Faith Like A Mustard Seed

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Preacher: Shawn Woo

[0:00] Turn with me in your Bibles to Matthew chapter 17, verses 14 to 23. If you don't have a Bible, please raise your hand.

We'd love to give you a copy of it. We're in Matthew chapter 17, verses 14 to 23. Let me pray for the reading and preaching of God's word.
Oh, Lord God. Lord, how can it be that sinners like us have something to gain from the blood of our Savior?
How can it be that though all our righteousness is woefully inadequate, that you have made a way for us to be saved by your grace through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone?
Lord, affirm and establish us in that glorious faith. Fix our eyes on your Son, Jesus Christ, this morning.
[1:30] Lord, we need more of Him, more of you. Speak to us, God, in your word. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen. Please stand, if you are able, to honor God as I read from His word. Matthew 17, verses 14 to 23. And when they came to the crowd, a man came up to Him and kneeling before Him said, Lord, have mercy on my son.
For he has seizures and he suffers terribly. For often he falls into the fire and often into the water. And I brought him to your disciples and they could not heal him.
And Jesus answered, O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him here to me.
And Jesus rebuked the demon and it came out of him. And the boy was healed instantly. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, Why could we not cast it out?
[2:40] He said to them, Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, move from here to there and it will move.

And nothing will be impossible for you. As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men. And they will kill him.
And he will be raised on the third day. And they were greatly distressed. This is God's holy and authoritative word. Please be seated. Faith is a word that we use often.
As Christians. But we rarely define it. However, it is critical that we understand what faith is.
Because Romans 5.1 says, We are justified by faith.
That's what Connor was just talking about. It is by faith that we are declared righteous before God.
In other words, there is no salvation apart from faith. Hebrews 11.6 also says, Without faith, it is impossible to please God.
[3:52] It is not merely hard to please God apart from faith. It is impossible to please God. So faith is absolutely essential. Faith features prominently in Jesus' ministry that we've seen throughout the Gospel of Matthew.

Jesus heals the Gentile centurion's paralyzed servant in response to his faith. Saying, Truly I tell you, With no one in Israel have I found such faith. Go, let it be done for you as you have believed.
When friends brought a paralytic to Jesus for healing, It says in Matthew 9.2 that Jesus saw their faith. And that's why he healed him. Jesus also tells the woman who had the chronic discharge of blood in Matthew 9.22, Take heart, daughter.
Your faith has made you well. He heals the two blind men in Matthew 9.29 according to their faith.
Similarly, Jesus heals the demonized daughter of a Canaanite woman that we saw in Matthew 15.28 saying, Oh woman, great is your faith.
Let it be done for you as you desire. This is the consistent pattern in Jesus' ministry. To work miracles, to help, to heal in accordance with people's faith.

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[5:04] Which is why in his hometown of Nazareth, where people did not have faith, He says in Matthew 13.58, He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

Their lack of faith. But why does Jesus care so much about faith? Why does he emphasize faith so much? And our passage this morning answers that important question. Jesus teaches us what the nature of faith is, and why God prizes it, and why God has chosen to save us through faith.
And the main point of my sermon this morning is this, Dare not trust the sweetest frame, but holy trust in Jesus' name. That's what we were singing earlier.
I take that main point from the 19th century hymn, My Hope is Built on Nothing Less. It means don't put your trust in your favorable circumstances. Don't put your trust in your frame of mind, how you're feeling, how you think you're doing, how you think you're making progress before God.
No, put your faith solely, wholly in Jesus Christ. In his name. I'm going to first talk about what little faith is, and then I'll secondly talk about what faith like a mustard seed is.
[6:21] Remember where we are in the narrative in the Gospel of Matthew? We were just on the Mount of Transfiguration. Peter, James, and John went up and beheld the glory, the divine glory of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, unveiled for a period of time.

