

# A Tiny Seed, A Powerful Deed

**“Do not despise these small beginnings, for the Lord rejoices to see the work begin, to see the plumb line in Zerubbabel’s hand.”**  
**Zechariah 4:10**

**2026**  
**WHFMS**  
**Devotional Guide**

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A Tiny Seed, A Powerful Deed

WHFMS Devotional Guide 2026

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# 2026 WHFMS Devotional Guide

Dear Friends,

A Tiny Seed, A Powerful Deed. When we think about the small things mentioned in the Bible, we quickly come up with items like the widow's mite, a mustard seed, salt, pearls and the list goes on and on. We understand the lessons in the stories attached to these and other items. God can take the smallest of things and, through his power, they become mighty. So, why are we talking about "A Tiny Seed" for an entire year? We may understand the power of God to use tiny things, but we often struggle applying it to our lives.

We look at our small size, our ages or our lack of resources and can begin to feel overwhelmed with the tasks of the kingdom work. We have so little in the face of such large and important work, and we become easily discouraged.

Our theme verse really speaks to those thoughts. Zechariah (talk about an often overlooked book!) had several visions that he described in the book that bears his name. The purpose of the book of Zechariah is to encourage the people to rebuild the temple. Talk about a daunting task! In Zechariah 4:10, we read, "Do not despise these small beginnings, for the Lord rejoices to see the work begin, to see the plumb line in Zerubbabel's hand." God rejoiced when the work started.

As we go through this year, I pray we will rejoice when we see a work beginning or a small step in a continuing, long journey of faith. If God, who sees everything, rejoices in the small things, can't we?

Looking forward to seeing God's powerful deeds,



**Karen Hall**

National WHFMS President

# A Tiny Seed, A Mighty Deed: 2026 WHFMS Installation Service

Becky Mahler

**SCRIPTURE:** Our theme verse for 2026 comes from Zechariah 4:10: “Do not despise these small beginnings, for the Lord rejoices to see the work begin.”

**PURPOSE:** The WHFMS goal is to encourage, equip and empower women for personal and group development and effective service in ministries and missions at home and abroad. At this meeting, our purpose is to install the Women’s Home and Foreign Mission Society officers for the year 2026 and to stress to the members the importance of their participation in the group’s activities.

**MUSIC SUGGESTION:** “Sanctuary” (#335, “Hymns of Heritage and Hope”)

**THEME:** Our theme for the year is “a tiny seed results in mighty deeds.” We will review many examples in the Bible where tiny seeds resulted in mighty deeds. We can also cite many examples in our group where tiny seeds have resulted in mighty deeds in home and foreign missions. (*Ask your group to list some past accomplishments and goals.*) This year, let’s continue to use our resources and talents to turn tiny seeds into mighty deeds for missions by being “Salt and Light.”

**PREPARATION NEEDED:** For member readings and closing hymn, have the words available on handouts.

## BE SALT AND LIGHT

**INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS:** In Matthew 5:13-16, Jesus tells his followers that they are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Let your light shine before others that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. Work together to use your talents and resources to be salt and light to accomplish God’s will.

The officers play a major role in leading the team to accomplish mighty deeds through tiny seeds.

**INSTALLER:** Ask the officers to come to the front to be installed. Have large letters that spell out “SALT” for the corresponding officer to display.

**S IS FOR SECRETARY:** [Name], you have been elected as secretary. Your role is to accurately record minutes of each meeting and share them with the officers and members. The minutes assist everyone in remembering tasks that have been completed and tasks that remain unfinished. The minutes are also a record of the group's history and should be organized and maintained as such.

**S IS ALSO FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE LEADER:** [Name], your group depends on you for encouragement in their spiritual walk with God and to keep them updated on foreign mission needs. The Advent Christian General Conference International Missions news can assist you. Encourage your fellow members to pray for specific home and foreign mission needs.

**A IS FOR ASSIST FOR OUR VICE PRESIDENT:** [Name], you have been elected as vice president. Your role is to assist the president to coordinate and plan programs and projects. Some of your main responsibilities include organizing programs for the meetings by using the annual toolkit to encourage members to present the programs and to obtain speakers from outside the group as needed. You are responsible for leading the meeting in the absence of the president.

**L IS FOR LEADER:** [Name,] you have been elected as president. Your role as president is to lead your team. You are "organized for success." Remember there is no 'I' in "team." Success in "turning tiny seeds into mighty deeds" requires you to engage the officers and members who have many gifts and talents. You prepare meeting agendas and conduct the meetings of your group. Frequent communication with the vice president related to planning meeting agendas and programs is important. Follow-up on the status of projects, ideas for new projects, and appreciation for projects accomplished is vital. Earnestly pray for God's guidance as you lead your team.

**T IS FOR TREASURER:** [Name], you have been elected as treasurer. Your role as treasurer is to keep accurate records of all financial activities of the group, which include incoming resources and outgoing transactions. You should provide a report at each meeting and as requested by the officers. The team trusts you to manage the resources.

**MEMBERS:** Be the light. It is important that each member supports the officers and actively participates in the team's mission projects. Study God's Word and pray consistently for guidance to use your talents and resources to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. Attend the meetings to fellowship with the ladies in your group and to plan and discuss mission

projects. Invite others to join and participate. Support the programs and projects of your team to demonstrate love for your church, your community and foreign missions.

**RESPONSE INSTRUCTIONS:** Have officers and members use their cell phone lights or provide battery operated candles to say the following acronym for “light.” Dim the lights for greater effect.

L IS FOR LOVE  
I IS FOR INVITE  
G IS FOR GIVE  
H IS FOR HELP  
T IS FOR TEAM

**Our Mission** (page 530 in “Hymns of Heritage and Hope”) Have the group read aloud:

To love the Lord our God is the heartbeat of missions. . .

The spring from which our service overflows.

Across the street or around the world,

The mission’s still the same

Proclaim and live the truth in Jesus’ name.

**INSTALLER:** Remember: Do not despise these small beginnings, for the Lord rejoices to see the work begin. Ministry takes place when divine resources are used to meet human needs through loving channels to the glory of God.

**CLOSING HYMN:** “Sanctuary” (# 335 in “Hymns of Heritage and Hope”)

**CLOSING PRAYER** by the installer. Ask God’s guidance and blessing for the officers and members as they work to spread the gospel through home and foreign missions.

**SHARED BY:** Becky Mahler. Becky and her husband Phillip retired to the Advent Christian Village in 2019 from North Carolina where they were members of the Lees Chapel Advent Christian Church. Becky is a retired registered nurse. She currently serves as the president of the Christina Baker Circle of the Bixler Memorial Advent Christian Church. She is thankful for her mentoring in the WHFMS work by Sandra Blackmon, Barbara Phipps and Karen Hall.

# Consummate Creation

Karen Hall

**SCRIPTURE:** Genesis 1:26-27; 2:7, 15-25

**PURPOSE:** This devotional will focus on a different aspect of “A Tiny Seed, A Powerful Deed.” The other devotionals relate to small things that, with God’s help, become powerful. This devotional focuses on the fact of God’s amazing creation. He made everything from nothing. He created the “tiny seed” that became the universe and everything in it. Our God is greater than we can describe and is worthy of all honor and worship.

