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everything—even the littlest thing—has become new because Jesus died for us.

“The most basic fact for Christians is this: People have value because Christ has died for them. People, whoever they are,” even the people considered of the littlest importance by this world, “whether they have responded to Christ or not—Christ died for everyone—are treasured by God. From the moment of Christ's death, everyone has value. The problem rests with us. We often want to establish hurdles that others must jump before we will grant them value.” These hurdles are too often little things, petty things, that matter way too much to us. “We want others to think the way we do, act the way we do, vote the way we do, land on our issues the way we want them to—and the list could go on and on. No, each person's value has already been established by Christ's death for them, not by their response to that death. So we do not need to inquire whether persons are fellow Christians before we know that they deserve to be treated with respect. They are valuable because Christ has died for them.” Because Christ died for all people, and has created us who believe in him to be new beings, we are no longer to consider others by their appearances, but by their hearts. [TNIBC](#) Vol. X, pg. 98

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Along with making us new creations that look upon others hearts, not their appearance, there is another little thing that Jesus' death did for all of us. Jesus died to reconcile even the lowest, most unimportant of human beings by societal standards to God. Bible scholar, J. Paul Sampley writes, "Reconciliation is at the heart of life's business. If the most important single factor about any of our lives is God's having reconciled us to God's very self, then the proper celebration of our reconciliation is to share it with others by fostering reconciliation and atonement wherever and whenever we can." This needs to be the most significant single factor in our lives. "Reconciliation as the foundation of life would mean that when your friend makes some negative or judgmental comment about a neighbor, you will resist joining in." Oh those little snide comments do matter do they not? "Indeed, instead you might respond by noting something you have appreciated about the same neighbor. Thus you may help two of your acquaintances to come to understand each other better," get to know the real heart of the other person and maybe cause reconciliation to occur. TNIBC Vol. X, pg. 98.

These little things that matter, being made a new creation by Christ, and being reconciled to God by him, are a "renewal of life that can take place despite the presence of huge problems that bear externally on us. As new people in Christ we are no longer to be "governed or defined by what is happening around us—or even to our bodies—but by what God is doing from the inside"—by what God's doing in our hearts.

As Jesus talked about in the parable, God has planted that little thing, that tiny mustard seed of faith inside us so that Christ can nurture it and mysteriously cause it to grow. As this little thing grows, then our hearts will change our outward appearances, our behavior, so that others might see Jesus Christ, the Kingdom of God alive in us. Hopefully, these other people will want the little thing that matters, the mustard seed of saving faith in Jesus Christ to be mysteriously planted by God in them, too. By God's grace they too will be made new creations that will join with us in declaring "God works in mysterious ways, his wonders to perform."

The Old Testament Lesson is from I Samuel 15: 34-16:13. This is the story of how David became anointed King supplanting the first King of Israel, Saul.

34 Then Samuel went to Ramah; and Saul went up to his house in Gibeah of Saul.

35 Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death, but Samuel grieved over Saul. And the LORD was sorry that he had made Saul king over Israel. 16 The LORD

said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the

Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons." 2 Samuel said,

"How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me." And the LORD said, "Take a heifer

with you, and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.' 3 Invite Jesse to the

sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for me the one

whom I name to you." 4 Samuel did what the LORD commanded, and came to

Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, "Do you come

peaceably?" 5 He said, "Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD; sanctify

yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." And he sanctified Jesse and his sons

and invited them to the sacrifice. 6 When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought,

"Surely the LORD's anointed is now before the LORD." 7 But the LORD said to

Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have

rejected him; for the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward

appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart." 8 Then Jesse called Abinadab, and

made him pass before Samuel. He said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one."

9 Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen

this one." 10 Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to

Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen any of these." 11 Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all

your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the

sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until

he comes here." 12 He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful

eyes, and was handsome. The LORD said, "Rise and anoint him; for this is the one."

13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah. The Word of the Lord.

The Epistle lesson is from 2 Corinthians 5: 6-17. Paul puts a whole lot of theology in these few verses. He writes about the struggle of practicing the Christian faith in this world; about how we are follow Christ by faith not sight; about how, because of Jesus death for us just as we are, we are to look upon others is a new way; and about how we are reconciled to God and made new creations because of Christ.

6 So we are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord-- 7 for we walk by faith, not by sight. 8 Yes, we do have confidence, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. 9 So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. 10 For all of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil.

11 Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we try to persuade others; but we ourselves are well known to God, and I hope that we are also well known to your consciences. 12 We are not commending ourselves to you again, but giving you an opportunity to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast in outward appearance and not in the heart. 13 For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. 14 For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. 15 And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them.

16 From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. 17 So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! The Word of the Lord.

The Gospel Lesson is from Mark 4: 26-34. Jesus teaches one of his many parables about the kingdom of God. It is one of surprise where the smallest seed can produce a great harvest or great shrub.

26 He also said, "The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, 27 and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. 28 The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. 29 But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come."

30 He also said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? 31 It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; 32 yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

33 With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; 34 he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples. The Word of the Lord.

First Presbyterian Church
Cheyenne, Wyoming
June 14, 2009
Rev. Bob Garrard

Worship Theme: When Little Things Matter,

1 Samuel 15:34–16:13, 2 Corinthians 5: 6-21, Mark 4:26–34

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