And now they have come down from that mountain. The nine other disciples that Jesus didn't take up along with him, who were left behind, have apparently been redeeming their time by ministering to people while Jesus was away.
And so in this passage, they reconvene. It says in verse 14, This story is also recounted in Mark chapter 9 and Luke chapter 9.
This man's son is afflicted with uncontrollable seizures. The other Gospel writers note in more detail that he falls down.
He rolls about on the ground, and he foams at the mouth. And the boy's father notes that he's been doing this, this kid from childhood. The Greek word here for having seizures is a word that literally means moonstruck.
[7:38] The Greeks believe that this kind of epileptic symptoms came from being struck by the goddess of the moon, Selene. We have an English word for that.

We call it lunatic, which comes from the Latin word for moon, luna. It means you're struck by the moon. For thousands of years, many ancient cultures held that epilepsy was caused by spirit or a god associated with the moon.
Ancient Mesopotamians termed epilepsy the hand of sin, attributing it to a spirit. Modern-day neurologists, of course, deny this.
They tell us that epilepsy is not caused by evil spirits, whether it's caused by disruptions in the brain's electrical activity. For example, it can be caused by traumatic brain injuries or from tumor growth in the brain.
However, we should not be too quick in our own chronological snobbery to dismiss all the ancients. According to a 2020 article from the journal Neuroepidemiology, 50% of epilepsy diagnoses have no identifiable cause.
[8:52] 50%. And this research only concerns high-income countries where they have access to thorough checkups and medical diagnoses.

Could it be that some of these epilepsies are not actually epilepsy at all, but demonization? Evil spirits attacking people? I think so.
In this case, the boy's epileptic symptoms are not caused by disruptions in the brain's electrical activity, but by an evil spirit. And you can see the demon's malice in what he does to this boy.
In verse 15, it says, for often he falls into the fire and often into the water. The evil one comes only to steal and to kill and to destroy, and that is exactly what this minion of Satan is trying to do.
He's trying to kill and destroy the boy. The desperate father says in verse 16, and I brought him to your disciples, and they could not heal him.
[9:55] No doubt the man was originally seeking Jesus, but Jesus is up on the mountain being transfigured. So the next best bet is, okay, well, you guys are his followers.

You're learning from him. You're his students. You're his disciples. Maybe you can help me. And they have tried their hand in exorcism, but embarrassingly, they could not heal the boy. This should be surprising to us because in chapter 10, verse 1, Jesus explicitly and literally gave them authority over unclean spirits, it says, to cast them out and to heal every disease and every affliction.

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We know from Mark 6, verse 13, that by the time of the transfiguration, they had already been doing this. They had already been casting out demons. It says that they cast out many demons, anointed with oil, many who were sick and healed them.
In Luke 10, 17, they returned with joy to Jesus, saying, Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name. So they were already experienced exorcists. They've had plenty of real-life, hands-on opportunities to witness the power of Jesus' name.
So it's actually surprising that they weren't able to cast out this demon. And we learn later in verse 19 that the disciples themselves were puzzled by their inability to cast out the demon.
[11:20] This report of his disciples' failure stirs up in Jesus a passionate lament in verse 17. Oh, faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you?

How long am I to bear with you? Bring him here to me. There's something about this generation, Jesus says, that is twisted, like into a knot.
Something is off about it. It's not the way it's supposed to be. It's not straight. It's twisted and askew. And this generation is faithless. If even his disciples, to whom it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, as Jesus said in Matthew 13, 11, if they can't even cast out this demon, if that's where their faith is, the rest of this generation, what can you say about them?
They are faithless and twisted. How long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring the boy to me, Jesus says.
And when the boy is brought to Jesus, exactly what we expect happens. There's no spectacular, dramatic showdown between this extra powerful demon that the disciples could not cast out versus Jesus.
[12:37] There's no buildup in the narrative. There's no climax. Matthew's narrative is intentionally simple and unadorned in verse 18. And Jesus rebuked the demon. And he came out of him.

And the boy was healed instantly. What gives? The sheepish disciples are too embarrassed to ask in public, why couldn't we drive out the demon?
They don't want to be embarrassed by what Jesus might say. So they ask Jesus privately, why could we not cast it out? And then Jesus' answer in verse 20 is simple but profound, because of your little faith.
For truly I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, move from here to there, and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.
If you have an eye for this kind of detail, you may have noticed that there is no verse 21 in this chapter. It goes from verse 20 to verse 22. That's not a typo.
[13:40] It's not because someone didn't know how to count. And it's definitely not a sinister conspiracy to hide something from us, like some people are prone to think. It's simply because when the verse numbers were added to the Bible in 1555, verse 21 was in there.