**MUSIC SUGGESTION:** “Indescribable” by Laura Story; “Creation Sings the Father’s Song” by Keith and Kristyn Getty and Stuart Townend; “God of Wonders” by Steve Hindalong and Marc Byrd; “How Great Thou Art” (“Hymns of Heritage & Hope” # 4). Many of these songs have been recorded by various artists and are available on YouTube.

## INTRODUCTION

**SAY:** Have you ever awakened in an unfamiliar room, and the darkness was so great you could not see anything? Perhaps you are in a friend’s guest room. Perhaps you are in a hotel room. You awaken and can see nothing. You know there is furniture in the room. You know there is a lamp nearby, but, to you, for a few seconds, there is nothingness. Take that memory and apply it to what it was like before God created the heavens and the earth. There is truly nothingness. God’s creation was designed for his pleasure and our benefit. He left nothing to chance.

**ASK:** If you quickly had to answer this question, “What in all of God’s creation amazes you the most?” “What would it be?” (Take a few minutes for people to share. If no one says anything after a few minutes, share your thoughts. Perhaps you are amazed that God created the world with such a variety of animals and plants. Maybe the fact that God set the sun in the sky to provide not only light, but also heat, a way to keep time, and beautiful sunrises and sunsets is what comes to your mind. Spend a little bit of time just listening and sharing.)

## MESSAGE

**SAY:** Keep in mind the thoughts of the beauty that God created from nothingness as I read Genesis 1:26-27 and Genesis 2:7, 15-25.

## **READ** the Scripture now.

**SAY:** We have all heard these Scriptures read many times. We have likely heard people debate how God really created man, or even IF he did. When we consider that we were made from dust, any pride we have is immediately put away.

The beauty of the human body, with all of its organs and workings, is not easy to explain. Scientists tell us that there are more than 60,000 miles of blood vessels in the body! We know that we obtain knowledge from the five senses that we take for granted, until age starts to diminish their function. The information that we gather from taste, touch, sight, hearing and smell provides pleasure, warnings, communication and a host of other vital things to our lives. That is only a small part of the wonder of how he chose to make us.

We do not know how God formed man. The Bible provides more descriptions about why and how our Creator formed woman. But there is no way we can understand the process. Did he start with the head? Did he form the face first? Did he think when he was making the mouth that it would be used for both blessing and cursing? Did he consider the fact that the heartbeat would be the way we determined life and death?

**ASK:** Imagine being Adam or Eve when they inhaled their first breath. Imagine the beauty of the Garden of Eden. What would it have been like to walk with God in the cool of the evening?

**ASK:** Have you ever thought about what it was like before sin entered the world? How did Adam and Eve spend their days? Were they friends with all the animals? Did they enjoy caring for the Garden of Eden?

**SAY:** We know that God saw the ending as well as the beginning when he made us. But he made us anyway! We know that we are fearfully and wonderfully made.

**ASK:** What do we know about God from reading the creation story? (Some answers may relate to his love of beauty, love of us, desire for a relationship, he is perfect, etc.) If no one mentions this, be sure to share that even though the Bible tells us about God, we cannot fully understand him. We cannot define him. We can only describe parts of who he is in a limited way.

**SAY:** One thing we know without a doubt: God is worthy of our worship and praise.

## **APPLYING THE WORD**

**ASK:** How do we truly worship a God like ours?

The Bible uses many different names for God to describe his attributes. For example, the word for God in Genesis 1 is “Elohim,” which means creator, mighty and strong. There are other names for God found throughout Scripture. He is called ABBA, which closely translates to “Daddy” in our language. Other names describe him as the God who sees, the God who provides, and the God who heals. Some sources say there are as many as 95 names for God in the Bible.

## **RESPONDING IN PRAYER**

Thank the Lord for the privilege of his working in us to be his hands and feet to meet the needs of those he places in our lives. Thank him for the opportunities he puts before us. Ask him to use our measure of faith, however small, to help us depend upon him to accomplish his will. Ask him to help us be faithful in prayer as we seek his leading and wisdom.

As we are closing our devotional today, consider some of the names for God you know. In a moment, we will have time for silent prayer and worship. As you begin this time, thank God for who he is and who he has been to you throughout your life.

**SAY:** Let us bow our heads and privately worship our God. Our Father, our Creator, our Provider, our Daddy, our Healer, the Almighty, deserves our worship.

After a few moments close with one of the suggested songs above and/or by reading Revelation 4:11.

**WRITTEN BY:** Karen Hall has had the privilege of serving as your national WHFMS president for 11 years. She and her husband, David, live at the Advent Christian Village in Dowling Park, FL. She loves her God, her family, her friends and a little chocolate each day.

# Rahab's Red Cord

Linda Dean

**SCRIPTURE:** Joshua 2-3; 6:17-23; James 2:25; Hebrews 11:31; Matthew 16:15

**PURPOSE:** Through the truth of God's Word, this program will help us consider our identity in Christ and how we can live fearlessly for him.

**MUSIC:** "Take My Life and Let It Be" ("Hymns of Heritage and Hope" #620) and "You Say" by Lauren Daigle

## INTRODUCTION:

There is much discussion in today's world about one's identity. In Matthew 16:15 (NIV), we read that Jesus asked his disciples, "But what about you? Who do you say I am?" Jesus was not having an identity crisis. He knew exactly who he was and what his purpose was. If you were asked to share your identity with someone, what would you say? (ALLOW TIME for answers to this question.)

As the ages of our grandchildren change throughout the years, certain games become popular within our family. One particular year, we enjoyed the game "Guess Who?" Each player chooses a mystery character and then tries to figure out their opponent's mystery character by asking a series of simple questions. To determine the correct identity, some of the questions may be phrased like this: "Does the person wear glasses?" "Do they have red hair?" "Is this person a male or a female?" The first person to correctly identify the mystery character wins the game. To the question Jesus asked his disciples, Peter responded in verse 16, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Peter's response had nothing to do with what Jesus looked like but everything to do with who Jesus was, which could have only been revealed to him by the Father.

## MESSAGE

If you have time, read Joshua 2 together.

In Joshua 2, we read that after the death of Moses, Joshua sent two spies to look over the land, especially Jericho. Once there, the spies entered the house of a woman named Rahab, identified as "a prostitute." We don't know how or why she was a prostitute, only that this

is how people identified her. When the king of Jericho heard the spies were at Rahab's, he sent word for her to "bring out the men." Instead of doing what she was ordered, she lied to cover up her actions. Rahab hid the men on her roof under stalks of flax and told the king the men had indeed been to her house, but they left, and she didn't know which way they had gone. Before the gates closed that night, the king sent out his men to hunt down the spies.

**READ:** Joshua 2:9.

**ASK:** What caused Rahab to risk her own life to help the spies?

Joshua tells us that Rahab knew that the Lord had given the Israelites the land. The people of Jericho were terrified because of them. They had heard the many stories of God's faithfulness to his people, and Rahab believed that their God was "the God in heaven above and on the earth below." She believed it so much that she staked her life and the lives of her family members on it. As she had extended kindness and safety to the spies, she requested the same from them. Her request? When the Israelite army came to destroy the city, Rahab and her family would be spared. The spies agreed.

