

THE HOPE JOURNAL

LEARNING TO LOVE, TOGETHER

October 5, 2025



ENOUGH

why Jesus says that we have enough faith

by Drew Downs

Jesus uses the mustard seed as an example of just how little faith is required to be full of faith. A speck of faith is enough to rip a tree out of the earth and throw it in the sea. Wow, right? And this is his response to the Apostles begging for help. They want him to give them more, like he's a faith dispenser, just pop his top and pour it out. But Jesus tells them that whatever they have is enough to do extraordinary things. To move those proverbial mountains.

We're not expecting to do that much, are we? So all the stuff we are trying to do should be much easier. Like loving the person next to us; maybe giving them a sandwich.

Perhaps we want it to be complicated, to justify our non-participation. Or to excuse our anger. Or mollify our distrust. But if any faith at all is enough to do the impossible, then any amount of love for other people is absolutely possible. Any.

ORDINARY TIME

2025

WHAT'S GOING ON

*"You know we've got to find a way
To bring some loving here today".*

-Marvin Gaye

Disciples, Apostles, and Saints!

Tragedy

This past weekend, the people of Grand Blanc were rocked by a horrifying experience of a man driving his truck into an LDS church, getting out, shooting and killing multiple people during a worship service, and setting fire to the building, which was almost entirely engulfed in flames by the early afternoon.

It is hard to overstate how disturbing this event, like any other mass killing of people at a church, school, concert, or any other place is. This one took place about 14 miles from where Rose grew up, in a community we have visited many times and where we liked to go to the movies.

Let us pray for the people of Grand Blanc and of Burton, Michigan. This was a horrifying event.

Let us also reflect on how easily we tolerate the hatred that leads to violence, the willingness we are to accept the easy proliferation of weapons in our communities, our jocularly in condemning whole swaths of people, our resistance to expanding healthcare services in all our communities, our rejection of the common good and the means by which we can build up our communities, and our unfaithfulness in believing there is nothing we can do about it. At a time when leaders have an easier time blaming an outside threat, or seeking to militarize our police to dominate our citizens — even for the federal government to seek unconstitutional war powers on our own soil, the hardest thing to admit is how we all have failed each other. And how much we all need to repent of this sin we bear together.

With love,
Drew+

ORDINARY TIME

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FOR SUNDAY

Proper 22C

October 5, 2025

Collect

Almighty and everlasting God, you are always more ready to hear than we to pray, and to give more than we either desire or deserve: Pour upon us the abundance of your mercy, forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things for which we are not worthy to ask, except through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Savior; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

Reading

Luke 17:5-10

The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" The Lord replied, "If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you.

"Who among you would say to your slave who has just come in from plowing or tending sheep in the field, 'Come here at once and take your place at the table'? Would you not rather say to him, 'Prepare supper for me, put on your apron and serve me while I eat and drink; later you may eat and drink'? Do you thank the slave for doing what was commanded? So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, 'We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!'"

ORDINARY TIME

Reflection

A writer once pointed out something so obvious, we should have seen it. They wrote that a father looking after his own kids isn't *babysitting*. He's doing his basic job as a father. This was similarly articulated as a recurring joke in the sitcom *Everybody Loves Raymond*, that the eponymous character would seek to be rewarded for doing the things he is supposed to do. The same character would also feign incompetence to get out of work, too. These are so common as concepts that millions of people nod along and say *too true!*

When Jesus offers his apostles this same teaching, he is reminding them that the commands are, in fact, the baseline. This is what it means to be a follower of Jesus: to love God and neighbor. To be as Jesus in the world. Not as aspiration, but as normal, command, very way of being.

I'll note that he says this after commanding the apostles forgive the repentant sinner every single time. After saying sin is terrible. Call it out. And also forgive the sinner in their repentance. That is why the apostles balk at it, asking him to give them more faith. Because that seems like a lot to them. And I suspect it seems like a lot to us, too. Given that, I suspect Jesus's response might translate to some as *Tough. Figure it out.*

I don't think it says that, exactly. Because I think Jesus would have us invite the servant to our table. That our own obsession with getting the things done in the right order is more a reflection of the kingdoms of earth than the dream of God. That our work, for all that it is oriented toward the will of God, ought to have at its heart, the work that God would have us do. Repentance and forgiveness, love and devotion, service and commitment. That this is God's work, our work, and our mutual conviction. May we be so ordered, so generous, so convicted.

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