It was included. However, later, as more ancient manuscripts of the original text were discovered, scholars figured out that the best and most ancient original manuscripts of the Greek New Testament did not include verse 21.
It was likely a later scribal addition to bring it into harmony with the Gospel of Mark. This is why the modern translators struck the verse, and then once you strike the verse, you can't slide up all the other verse numbers because then hundreds of years of people dealing with these verses and these schemes and memorizing the Bible, if you memorize any verses in the Bible after this, now you have your references wrong by one verse.
You can't do that, so they just struck the verse so that it doesn't mess up our usage of it. But even if the verse were included, it wouldn't change much.
You might have a footnote at the end of verse 20, if you have certain Bibles that have that, and that tells you exactly what the missing verse was. It says, but this kind never comes out except by prayer and fasting.
[15:05] Mark 9, 29 does include that verse, and that's in the original manuscript. It says, this kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.

So Jesus said that in this occasion, but Matthew doesn't include it because for him, Jesus' diagnosis, because of your little faith, is sufficient explanation. It is already inclusive of that.
Yes, Jesus has given authority to the disciples to cast out demons, but they must always remember that this power does not reside in themselves or in their methods or techniques, but in Jesus alone.

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They must draw from the power of Jesus through faith. Faith is the only instrument by which one can draw on and exercise the authority and the power of Jesus, but they lacked it.
They had little faith, and so there was little prayer or none at all. Why is faith the key? Faith is one of the foundational Christian virtues.
[16:08] 1 Corinthians 13, 13 says, So now faith, hope, and love abide these three, but the greatest of these is love. Paul says love is the greatest of the three because love is what lasts forever.

Faith and hope only last in this lifetime because they are characteristic of this present age before the consummation of the kingdom of God. Hebrews 11, 1 offers a helpful definition.
Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. That's the ESV.
The reason why we need faith in this life is because we do not yet see the invisible spiritual reality, so we have to walk by faith and not by sight.
But soon will come a day when we will see God face to face, at which point we will no longer need any faith because our faith will have turned to sight. Faith is not a weak, tentative thing.
It is assurance and conviction, it says in Hebrews 11, 1. Paul uses those strong words for a reason.
In fact, the original in the Greek is even stronger, and I think I have the King James Version to project for you which captures it well.
[17:22] It says, Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.
How in the world is faith the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen.

Faith, Paul says, is not something that needs evidence and proof. Paul says, No, faith is the proof.
Faith is the evidence. It is the substance.
How? Faith is worlds apart from wishful thinking. Wishful thinking is fanciful. Faith is solid and substantive.
Wishful thinking is grounded in fantasy. Faith is grounded in reality because it is grounded in the certain, unchangeable, objective reality of God and His promises.
When we walk by faith, eternal, heavenly realities invade our present earthly perspectives and priorities. Heavenly, when we walk by faith, heavenly power invades our earthly weakness.
[18:34] And to convey this, Paul picked the most solid words that he can think of to define faith. It is the substance of things hoped for. The evidence of things not seen.

This is why Augustine, the fourth century Christian pastor, describes faith this way. Faith is to believe what you do not see. The reward of this faith is to see what you believe.
Faith is the evidence of things not seen. This is why Hebrews 11, 6 says, as I said earlier, and without faith, it is impossible to please Him.
For whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him. The object of faith is God and when we walk by faith, we live as if this all-knowing and all-powerful, everywhere-present God really exists and that His promises are really true and that He will really reward us for our faithfulness to Him.
That's faith. The disciples did not try to cast out the demon with this kind of faith. Instead, they had little faith. This is now the fifth and final time that Jesus rebukes His disciples for their little faith.
[19:52] Let's do a brief survey. In Matthew 6, 30, Jesus said, you worry about what you will eat and drink. Will not God who feeds the birds of the air and clothes the grass of the field not take care of you, you of little faith?