**ASK:** How did the spies know they could count on Rahab?

They didn't know her; her culture and religious practices were very different from theirs. However, the spies worked out a plan with her. She was to tie a scarlet cord in her window so that when they came back to Jericho, they would know she had kept their oath. If there were no cord, they would not be bound to protect Rahab or her family. For Rahab and her family, the scarlet cord was a symbol of the deliverance her family would receive, a symbol of the faith that she had in Israel's God, a symbol of the hope that she and her family would be protected.

**READ:** Hebrews 11:6 "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."

**ASK:** How does this verse make it clear that faith, not ancestry, is what pleases God most?

In a relatively short time, we see Rahab's identity go from being known as a harlot and a liar to becoming a woman known for her faith. Why was she so courageous? She had heard the stories of the Israelites; she knew the spies were in town. Jericho was about to be destroyed. She had no godly upbringing. She was brought up in a pagan society. Yet when she heard the stories and talked with the spies, her fear of and faith in Israel's God was ignited. Her new identity was transformative not only for Rahab and her family, but also for Israel as well as you and me as well. Nothing, not even her past, could hold her back from grasping the hope and promise before her.

**ASK:** How did Rahab's identity change? (Answers may vary.)

## CONCLUSION

Her past remained her past, but Rahab didn't allow the shame of her past to inhibit her future. She trusted and obeyed the Israelite God and became a Gentile dwelling among the Israelites. She remained with the Israelites, marrying Salmon. Salmon and Rahab are the parents of Boaz, and Rahab is included in Matthew's lineage of Jesus. Rahab's identity became fulfilled in God, not through her ancestry.

**ASK:** What other stories from Scripture does the scarlet cord remind you of? (The Passover/ Christ's shed blood)

**ASK:** How has God transformed your life? Take some time to share how your life has changed because of who you are in Christ.

**ASK:** What about your life reflects that transformation? (Answers will vary.)

**PRAYER:** Close in prayer by seeking God to help us live out our identity in Christ in all situations he puts us in.

**SHARED BY:** Linda Dean lives in Potters Hill, N.C., and graduated from Berkshire Christian College in 1978. She directed a preschool for 30 years, retiring in 2023. She and her husband, Paul, have lived in Potters Hill for 36 years. Paul pastors an Advent Christian church there. They have two children, five grandchildren and love to travel.

# The Pebble Took Him Out

Dr. Cynthia Lee

## SCRIPTURE: 1 Samuel 17

**PREPARATION:** This devotional reminds us that God's power is made perfect in weakness and that he delights to accomplish his purposes through what seems small or insignificant. Just as David faced Goliath not in his own strength but in the name of the Lord, we too trust in Christ—the greater David—who conquered sin and death. David's story is not mainly about courage but about God's glory displayed through faith in his deliverance. God takes what is tiny, uses it for his purposes, and points us to the ultimate victory found in Jesus Christ.

**MUSIC SUGGESTION:** "Raise a Hallelujah" by Bethel Music.

## INTRODUCTION:

**SAY:** Most everyone knows the story of David and Goliath.

**ASK:** Tell us what you know or believe about the story. Either write down or have someone else make a list of points so it can be referenced later in the devotion.

**MESSAGE:** Most people think that David was a boy but in fact, he was a young man (v. 33). The youngest of Jesse's sons, David was doing as he was told by his father to visit the front line, check on his brothers, take rations for them and their commanders and bring back some assurances from them. David, realizing that the Israelites were terrified more of Goliath than the entire Philistine army, asked what will be done for the man who kills this Philistine. The Israelite's troops answered, and David's older brother (in older sibling fashion) questioned David and ridiculed him. David then went to Saul and told him he would fight Goliath. Saul questioned David's being able to kill Goliath. David answered Saul with his being equipped to handle the lion and the bear and compares his killing them to Goliath. This equipping by God is a culmination of past victories as well as defeats. He learned from both. Then Saul tried to equip David with his armor; David tried to wear it but ultimately says it will not work. How often do we think that a method or a tool that someone else uses in a situation should also work for us? Rarely is that the case. He then chose five stones from the brook, when he only needed one, but put them in his bag with his sling and approached Goliath. When David comes toward Goliath, Goliath literally laughs at him.

## **READ: 1 Samuel 17: 45-51**

This story is amazing since a pebble from a brook, slung from a sling shot, embedded in Goliath's forehead so far that Goliath died. Not only did Goliath die, he fell face forward. Think about this for a moment. What kind of force did that pebble have?

Also, what kind of force was behind Goliath that he would fall forward and not backward? Newton's Third Law of Physics and Conservation of momentum are defied with this force and then movements of Goliath. All from a pebble hurled by a willing servant that loved his God more than life itself.

As stated earlier, we all face Goliaths in life. We face trials and challenges that test our trust in God. Be encouraged that the Lord is with you, has equipped you through his Word and Spirit, and will accomplish his purposes as you depend on him. The victory belongs to God, not to us, and he uses even our weakness to display his strength.

Please refer back to your list of points to compare this wonderful story with what you know.

**CONCLUSION:** The smallest acts of faith can make the greatest impact in God's hands. In David's story, it was a pebble; in ours, it might be a simple word of encouragement, a prayer or an act of obedience that seems insignificant but carries eternal weight. God often uses what appears small to accomplish his mighty purposes. He equips us through his Spirit and our past experiences to trust him in the battle. Remember, the victory is the Lord's. Our part is to stand in faith and let his strength be displayed through our weakness.

**PRAYER:** Let us pray. Heavenly Father, thank you for putting in place all that we need right before us. Thank you for using our past experiences as well as our talents, abilities and strength that comes from you to persevere through difficulty knowing that your power is made perfect in our weakness. Please continue to use us for your kingdom work to make heaven crowded. By the cross I can pray, amen.

**WRITTEN BY:** Dr. Cynthia Lee (Doctor of Nursing Practice) who realizes this death was a medical mystery. I live in Dunn, N.C. I am your Southern Region WHFMS president, and I work at my dream job every day at Campbell University, helping others know how to slay their Goliaths.

# Widow's Oil & Flour

Nell Lassetter and Pam Buchanan

**SCRIPTURE:** 1 Kings 17:7-16, Matthew 17:20, James 2:17, Psalm 46:1, Psalm 34:8 and John 6:35

**PURPOSE:** This program will help all of us learn about God's provision. God takes care of us always and sometimes waits until we reach "the end of our rope."

**MUSIC SUGGESTION:** "God Will Take Care of You" ("Hymns of Heritage and Hope" #76)

## PREPARATION NEEDED:

- If using Option #1, provide a small piece of rope for each participant.
- If using Option #2, provide different kinds of bread for tasting (if desired).
- Provide hymnals (or copies of the words) for Hymn #76 to use at the close of the lesson.

## INTRODUCTION

Rope Option (1) – Give each participant a small piece of rope and discuss various Bible characters that came to the "end of their rope" - ones who felt desperate and hopeless like Hagar and Hannah and Esther and Moses at the Red Sea. Others?

