop because all day long he'd been hearing a still small voice, urging to go to this barbershop.

He had a lot of other things to do that day. But the voice kept persisting. "Go and get a haircut" So he went in...feeling stupid;

But it was a mustard seed response .

Turns out, the barber had a lot on his mind that day. Turns out he was going through a tough time. Lewis consoled him and prayed with him.

As Lewis prepared to leave, the barber looked at him and said, "I'm so glad you came in today. If you hadn't come in, and said what you said to me, I was planning on locking up early, and taking my own life. You've given me hope. Thanks so much."

Each time a few of us gather to pray for this church at 6:30AM on Tuesday morning in the library there aren't too many brave souls that venture out. ...but I have been in ministry too long to not know that this tiny prayer group is the mustard seed that has already opened doors for us in countless ways...this group of people is small but powerful...and prays for you, for the future of this church, the finances, the people, the vision...and we also pray against anything the enemy would want to do to distort or come against God's plan here....just a mustard...but powerful....rocking heaven and earth...

A child from the bowels of Harlem  
A step into a barbershop  
A few folks gathered for prayer each morning

And we see the kingdom of heaven....

This is mustard seed living  
Stay awake to it!

Its through the smallest things, and lowliest people and little events in the interruptions, in the still small voice, in a group of a few huddled together for prayer that we find the kingdom of heaven...

That's so we won't think that anything the Lord does is because of our great achievements...

This thing called Christianity all  
started in the mustard seed of a manger...a feeding trough for animals  
It started with a rag tag bunch of uneducated men  
Who followed a rabbi named Jesus who paid attention to people no one else really cared about;  
prostitutes and thieves and people called Samaritans that you weren't supposed to talk to....

This Jesus...never wrote a book, held an office, or traveled very far from the place where he was born

He was homeless...shacked up with friends...this Jesus  
Was then crucified and laid in a borrowed grave  
Who would have thought that such a small unimpressive movement...somewhere in some  
Obscure area in the Middle east  
Such a humble beginning...of no account ...a mustard seed of a movement  
Would shake the foundations of our culture, or our history and still be transforming human lives  
today?

The Bible today, is still the best seller...hands down  
And when you do believe, and you make a practice of watching God work...you find that ...lives  
are changed beginning with the mustard seed...  
Because someone took the time to pray  
Someone listened to God and went in a barber shop  
Or someone decided to make a visit, hold a hand, offer a cup of water in Jesus' name...  
Someone decided to do a Vacation bible School and lead small children to Jesus

I've heard people tell me that WVPC is "just a small church"  
That we don't have enough of money, or people or other resources  
They say it with a sigh.....

Watch out WVPC...cause  
...small churches are God's favorite...they are the mustard seeds for all sorts of possibility and  
miracles...and...mustard seeds grow...into amazing things...and the kingdom of heaven is like  
this...right here...  
Because we know that when something happens here...God is at work  
It isn't because of us...and our greatness  
It is because of God and his greatness that things happen here...and they are happening friends...  
All he needs is a mustard seed...and God loves mustard seeds...All he needs is a willing heart...a  
willing church of just a few  
Invested in his purpose...

This week 15 children asked Jesus into their heart for the very first time. (story of Alyssa)  
That's a mustard seed beginning of the kingdom of God in our midst at work...working in the  
small...working in the ordinary...working in the humblest of ways...to bring his kingdom.