Matthew 8, 26, why are you afraid? This is when they are in turbulencies. They are rowing and going on their boats and then Jesus rebukes the wind and the sea so there's a great comment.
He says to them before that, why are you afraid, oh you, of little faith? Matthew 14, 30 to 31, Peter asks Jesus, let me walk on water because Jesus just came to him walking on water and Jesus says, come, and then Peter starts walking on water but he says, as soon as he saw the wind, wind churning up the waters, he becomes fearful and is filled with doubt and then he begins to sink and then Jesus says to him, oh you, of little faith, why did you doubt?
And then finally in chapter 16, verse 8, which we saw recently, when they forgot to bring bread, they're worried that they're going to go hungry and then Jesus tells them, why are you discussing among yourselves the fact that you have no bread, oh you, of little faith?
All of these situations have in common something and there is that they do have some faith but it is not full faith. There's something else besides God that they are depending on.

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[21:20] They're not coming to God empty handed, they're coming with something else in their hands. When there's plenty of food to eat, plenty of bread packed in their knapsacks, they have full trust that God's going to provide for them and feed them.

Oh yes, our heavenly father provides for us. Look right here, look, I got some bread right in my bag. But when they have no bread, now that faith falters. Oh, why?
Because they didn't come, their faith wasn't fully on God in the first place, their faith was in God and my preparedness in industry, the bread that I brought on with me.
As they're going on the water, their waters churned up by the winds. When the waters come and the sun is shining and full faith in God.
Yes, God is our navigator, God is our lodestar, he guides us, he protects us and he will bring us to our final destination. Full faith in God. But as soon as the storm comes up and the wind blows and he sees the water, the Peter, that faith falters because that faith was not fully on God alone in the first place because it was on God and calm weather.
[22:45] Favorable circumstances. In what areas of your life do you have little faith? faith? What are the sweetest frames of your life that you are putting your trust in rather than in Jesus Christ?

Your intelligence? your financial portfolio? Your savings account?
Your resume? Your connections? Your diligence? And discipline? I trust you God and I trust these things that I have.
Let's think for a minute about what this might have looked like for the disciples that are trying to cast out the demon. I cast you out in the name of Jesus. Leave this boy.
Nothing happens. Maybe he didn't hear me. A little bit louder. I cast you out in the name of Jesus. Leave.
[23:56] Nothing happens. Oh wait, that's right. That's right. I should lay hands on the boy. I cast you out in the name of Jesus. Leave. Nothing happens. Wait, what's going on?

Oh wait, that one time Jesus cast out the demon legion. Remember, Jesus asked them for the name first. You're going to get the name of the demon. Okay, what's your name, demon? Your name, demon, whatever it is, I cast you out in the name of Jesus.
Nothing happens. He says that they had some experience healing with using oils. Maybe they're using oils. You know that some denominations, Christian denominations nowadays use that for exorcism. Oils and exorcised salts.
Spread it out and apply oil. Maybe it's the oil. Let's apply some oil on this boy. I cast you out in the name of Jesus. Leave. Nothing happens. At some point between when Jesus gave them the authority to do this in Matthew 10 and now when they failed to exorcist, cast out this demon, the object of their trust has shifted from God alone to these other things.
They're no longer coming to God with empty hands. I have nothing. It is all in your power to do this. They come with something else. Trust in God and this.
[25:20] I'm a little experienced now. I've done this before. I've got my methods now. I've got my techniques now. I bring these along with me and it doesn't work.

It doesn't work. Because that's the point. Faith is the empty work. Faith is the one method, one way, the means by which God works powerful things and we get no credit at all and all credit and glory belongs to him.
That's the only way. That's why God moves like that. This is why whenever people present techniques or strategies were proposed to me some foolproof way of growing your church and having success in Christian ministry and making sure people are converted, I have this kind of instinctual allergic reaction.
Probably to a fault. In his book, David and Goliath, Underdogs, Misfits, and the Art of Battling Giants, Malcolm Gladwell writes a revisionist account of the David and Goliath story.
He argues that David was actually not the underdog in the fight. He argues that David had the advantage because he was using superior, unconventional, high-speed projectile technology against a slow, heavy infantryman.
[26:53] But I assure you that if David had entered that battlefield against Goliath with that mindset, with his faith, not in the living God, but in his superior sling technology, he would have been speared to death, and we would have never heard of him again.