If using option #1, transition to the lesson by saying... "Many of us in our society today can relate to the feeling of desperation – coming to the "end of our rope." In our Bible lesson today, we will read about how God provided in a moment of hopelessness.

Bread Option (2) – Ask the group to discuss their "favorite" type of bread. Is there a particular restaurant they enjoy just because of their bread? If desired, have some bread on hand for a "tasting."

If using this option #2, transition to the lesson by saying... "Bread is a staple of life. In our Bible lesson today, we will read about bread being supplied by God."

## MESSAGE

Our Bible lesson for this program is found in 1 Kings 17.

**READ:** 1 Kings 17:1. At the beginning of this chapter, we read that Elijah had prophesied a two-year drought sent by the God of Israel. King Ahab was an evil king that had led the nation of Israel into idolatry and sin. Because of the sins of the people, God had sent this

drought. As a result, times were hard. During this time, there was a widow woman living in Zarephath. Her name is never recorded, but we do know that she was a widow with a son. Let's read her story together.

**READ:** 1 Kings 17:7-16 and discuss.

- **What do we learn about the prophet Elijah from these verses?** (He was hungry, he was directed by God to go to Zarephath, and he was obedient. Other facts?)
- **What do we learn about the woman from these verses?** (She was a widow with a son. She was honest. She was ready to fix the last meal for herself and her son and thought she would die, but, in the midst of her desperation and hopelessness, she obeyed Elijah's request and prepared bread for him FIRST. Other facts?)
- **Can you (or anyone you know) identify with this woman as a widow?** (Discuss how hard it was in Bible times for widows to survive. She had no support and even had the responsibility of a son.)
- **Can you (or anyone you know) identify with her feeling of despair?** (She only had a meager handful of meal and a little oil. That was all that stood between her and death. She was probably dealing with heartache, pain and a lack of hope.)

## APPLICATION

In these few verses, we can identify at least two examples for our Christian lives today.

**1. FAITH** – In Hebrews 11:1, we read the definition of faith. It is “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (KJV). In this lesson, we see the faith of both Elijah and the widow. They both believed that God would supply their needs and provided us an example to follow.

**ASK:** What are our current life situations where we need more faith?

**READ:** Matthew 17:20.

**2. OBEDIENCE** – Their faith is commendable, but all faith needs action. Both Elijah and this widow put their “faith into action” by obeying and as a result, they both (along with her son) experienced godly provision, and gave us an example to follow.

**READ:** James 2:17

## CONCLUSION

In these few verses, we see that both Elijah and the widow (and her son) were at the “end of their rope” due to the drought, but God had a plan and a purpose.

- How has God worked in your life beyond your expectations because of your faith and obedience? (Allow time for the participants to share if they desire.)
- How does this lesson from 1 Kings 17: 7-16 relate to our theme of “A Tiny Seed, A Mighty Deed?”

## CLOSE IN PRAYER

- **If you used Option #1** (using the rope to begin this lesson), ask the group to take this piece of rope home and use it as a “prayer reminder” to pray for more faith and obedience for yourself and for others. Close the prayer time by reading Psalm 46:1 and singing (or reading) Hymn #76.
- **If you used Option #2** (using the bread to begin this lesson), ask the group to take another sample of bread as you are reminded that “Jesus is the Bread of Life” (John 6:35). Close the prayer time by reading Psalm 34:8 and singing (or reading) Hymn #76.

## WRITTEN BY: Nell Lassetter and Pam Buchanan (mother and daughter)

Nell Lassetter resides in Gadsden, Alabama and attends the Valley Community Church where she is a charter member and also serves as treasurer. During the summer months, the ladies of the church sell homemade baked goods at the local Farmer’s Market. The proceeds from this summer endeavor go to fund the WHFMS Regional and National budget needs along with local needs.

Pam Buchanan, (Nell’s daughter), lives in Live Oak, FL and is a member of the Village AC Church where she is participating in both WHFMS circles. She and her husband Rob are enjoying their retired life and hope to visit all the 50 states in the USA!

# Salt of the Earth

Lori-Ann Foister

**SCRIPTURE:** Matthew 5:13 “You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trodden under foot by men.”

**PURPOSE:** This program will help us learn how our praying can focus on the idea that we need to remain salty and not lose our flavor. Just like salt is used for many things, we have a purpose. However, just as salt, we must remain faithful to our purpose.

**MUSIC SUGGESTION:** “Salt & Light” by Jami Smith (Integrity’s Hosanna – 2002 Wash Over Me)

## INTRODUCTION

I love to bake. One of my love languages is baking for those I care about. It is my desire that whatever I make should be delicious and eye appealing, but what happens when I am putting my recipe together and I leave out the salt?

Leaving salt out of a recipe, especially baked goods, can significantly impact the final product’s flavor, texture and appearance. Salt enhances flavors. Omitting it can lead to a bland, flat-tasting or poorly structured result. Both salt in a recipe and the spiritual meaning of “salt of the earth” relate to the concept of value and purpose, and have potential consequences of their absence or dilution. Let us compare omitting salt from a recipe to being the salt of the earth.

### Problems with omitting salt in a recipe:

**Impact on taste and texture:** Salt is crucial in cooking, not just to add a salty flavor, but to enhance and balance other flavors. It can suppress bitterness and intensify sweetness, creating a more complex and enjoyable eating experience.

**Loss of purpose:** Without salt, a dish can become bland, unpalatable and lacking in depth.

**Potential for spoilage:** Salt acts as a preservative, inhibiting the growth of microorganisms that can cause food to spoil. Omitting salt may shorten the shelf life of food.

## **“Salt of the earth” spiritual meaning**

**Value and influence:** In Christianity, followers of Jesus are called the “salt of the earth” (Matthew 5:13), signifying their role in preserving goodness, enhancing the lives of others, and having a positive impact on the world.

**Preventing decay:** Just as salt preserves food from spoiling, Christians are meant to preserve and safeguard moral and spiritual values in a world prone to decay and corruption.

**Adding flavor and purpose:** Being “salt of the earth” also implies bringing a “God-flavor” to the world, enriching society with the teachings and love of Christ.

**Losing saltiness:** Jesus’ warning that salt can lose its flavor is a metaphor for Christians losing their influence or distinctness, becoming indistinguishable from the world and ineffective in their purpose.

## **APPLYING THE WORD**

**ASK:** Below are additional Scriptures about salt for further discussion. Read as many for which you have time and consider how they answer the questions that follow.

- Mark 9:49-50
- Luke 14:34
- Colossians 4:6
- Romans 12:1
- Jeremiah 17:5-6
- Hebrews 10:24
- Job 6:6
- How can you act as “salt” in various environments, such as work, family, friends or the wider community?
- What are the greatest challenges Christians face in living out their call to be the salt of the earth today?
- What are some areas in life where Christians might be tempted to lose their “saltiness” or compromise their values?
- How can Christians avoid losing their flavor, becoming ineffective or even detrimental to the world?
- What can be done to encourage and equip Christians to be more impactful as salt in their spheres of influence?

