

### In God's Kingdom, Large and Surprising Results Often Result from Very Small Beginnings

"The surprising twist" in Jesus' parable about the tiny mustard seed which grows into a tree was that those who were listening knew that "the mustard plant was an annual herb that normally would grow no more than six feet in height," the Rev. Dr. Brook Thelander said in his July 27 sermon.

"What might Jesus be trying to tell us in this parable?" Pastor Thelander continued. "Simply this: In God's Kingdom, large and surprising outcomes often result from very small beginnings."

When C.S. Lewis was still an atheist, he read a small book by George MacDonald that started Lewis "down the path of conversion to Christ." In 1918 Cameron Townsend was selling Spanish translations of the Bible in Guatemala when he was asked, "If your God is so great, why can't he speak my language?" That led to the founding of Wycliffe Bible Translators.

"Many of you are here in this service today worshipping God as believers in Christ, not because you woke up one morning and decided, 'I'm going to become a Christian today,' but (p. 2→)

### If We Dare to Follow Him, the Ministry Christ Has Called Us to, Will Get Done

"Imagine the shock, the consternation," the Rev. Dr. Brook Thelander said in his August 3 sermon, when Jesus' response to their practical suggestion that he send the 5,000 people away was to tell *them* to feed the people.

"With what?" they might legitimately ask.

"And the looks on our faces are similar when Jesus says to us, 'I want you to minister in my name. I want you to console the distressed, visit the sick, be a good neighbor. I want you to give hope to those who are discouraged. I want you to meet the needs of people who may never come to church, and to share your gifts with others as a way to bear witness to me.' . . .

"The task is clearly impossible, but . . . if we can be daring enough to follow where the Gospel leads us, the ministry Christ has called us to, will get done—but our biggest obstacle is not the daunting task of ministry itself. Our biggest challenge is *believing* that it can be done.

How the task will be done "starts right here, at the Lord's Table. The (p. 2→)



"Jonah", by Michelangelo (1475-1564), Sistene Chapel, the Vatican. © Web Gallery of Art, which comments, "The figure mocks every law of composition and perspective. Michelangelo conceived Jonah as an Old Testament Prometheus touched by grace and presents us with a solution to the riddle of good and evil. An artist, himself a rebellious Titan, proffers a solution that spells deliverance in what may be the grandest piece of dialectical theology ever stated in terms of art. The rebellious Prophet, whom God would not have otherwise, looks up directly at his self begetting and affirming Maker. In his expression, scorn and rebellion are giving place to joy, delight, love and filial response, and the ecstatic contemplation of God." The Jonah story will be the O.T. lesson Sunday, and the Gospel lesson will feature Peter's walking on, and then sinking in, the water as he attempts to meet Jesus on the lake.

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Sundays, 10:00 a.m.: Word & Table service

Sundays, 11:30 a.m.: Refreshments, conversation

Sundays, 11:45 a.m.: Moderated post-service discussion

Thursdays, 7:00 p.m.: Evening Prayers

**For the poor:** Meat; fresh produce; canned fruits and vegetables; dairy products; peanut butter; cooking oil; pancake mix; syrup; spices; diapers; baby wipes; bathroom tissue; for personal care: soap, shampoo, conditioner, razors, shaving cream; new underwear (adults and children); cleaning supplies; bleach.

**Readings, 8/10:** Jonah 2:1-9; Ps. 29; Rom. 9:1-5; Mt. 14:22-33. **8/17:** Is. 56:1-7; Ps. 67; Rom. 11:13-15, 29-32; Mt. 15:21-28.

**Prayer Emphases:** Switzerland; Seventh Day Adventist Church; St. Herman's Orthodox Church, Minneapolis, MN, and Fr. Paul Wesche; Arts Centre Group (UK); parishioners on Poplar Drive.

(7/27 sermon, cont'd.) because somewhere in the recesses of your past a small Gospel seed was sown. . . . As we come to the Table of the Lord this morning, open your hearts to the grace of God at work in your lives, . . . and do not underestimate what you perceive to be the smallness of your own life, your own circumstances, your own abilities, for God has the power to produce great results from humble and small beginnings."

(8/3 sermon, cont'd.) verbs Matthew uses here in verse 19 (taking, blessing, breaking and giving) are the very same verbs he uses later of the Last Supper. . . . Matthew links the miracle of God's abundance with the Eucharist."