What does David say to the Philistine Goliath in 1 Samuel 17, 45, 46? You come to me with heavy sword and javelin and spear, but I come to you with advanced high-speed projectile technology.

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no, of course not, that's not what he says. David says, you come to me with the sword and with the spear and with the javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied this day, the Lord will deliver you into my hand.
David defeated Goliath because of his faith in God, not because of his faith in himself or his weapons. And whenever we have the Lord of hosts, Almighty God, on our side, I don't care what the odds makers say.
I like our chances. Psalm 20, verse 7, says, some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord, our God.
[28:24] This doesn't mean that the Israelites never used chariots and horses. They did. But they must never trust in chariots and horses in the place of trusting in the Lord.

I'm not denying that God uses means. He does use means. But there's a difference between trusting in the God alone who uses means to help us versus trusting in the means themselves. the big difference. Maybe that's why in Joshua 11, 6, when they're first conquering the land of Canaan, the Lord commanded them, hamstring their horses and burn their chariots with fire. Why? That's perfectly good equipment. We could use those for ourselves. No, burn the chariots, hamstring the horses. So you might always know that your battle is won not by horses and chariots, but by the Lord God Almighty.
In contrast to their little faith, Jesus says in verse 20, for truly I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, and you will say to this mountain, move from here to there, and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.
[29:48] what is faith like a grain of mustard seed? We've seen a grain of mustard seed before, early in chapter 13, where Jesus compares the kingdom of heaven to a grain of mustard seed that is sown in the field, and in that context, Jesus describes this as the smallest of all seeds.

A mustard seed, probably in this case black mustard, is a proverbially small seed. It's the smallest seed that was commonly sown in that region. I kind of wanted to bring the perilla seeds that I have at home because it's about the same size.
You wouldn't be able to see it if I were to hold it up to you. It's the smallest of the common cultivated seeds in the ancient areas. And this is why most people understand faith like a grain of mustard seed as referring to small faith.
Since mustard seed is a small seed, a mustard seed faith must be a small faith. However, that interpretation runs into a small problem in verse 20 because Jesus just admonished the disciples saying that they were unable to cast out the demon because of their little faith.
So then right after saying that is Jesus now saying that all you need is little itty bitty faith like a mustard seed and then you can move mountains? Well then why didn't it work?
[31:12] you said they have little faith. It doesn't quite fit. I was confused by this.

I'm sorry to say that this is the first time I'm preaching on this passage and I didn't realize this until this past week that doesn't work, doesn't make sense. And so I was confused and I asked God for help and then he immediately brought to my mind 1 Corinthians 13 verse 2.
According to this verse, what kind of faith is required to move mountains?
Not tidy mustard seed faith, all faith. If you have all faith so as to remove mountains, so it's not little faith that Jesus is talking about here.
Mustard seed faith cannot refer to a small or weak faith. Faith that moves mountains is a great faith. It's all faith. Why then does Jesus highlight faith like a grain of mustard seed?
[32:31] A mustard seed is a small seed and there's something else that is small that Matthew loves to talk about. more than any other New Testament writers and four times as much as the other synoptic gospels, Matthew mentions little ones.

That's Matthew's favorite way of referring to the followers of Jesus. And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.
Matthew 10, 42. Matthew 18, 6. Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.
Matthew 18, 10. See that you do not despise one of these little ones for I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my father who is in heaven. These little ones have uninterrupted and unhindered access to God.