**CLOSING PRAYER:** Thank you, Jesus, for your Word that gives guidance as we live as salt in this world. Thank you for brothers and sisters in Christ who spur one another on toward love and good works that point to You. Thank you for giving us so much access to your Word. May we lean into you each day and ask, “how can I add flavor today?”

**WRITTEN BY:** Lori-Ann Foister. Lori-Ann is youth leader at Holly Grove AC Church in Benson, North Carolina. She has been married to Pastor John Foister for more than 41 years. They have four adult children and six precious grand blessings.

# Light to the World

Dr. Cynthia Lee

**SCRIPTURE:** Matthew 5:14-16

**PURPOSE:** This devotional will help us all understand how God uses tiny seeds to produce powerful deeds. This devotional speaks about light and being a light to the world. Whether a small night light or a flood light, we are called to be a light for Jesus. His light is to shine through us for others to use in a dark world.

**MUSIC SUGGESTION:** “This Little Light of Mine” (Yes, the children’s song). This song has been recorded by various artists on YouTube.com. Most of them are designed for children, but YouTube has songs from the Oak Ridge Boys, Next Level Media, and Addison Road that are good for all ages.

## INTRODUCTION

**SAY:** We all have a different definition of light, maybe the absence of darkness or something that makes you see better.

**ASK:** Have you ever thought about what your Jesus “light” does? Maybe it makes a path brighter or shines in dark places?

**SAY:** Think of your feelings when you are in the middle of a storm (hurricane, thunderstorm, snowstorm, tornado, etc.) and your lights go out.

**ASK:** What do you do? You grab for another light. Now, think of how you feel when the batteries in that flashlight you just grabbed are dead, or your phone battery is low.

**ASK:** Has there ever been a time in your life that you felt like you wanted to hide your light? Maybe it wasn’t intentional, but you just were not actively shining? Maybe it was as dim as a night light or a candle?

**ASK:** Has there been a time in your life that you knew your light was shining as bright as a runway or a lighthouse?

**ASK:** Where does your light shine? Does your light shine before others just in a small group or around everyone you meet?

**ASK:** When have you needed help to see the way? Have you ever needed someone else’s light to help you in the middle of the storm?

**ASK:** Have you ever thought about someone else’s needing your light to help?

## HAVE SOMEONE READ SCRIPTURE: Matthew 5:14-16.

### MESSAGE

One particular ongoing incident in my life shines brighter than all others. Every year for the last 19 years, I have attended a special needs camp in Purdy, Missouri. The event I'm about to share happened in my second year there when, on a whim (not really — definitely a God thing), I had applied for my Missouri nursing license, just in case I was needed.

For the first year at Camp Barnabas, I served as a cabin mom and was able to do some nursing tasks, but nothing like being a nurse in the medical center. This time, the week before I left for camp, my Missouri nursing license was granted. I was excited to go to camp and work as a wrangler with the horses for the week. When I arrived at camp and told the medical director that I had my nursing license but would be at the barn, she immediately said, "To heck with horses, go get your stuff, you are moving to the Fish House (medical center)."

Can I just tell you, my heart almost leapt out of my chest? My stomach was rolling, rolling and rolling, like no other. I had been a nurse for 12 years, but a nurse practitioner for eight years. I had not done feeding tubes, passed meds, changed dressings and/or catheters in about six years or longer.

I went next door to the house and prayed for calmness. In that place, God reminded me that I was not called to hide my light under anything, even if I was a nervous wreck inside. That week, we had very minimal nurses, and I worked my tail off, never letting them see me sweat. I sang "This Little Light of Mine" all week. Looking back on that week, I know God used me to shine my light to show those campers, staff and fellow medical team Jesus. He is still doing that today. I still do all the "nursing" tasks at Camp Barnabas every year and love my week of camp.

### APPLYING THE WORD

Our "little light" is made to glow internally with an automatic dimmer switch that is under God's control, not ours. He will make our light shine as bright as a lighthouse or as dim as a candle for whatever purpose he has. However, if we choose to cover our light with a bushel, a lamp or a bowl (verse 15), then our light helps no one. Shining our light needs to be for his glory (verse 16).

**CONCLUSION:** Being the light of the world can be as hard or as easy as you make it. Since that week, it has never been easier for me. Matthew 5:14 says, “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.” This was not a question. This was Jesus’ telling us what is required. **GO BE MY LIGHT.**

My favorite quote by James Keller (with my slight modification): **“A candle loses nothing of its light by lighting another candle.”**

**PRAYER:** Let us pray. Heavenly Father, thank you for being my light. Thank you for using our lights to bring you glory. May we always remember that you control the dimmer switch and will shine our light as bright or as dim as it needs to be. That is not for us to decide. Please continue to use us for your kingdom work to make heaven crowded. By the cross I can pray, Amen.

**WRITTEN BY:** Dr. Cynthia Lee (Doctor of Nursing Practice – jokes on me) lives in Dunn, N.C. and is your Southern Region WHFMS president. I work at my dream job every day at Campbell University, shining my light in all the places I go!

# Mustard Seed

Angie Grillo

**SCRIPTURE:** Matthew 17:19-20; Luke 17:5-6; Mark 9:17-29

**PURPOSE:** This program will help us learn how we can apply the principle of the mustard seed as we respond to the needs around us.

**MUSIC SUGGESTION:** “Nothing is Impossible” sung by The Living Stones Quartet on YouTube

## INTRODUCTION

**ASK:** When have you had trouble when pondering Jesus’ statement that, if we have faith like a grain of mustard seed, we can say to a mountain to move from here to there and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you? (Allow time for responses.)

This teaching may stretch our reasoning. Let’s take a closer look at this.

**ASK:** Why do you think Jesus used moving a mountain as a metaphor? (Possible answers: This represents an object of nature that would be physically impossible to move. OR: He wanted to use an extreme illustration.)

**ASK:** Do you think the mountain could be a metaphor for something else? (Possible answer: It could be a metaphor for a very difficult problem or a hardship that seems insurmountable or impossible in our life or the life of another: financial problems, illness, disabilities, relationship issues, etc.)

## MESSAGE

**READ:** Matthew 17:19-20

The setting for this passage in Matthew is that a man came up to Jesus and asked for healing for his epileptic son who suffered terribly. The father had brought the son to the disciples for help, but they couldn’t heal him. Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of the boy. The boy was healed instantly.

The disciples then asked Jesus privately, “Why could we not cast it out?”

Jesus replied, “Because of your little faith.”

In Chapter 9 of Mark, there was another encounter of the disciples’ inability to bring healing to a boy possessed by an unclean spirit. They again questioned Jesus, “Why could we not cast it out?” Jesus replied to them, “This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.”

The disciples had witnessed many miracles Jesus performed during their time with him. Plus, Jesus had told them they would do “greater things than these” (John 14:12). Yet, they were puzzled and discouraged. Jesus expressed his own disappointment and frustration that his disciples were such slow learners. In Mark 9:19, Jesus says, “You unbelieving generation, how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me.” He revealed that their lack of faith (“because of your unbelief”) was the reason for their failure. He was perceptive in recognizing that they obviously did not demonstrate faith even to the level of a mustard seed. He recognized their human weakness and took the opportunity to teach them that they had no power to heal, but rather, he is the source of all healing.

We must be careful to keep the proper balance as we approach an act of service or ministry:

- Prayer
- Dependence upon God
- Faith

### **APPLYING THE WORD:**

**ASK:** How do we apply this Bible lesson to our own lives? (Allow time for responses.)

**ASK:** Have there been times when we failed to undertake a task God was prompting us to do because of fear of failure or inadequacy? (Allow time for responses and discussion.)

**ASK:** Have any of you had an experience when your faith felt very small to take on a task or meet a need? How did God provide? (Allow time for responses and discussion.)

During those times when our faith seems very small, we must consider not what we can do, but what God can do as he works in us. We must confess to God that what we in ourselves have to offer is small, but we look to our God who created and sustains the universe and has all power to accomplish his will. We must fortify our faith by regularly being in his Word, reading Scriptures that feed our faith. We must be in fervent prayer, depending upon the Holy Spirit to guide us, strengthen us and give us wisdom.

### **RESPONDING IN PRAYER:**

Thank the Lord for the privilege of his working in us to be his hands and feet to meet the needs of those he places in our lives. Thank him for the opportunities he puts before us. Ask him to use our measure of faith, however small, to help us depend upon him to accomplish his will. Ask him to help us be faithful in prayer as we seek his leading and wisdom.

**WRITTEN BY:** Angie Grillo, a member of the Vesta Clothey WHFMS mission circle at the Village Church in Dowling Park, Florida.

# A Woman's Worship

Jessica Skipworth

**SCRIPTURE:** Matthew 26:6-11, Mark 14:1-9, and Luke 7:36-50

**PURPOSE:** This program will help us all learn the importance of worshiping the Lord with sincerity and reverence.

**MUSIC SUGGESTION:** If you have access to music and lyrics to them, some beautiful worship songs include "Majesty" ("Hymns of Heritage & Hope" #288) and "There's Something About that Name" ("Hymns of Heritage & Hope" #258). Another beautiful song not found in the hymnal is "Alabaster Box" by CeCe Winans.

## INTRODUCTION

**ASK:** What do you think about when you reflect on what you have done for the Lord? (Allow time for responses and discussion.) I'm sure we can all list many ways that we have served him.

(The following are rhetorical questions that you can discuss if you have time, but they are meant to be thought-provoking, not discussion starters.)

Did you consider options such as volunteer roles, donating your time, making financial contributions and performing acts of service? What about your worship of the Lord? Do you take time to worship the Lord with no reservations? Do you give your best to Jesus, even if it costs you something? What if it costs you everything?

In today's lesson, we will examine the actions of two women who approached Jesus with their alabaster jars. One woman anointed his head with pure nard, while the other anointed his feet with her tears and expensive perfume as she worshiped her Lord and Savior. Alabaster, a durable stone sourced from Alabastron in Egypt, was fashioned into containers such as boxes, jars or flasks, which were filled with precious fragrant oils. Typically, a jar would be gifted to a young woman by her parents to present to her fiancé as a symbol of commitment. Additionally, these jars were commonly used for anointing bodies during burial rites. They were intended to be opened only once, signifying a profound purpose.

**READ:** Matthew 26:6-11, Mark 14:1-9

**SAY:** The value of the oil was 300 denarii, which was nearly a year's wages.

**ASK:** Does anyone want to guess how many people this could have fed?

**ANSWER:** This could have fed at least 7,500 people.

**ASK:** How did Jesus respond to the disciples' indignation?

**ANSWER:** See Matthew 26:10-11; Mark 14:6-9

**READ:** Mark 14:8

**SAY:** This does not imply that she was fully aware of the importance of her actions. It is uncertain whether she understood the imminent nature of his death, or at least how near it truly was. Nevertheless, her act was one of genuine worship, inspired by God to undertake a sacrificial and symbolic gesture, the complete meaning of which she likely did not comprehend.

**READ:** Luke 7:36-50

**SAY:** The woman's ointment was nothing compared to what the wealthy have, but she anointed Jesus' feet in worship and submission. Our primary focus should be on Jesus. Do we give Jesus the precious ointment of our best affections?

## APPLYING THE WORD

- It is essential to consider the sacrifices involved in following Christ. The women highlighted in today's lesson were fully aware of their actions. They honored the Lord not by offering him the bare minimum but by dedicating their finest and most valuable possessions in reverence to a Savior who is truly deserving.
- Do we criticize others for their "alabaster boxes"? The actions of these women were not sinful. We ought to refrain from judging how individuals choose to worship and serve the Lord. Even when others cannot comprehend them, Jesus embraces our genuine expressions of devotion to him.
- How often do you find yourself worshiping the Lord? We should worship the Lord daily for he alone is worthy of praise!
- It is so easy to praise the Lord when we are on the mountaintops. However, as you grow in your faith, you will discover that the most meaningful worship occurs in the valleys when you seek closeness to him. I have experienced instances in my life when

I was at a loss for words to pray. Yet, in those moments of worship, I sensed God's presence and realized that I was not alone.

## **RESPONDING IN PRAYER**

Dear Heavenly Father, you alone are worthy of all praise. I pray that our worship will be worthy of your acceptance and that we always present you with our best affections. In Jesus' name, Amen.

**WRITTEN BY:** Jessica Skipworth resides in beautiful Panama City Beach, Florida, with her husband Kevin. Together, they pastor West Bay Advent Christian Church. Jessica serves as president of her local WHFMS and secretary for the Florida Western District WHFMS. Jessica was raised in the Advent Christian faith, growing up attending First Advent Christian Church in Lenoir, N.C., with her great-grandmother, Virgie and her grandmother Jerrine.

# Dorcas' Needle

Barbara Phipps

**SCRIPTURE:** Acts 9:36-43

**PURPOSE:** Dorcas used her needle to step in and help where needed. She generously gave what she made. This program will help all of us learn how God can use something as small as a needle to bless the lives of others. It will also challenge us to find ways we can serve others when we can sew.

**MUSIC SUGGESTION:** “Wherever He Leads I’ll Go” (“Hymns of Heritage and Hope” #639) or “I Have Decided to Follow Jesus” (“Hymns of Heritage and Hope” #641)

## INTRODUCTION

When the word “needle” is mentioned, some of you might first think of the needle used to draw blood or administer medicine – especially if you are diabetic or have had a recent stay in the hospital. For people who sew, your mind probably takes you to the pincushion or little box that holds all your needles. Today, we are going to look at a woman in the New Testament who is remembered for a sewing ministry that greatly affected the lives of widows and the poor in her city. Before we have the program, would anyone like to share about something someone made for you – clothing, a crocheted item, a knitted item, etc. and how it made you feel? (Perhaps the leader of this program could bring in an item to show to get this started.)

## MESSAGE

Today, we will review Acts 9:36-43 by interviewing one of the widows who was present.

**INTERVIEWER:** Today, we are in the city of Joppa to report on an incredible event. You may remember that Joppa is the city from which Jonah fled from God. Joppa is a natural harbor and the primary port for Israel. It is a multi-racial city with a diverse culture. We are now at the home where this event took place. Let’s talk with a woman who was an eyewitness to this event. Who lives at this house?