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They are precious to him. So it is not the will of my father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish. Jesus says in Matthew 18, 14. Christians are by definition little ones, small people.
[33:45] This is also why twice in Matthew's gospel Jesus points to children, he brings children in the midst and then he says to them, truly I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. I think faith, like a grain of mustard seed, refers to the wholly dependent, humble faith of these childlike little ones. This humble faith is worlds apart from the little faith of the disciples. Remember what I said earlier, their faith was little because it was divided.
Here's trust in Jesus and here's this other thing. Children are not like that. Children have nothing to bring to the table. They have nothing to offer. They come empty handed, childlike, dependent, humble.
And so viewed in this light, you can say that the little faith of the disciples is a prideful faith. And faith like a grain of mustard seed is a humble faith.
[35:02] Mustard seed faith is a humble faith because it's an undivided faith that trusts in God alone and puts no trust in self or any other thing. Is it unimpressive on the outside?

Of course children are unimpressive. It is unimpressive and small on the outside because it's a faith that does not make much of self but only makes much of God.
Jesus commands a mustard seed faith because it's a faith that makes us look small but it makes God look big. So when Jesus tells us that faith like a grain of mustard seed can move mountains, he's not saying that that's the minimal adequate faith.
A mustard faith seed is great. If you have it, good for you. You can move mountains but imagine if you had an avocado seed or a whole coconut.
You can move planets that way. That's not the point. He already said that if we have faith like a grain of mustard seed nothing will be impossible for us.
[36:10] This is the kind of faith that Jesus commends for all of his people. Mustard seed faith is when small people trust in a big God. Charles Hedden Spurgeon, I've used these two quotes that I'm about to share with you many times but I do it again and again because I love these quotes.

Prayer, and you can apply this to faith, prayer is the slendered nerve that moves the muscles of omnipotence. Do you want to be powerful?
Childlike, dependent, humble faith. John Piper says this, prayer is the splicing of our limp wire to the lightning bolt of heaven.
I love that image. Think about lightning for a moment. Lightning is five times hotter than the surface of the sun. If you see a lightning from 50 meters away, it will appear 10,000 times brighter than the sun.
A single super bolt of lightning can carry up to 1 billion volts and light up 100 million standard 100 watt light bulbs for an instant. 100 million of them.
[37:27] It can single-handedly power 850,000 homes for an entire day. A single bolt of lightning. Now imagine that lightning bolt falling on a copper or aluminum wire.

That wire, however slack or limp, however short and stubby, however thin and frayed, as long as it is purely metal, will conduct that powerful lightning bolt.
Likewise, because its material itself is beholden to electrical currents, likewise the mustard seed faith that is beholden to God alone will conduct the power of God.
However, if you have a nylon wire, the kind you use for fishing or jewelry making, no matter how long and strong and thick that nylon wire might be, it cannot conduct the lightning bolt because its material is not beholden to electrical currents.
Likewise, the little faith that is beholden to not just God but to self and to self-effort, to self-righteousness, to all these other things, will not conduct the power of God.
[38:49] It's not the faith itself that is impressive but the faith that taps the power of the Almighty that is impressive. Who is impressive? God, who is impressive?

And when you have such faith, he says, you can move mountains and nothing will be impossible for you. Mountain is something that doesn't move, right?
That's proverbial. If you do a time-lapse video of a city that has a mountain in the middle of it, everything around it will change over time, over years, over decades.

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The mountain is just going to sit right there. It doesn't move. That's what mountains are. But when that mountain, a proverbially immovable thing, meets the lightning bolt of heaven, it moves because God is immovable.
Mountain has to move. Now, to qualify this a little bit because it's such an open-ended promise, nothing will be impossible for you.
[39:56] This doesn't mean you can do whatever you want with faith. To have faith is to place ourselves under the mercy of God. If God was obligated to do everything that we had faith for, faith, for example, to win the lottery, then that would place God at our mercy.

No, a self-serving, self-centered faith is no faith at all because faith by definition places us at God's disposal, not the other way around.
So, Jesus' open-ended statement in verse 20 that if we have faith like a grain of mustard seed, nothing will be impossible for you, must be understood within the parameters of God's will and God's promises.
It's similar to what Jesus said earlier in Matthew 7, ask and it will be given to you, seek and you will find, knock and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.
Does that mean that we'll get good things to those who ask him?
[41:08] God only gives his precious children good things. And God who alone is good and not we who are evil gets to define what those good things are.