**WIDOW:** Her name in Aramaic is Tabitha, but she is also known by her Greek name which is Dorcas.

**INTERVIEWER:** I understand that names usually have a meaning. Is this true?

**WIDOW:** Yes. Tabitha and Dorcas both mean gazelle. Gazelles are symbols of beauty,

grace and swiftness and I think this reflects the character of Dorcas.

**INTERVIEWER:** Tell me some more about Dorcas.

**WIDOW:** Dorcas is always doing good and helping the poor. She made this robe for me. Many of the other widows in Joppa can show you the robes and clothes that she made for them. Dorcas is also well known as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

**INTERVIEWER:** Aren't most of Jesus' disciples men?

**WIDOW:** Yes, and that makes Dorcas so noteworthy. There are many other women who knew Jesus, but Dorcas is the only woman who is identified by the term disciple.

**INTERVIEWER:** Please share with us exactly what happened here.

**WIDOW:** Well, Dorcas became sick and died. We were all devastated by her death. We washed her body and placed it in an upstairs room.

**INTERVIEWER:** Then what happened?

**WIDOW:** Some of the other disciples heard that Peter was in Lydda which is a city near Joppa. They sent two men to Peter and urged him to please come at once and he returned with the men to Joppa.

**INTERVIEWER:** What did Peter do when he arrived?

**WIDOW:** He was taken to the upstairs room. All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them.

**INTERVIEWER:** What happened next?

**WIDOW:** Peter sent all of us out of the room. We found out later that he got down on his knees and prayed. He turned toward Dorcas and said, "Dorcas, get up." She opened her eyes, and, seeing Peter, she sat up. He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then, he called for the believers, especially the widows, and presented her to them alive. You can only imagine our feelings when we saw our beloved Dorcas alive again!

**INTERVIEWER:** I am sure this will become well known all over Joppa and will be remembered for all time as an important event in the early history of this new movement that seems to be rapidly spreading throughout the known world. By the way, where is Peter now?

**WIDOW:** He is staying here in Joppa with a tanner named Simon.

**INTERVIEWER:** I thought that Jewish people did not associate with tanners because they take the hide of dead animals and turn it into leather boots, clothes and other items.

**WIDOW:** It is true that, as one who touched dead animals, Simon was ceremonially unclean in the Jewish faith.

**INTERVIEWER:** It seems that Peter's stay in the residence of a tanner shows his openness to the marginalized and his willingness to step out of his comfort zone to associate with people that others would probably ignore. I hope to meet him some day. Thank you so much for sharing your story with us.

**WIDOW:** You are welcome.

## APPLYING THE WORD

Dorcas reminds us of people who never seem to tire of working for Jesus by helping hurting people. God always seems to put them in the right place at the right time to minister with helpful words and compassionate action. Their eyes and expression indicate that they are approachable.

**ASK:** Can you think of other women who have demonstrated this in their lives? (Allow time for answers, biblical or more recent.)

We should all pray that the Holy Spirit would make us aware of people who need our ministry and that we would be obedient in meeting this need.

Dorcas was well known for her kindness and ministry to the poor and widows.

**ASK:** Is there something that we can do as individuals or as a group to meet some needs in our community? (At the end of this program you are given a list of some possible ministry projects that involve using our needles. You may have other ideas that are not included.)

Peter is known in this story and later in the story of Cornelius for his willingness to associate with people who others might ignore as unworthy of their time.

**ASK:** Is there someone in your life who needs you to step out of your comfort zone and minister to them even though their appearance and lifestyle might be quite different from yours?

## TESTIMONY

While we were serving as missionaries in Japan, I often had an opportunity to do the children's time during the worship service. The children would come down front, and

I would do a short devotional or an object lesson for them. One of my favorites used a needle, thread and a piece of fabric. I explained that the needle represents Jesus, the thread represents you, and the fabric represents your life. I threaded the needle and said, “If you join with Jesus and let him lead you then he can make your life beautiful and useful. With his leadership, your life can have meaning and purpose.” Sometimes we would sing either “I Have Decided to Follow Jesus” or “Wherever He Leads I’ll Go,” as the children returned to their seats. (If you use this in your meeting, perhaps you could close with the ladies singing one of these songs.)

## IDEAS FOR PROJECTS

Clothing protectors for nursing home residents or shut-ins: There are commercial patterns or you can do a Google search and find free patterns for:

- Adult bibs
- Lap quilts or throws for nursing home or shut-ins
- Blankets or baby clothing for a pregnancy center
- Days for Girls kits (These are washable and reusable kits with panties, snap in pads and a bag. Detailed instructions can be found on The Days for Girls webpage ([www.daysforgirls.org](http://www.daysforgirls.org)). Pat Hovenar and Cynthia Lee often distribute these on their mission trips.)
- Pillowcases for children arriving at shelters (Children often arrive at a shelter with all their belongings in a paper sack or trash bag.)
- Small stuffed animals for the sheriff’s department to give to children
- Cloth bag with coloring book and crayons to give to children to use while parents are being interviewed at shelters
- Prayer blankets for chemotherapy patients
- Check with shelters for domestic abuse victims or agencies involved with human trafficking to see if there are ways you can help.

**WRITTEN BY:** Barbara Phipps lives just outside Advent Christian Village with her husband Richard. Barbara and Rick served as missionaries in Japan for 27 years before retiring. She became very active in WHFMS at The Village Church and has taught the missions class at Camp Suwannee Junior for several years. In her spare time, she enjoys sewing, weaving and crocheting. She also loves to bake and cook and many have suggested that her love language is “food.”

# Such As I Have (Women's Sunday)

Gaye Martin

**SCRIPTURE:** Acts 3:1-9; Zechariah 4:10a (NLT) “Do not despise these small beginnings, for the Lord rejoices to see the work begin ... ”

**PURPOSE:** This is a full service for a Women's Sunday program. This year we have included a link to the message recorded by Gaye Martin.

([www.youtube.com/watch?v=E0sePn2qhP0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E0sePn2qhP0) or search “WHFMS Sunday 25” on YouTube). We encourage you to do the service as you normally would and then show the video of Gaye to the congregation in place of the message. If you prefer to have your own speaker, there is a suggested outline for them to use if you desire.

**PREPARATION NEEDED:** 1) Decide upon an order of service. A suggested plan is included, but it can be altered to fit your church's particular worship format. The praise and special music suggestions can be replaced by hymns you prefer to use. All hymns are from “Hymns of Heritage and Hope.” 2) Review the entire service and watch the message ahead of time. Speak with your audio/visual person to make sure the message can be shown and heard clearly.

## SUGGESTED ORDER OF SERVICE

Musical Prelude

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Announcements

Opening Hymn “Open My Eyes, That I May See” # 597

Receiving of Tithes and Offering

Hymns “Open Our Eyes, Lord” # 598, go into “Let the Beauty of Jesus” # 600

Special Music — Recommend the song “Dream Small” by Josh Wilson.

Scripture Lesson — Read Zechariah 4:10a from the NLT (It is written above in the Scripture section.) Read Acts 3:1-9, using the translation your congregation prefers.