This is the confidence we have toward him if we ask anything according to his will. He hears us. 1 John 5, 14. And then Jesus again returns to his unpopular topic that he loves to preach about. Verse 22 and 23. And they were gathering in Galilee. Jesus said to them, the son of man is about to be delivered into the hands of men and they will kill him and he will be raised on the third day and they were greatly distressed.
It's a little curious. We've seen Jesus predict his passion and his death multiple times now and he'll do it again but the disciples never quite get over it. He says he's going to be raised from the dead. That's a good thing but they're distressed because this again is a sign of their little faith. They're still stuck on the death part.
[42:25] They can't imagine resurrection from the dead. dead. But why did Jesus have to die? To move a mountain that nothing else would move?

Right? It's what Connor was talking about. Realizing the depth of our own sins. if I could pile a piece of dirt or a rock or stone for every sin every stray sinful thought every sinful speech word I've said every sinful act and pile it up it will be a veritable mountain.
How can sinners deal with that? how do we deal with a mountain of sin?
And so Jesus comes and he goes to the cross he dies as our substitute in our place because only his righteousness is sufficient to be imputed to us for our salvation because only his blood is sufficient to cleanse us of all unrighteousness.
And I think this is a common malady among believers and sometimes among the sincerest believers to be insecure about our assurance of salvation because you're relying on these good works and coming to God not faith alone in Jesus Christ but trust in God and with this other thing I went to all my catechism classes I answered all the questions I attend all the Sunday services I don't miss it I read the Bible every day and I pray and I sing and when I sing I raise my hands and I do this and when I sin I feel really sorry about it I'm going to cry and I have tears and because I do all these things and I bring these things to God God will accept me no that's not how it works faith alone bring nothing along come empty handed faith alone isn't that why it says in Ephesians 2 you're saved by grace through faith and this is not your own doing it is not a result of works it is a gift of
[45:12] God why does God save us this way so that he says in Ephesians 2 no one may boast so that no one may boast if you come with this trusting God in something else you have something else you can boast about but if you come to God empty handed!

God I am a wretch! I am a sinner! there is nothing to commend me to you I dare not trust the sweetest frame but holy trust in Jesus name then the lightning bolt of heaven thunders in to cleanse and move that mountain mountain of sin that's why faith is so precious let me close with this quote from J.

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A. Packer the late J. A. Packer he says one of the unhealthiest features of protestant theology today is its preoccupation with faith wait a minute I'm undoing everything I just said no yeah faith that is viewed man centeredly as a state of existential commitment inevitably this preoccupation diverts thought away from faith's object even when this is clearly conceived as too often in modern theology it is not though the reformers said much about faith even to the point of calling their message of justification the doctrine of faith their interest was not of the modern kind it was not subject centered but object centered not psychological but theological not anthropocentric but Christocentric the reformers saw faith as a relationship not to oneself but to the living Christ of the Bible and they fed faith in themselves and in others by concentrating on that Christ as a savior and Lord by whom our whole life must be determined are you guys following that so if you are insecure this morning about your faith how strong is my faith am faithful enough do I have enough faith to stand before God no don't rely on that it's not the intensity of faith that saves you it is the power of the God who is the object of our faith who saves you so so if you struggle with assurance of salvation you struggle with doubts the key is not to try to conjure up more faith or to try to do more things so you could have more sureness in yourself no the solution is to look away from yourself and look only at Jesus Christ only at Jesus Christ he died!
for me! and his righteousness is enough his blood! glory revealed in the gospel of Jesus Christ you'll see that it's sufficient and you'll see your doubts fade away and in so doing that faith becomes the evidence of things not seen let's pray oh father course through our souls our minds our hearts with the power of your Holy Spirit that we might be cut to the heart to believe in Jesus Christ alone to put our faith in Jesus Christ alone in all our service to you and in all our ministry and in all our acts of obedience to do it all not in our own strength but through faith in
[49:10] Christ Jesus alone dependence on him prayerfully Lord make us a faith filled church a prayerful church because we are a Christ fixed church Lord we pray this in the precious name of Jesus Christ Amen

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