## MESSAGE

If you use the video message, share the following:

“This year's theme is 'A Tiny Seed, A Powerful Deed.' We have been discussing how God can and does take the smallest act of service or the smallest item to do great things.

Today's message will be presented by Gaye Martin. She is a management and training consultant and public speaker. She has traveled around the United States, addressing audiences in the corporate world and church conferences, and she has been featured on Focus on the Family. She is also a private pilot and the author of 'I Read You Loud and Clear; Say Again.' Gaye and her husband reside in Florida and have five children, 12 grandchildren, 28 great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild."

Show video.

**If you prefer** to have your own speaker, you may choose to use the following outline as a guide.

## LESSON OUTLINE:

Such As I Have

Acts 3:1-9

The book of Acts is an account and documentation of what "man" can do when touched by Jesus and empowered by the Holy Spirit

Points to Ponder

- Often in the pursuit of our spiritual duties, we walk past the lame man laid "daily" at our gate.
- Is it possible we get so busy with the work of God that we forget the God of the work?
- This man represents a segment of society that cannot walk this way without help.
- In verse 7, we are reminded the smallest kindness to touch this man resulted in "immediate" strength in his walk.
- While the meetings of current issues were being discussed in the temple, God showed up at the gate. The miracle happened at the gate.
- Our goal, that men walk stronger after they have met us than before.
- Kindness changes the soil of the soul.
- There is a lame man at my gate today.

Closing Hymn "Make Me a Servant" # 527

Benediction

# Don't Sweat the Small Stuff; Everything is Small Stuff (Prayer Emphasis)

Pat Havener

**SCRIPTURE:** Zechariah 4:10, NLT “Do not despise these small beginnings, for the LORD rejoices to see the work begin.”

**PURPOSE:** This program will help us learn how we can apply the principle of the mustard seed as we respond to the needs around us.

**MUSIC SUGGESTION:** “Nothing is Impossible” sung by The Living Stones Quartet on YouTube

This verse encourages perseverance and trust in God’s guidance, even when progress seems minor, small or insignificant.

In our busy world, where we want everything to happen quickly, it’s easy to forget how vital small beginnings can be. A verse from the Bible, Zechariah 4:10 (NLT), says, “Do not despise these small beginnings, for the LORD rejoices to see the work begin.” This means that even when things seem small or unimportant, we should keep working hard and believe God is guiding us. “Small steps can lead to significant changes in our lives!” (Lara Nelson, “Tiny Habits, Big Changes: the Power of Small Steps”)

Sometimes, people celebrate big things and fast results, making us feel bad if we think our efforts aren’t enough. But God sees things differently. His plans for the world are huge, but they often start in simple ways. This teaches us that taking small steps is important in God’s plan. (Ideas from “Challenging and Changing Your Core Beliefs” with Sabrina Trobak.<sup>1</sup>

Let’s think about what we can learn from Zechariah and other prophets about how small things matter. They tell us that even tiny actions can lead to something great in God’s plan. Zechariah reminds us that those who look down on small things will later be happy because those small efforts can produce amazing results (Zechariah 4:10). He discusses facing big challenges and believes we can overcome them with faith (Zechariah 8:3-8).

<sup>1</sup> “014- Challenging and Changing Your Core Beliefs with Sabrina Trobak.” Apple Podcasts, 28 July 2024, podcasts.apple.com/do/podcast/014-challenging-and-changing-your-core-beliefs/id1743690374?i=1000663573070. Accessed 13 Aug. 2025.

However, achieving these results doesn't happen right away. As Haggai says, it might take "a little while."\* This reminds us that God's timing is different from ours. God's people waited for more than 400 years before they received what they were hoping for, which was the coming of Jesus. What started as a small moment reverberated into the future and changed the world eternally!

This shows us that God is patient. He takes his time because each small step helps build his kingdom. Just like a big tree grows slowly underground before reaching the sky, big changes often begin in small ways. The story of salvation started with little things—a couple who couldn't have kids, a tiny mustard seed, a virgin mother and a few ordinary followers. Each of these beginnings was surprising.

As people who believe in God, we should dream big and pray for wonderful things, while also doing the small, everyday tasks that come our way. It's not just about doing these things but doing them with faith and trust in God. For example, we might pray for good changes in our town while also making breakfast for our family with love. We can wish for God's glory to spread everywhere while being kind to our neighbors or listening to someone who needs help.

Big things will happen one day, but for now, we should focus on the small opportunities around us. It's important to change how we think about what "greatness" really is. Throughout the Gospels, we see how Jesus cared about things that seemed small. He welcomed children, spent time with people often ignored and taught us all that quiet, caring actions matter more than showing off. His words are clear: "What seems small to people is great to God."

We often feel pressure to achieve big things in a world that loves attention and fame. But the truth is that sometimes "the first will be last, and the last will be first." The big successes that the world praises might not matter as much as the small acts of kindness we do every day. Zechariah reminds us, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts" (Zechariah 4:6). This encourages us to let go of high expectations and trust that God is working slowly and steadily in our lives.

When we're feeling tired or facing tough times, we should remember that God is always at work, even on our hardest days. Accepting our struggles can bring relief, allowing us to share our concerns with God.

2 Corinthians 12:9 (ESV) says “But he said to me, ‘Therefore, I will boast more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.’” This means we can find strength in admitting our difficulties and continue to move forward.

Often, we feel down when we don’t see immediate or impressive changes. Some pastors may focus on gaining followers rather than the important job of sharing the gospel. We might be tempted to overlook small acts of kindness for something flashier. However, these little acts can truly make a difference and remind us of their importance in God’s eyes.

Looking at the little beginnings encourages us to be thankful for the ordinary moments and realize that every small action contributes to something larger in God’s plan. It invites us to be present and engaged in our daily lives, even if they seem less exciting.

So, let’s not overlook the little things; instead, let’s embrace them with faith. When we focus on the small tasks, we are taking part in a journey that can lead to something truly amazing. As we trust in God’s timing and work, we can look forward to the wonderful things ahead, starting with those small steps we take today.

I will strengthen them in the Lord and his name; they will live securely.” declares the Lord. Zechariah 10:12

A prayer for today:

Dear Lord Almighty,

Thank you for the strength I have in you. I pray you will be with me today and fill me with your peace. Help me do your will. You are all I need. I also pray for others who need your strength today. Please be with them and fill them with your love and comfort. Help us not to sweat the small stuff.

In the name of Jesus, I pray,

Amen

**SHARED BY:** Pat Havener, minister’s wife of Rev. Gary Havener. They have been married and in service for the past 51 years. Pat is a certified nurse clinician specializing in STDs and a pediatric intensive care RN. She volunteers with Samaritan’s Purse’s Children’s

Heart Project, medically escorting children needing open heart surgery from countries without the capability to perform the surgeries. She has three grown children and seven grandchildren. Pat, Gary, Keith (Gary's brother) and the cats Pete and Priscilla live in Seffner, Florida.

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(“Tiny Habits, Big Changes: the Power of Small Steps”) By Lara Nelson Published on Dec. 25th, 2023

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\*The Scripture reference where Haggai states that something might take “a little while” is Haggai 2:6. It reads, “This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘In a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land.’”