

**My faith =  
mustard seed**



**Expectations =  
oak tree**



**Pentecost 17C  
Ordinary Sunday 27C  
Proper 22C**

**October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

**Faith that Waits, Trusts, and Serves**

**Dennis Webster**

A weekly reflection based on the preaching at St Peter's by the Lake, Paynesville, together with a study guide based on the readings, some liturgical resources RCL Lectionary, and a weekly devotion



Revised Common Lectionary Related

**Pentecost 17C**  
**Ordinary Sunday 27C**  
**Proper 22C**

**October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

Habakkuk 1.1-4; 2.1-4  
Psalm 37.1-9  
2 Timothy 1.1-14  
Luke 17.5-10



**SEASON OF  
CREATION**

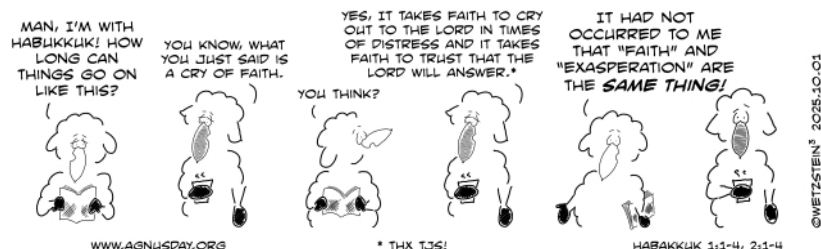


**PEACE  
WITH CREATION**  
SEASON OF CREATION 2025

Garden of Peace  
Isaiah 52:14-15

Book of Common Prayer (1662) Collects

O Lord, we beseech thee,  
let thy continual pity cleanse and  
defend thy Church;  
and,  
because it cannot continue in safety  
without thy succour, preserve it  
evermore by thy help and goodness:  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.



## INTRODUCTION

Have you ever felt like your faith wasn't enough?

Like the apostles who pleaded with Jesus to increase their faith, we often wonder whether our spiritual reserves are sufficient to meet life's challenges.

Drawing on the powerful imagery of Australian bushfires, this message reveals how faith, like nature's resilience, endures even in the face of devastation.

When Habakkuk witnessed violence and injustice, he cried out to God, "How long?" The answer wasn't a timeline, but a promise: "The righteous shall live by their faith."

Through exploring Habakkuk's lament, Psalm 37's wisdom, Timothy's courage, and Jesus's mustard seed parable, we discover that faith isn't measured by quantity but demonstrated through patient waiting, unwavering trust, and humble service.

Like those charred trees that sprout new life from seemingly dead branches, authentic faith holds on through the ashes until God's renewal breaks forth. The message challenges us to stop questioning whether we have enough faith and instead focus on living out the faith we have through active trust and service.

Just as the Australian bush regenerates after fire, we're called to nurture the seeds of faith we've been given, knowing that even the smallest measure of genuine trust in God can produce remarkable transformation.

As we walk lightly on sacred ground,  
teach us Lord to make known your kingdom,  
and let this reflect in all that we do and say.

## Pentecost 17C

### Faith that Waits, Trusts, and Serves

#### “How Much Faith is Enough?”

The apostles once said to Jesus, “Increase our faith!” It’s a cry that resonates with us. How often do we feel that we don’t have enough—enough strength, enough courage, enough faith to face what life demands?

Following devastating bushfires, the land appears stripped bare. Blackened trunks stand like sentinels on the hillsides, and the air hangs heavy with the lingering scent of smoke, creating a sense that recovery feels impossible. However, if you return in a few months, you’ll witness a remarkable transformation. Green shoots burst forth from the ash. Charred trees begin to sprout new life, and plants that seemed lost forever make an unexpected comeback.

That resilience of the bush is a parable of faith. Habakkuk looked at his world and saw violence, ruin, and injustice. He cried out to God, “How long, O Lord?” Yet, God’s word to him was this: “The righteous shall live by their faith.”

Faith is not about pretending the devastation isn’t real. Faith is about loyalty and trust in God’s vision, even when all we see is loss. It’s about believing that renewal will come, even when the ground is blackened.

Takeaway: Faith is like the bush after fire—holding on through the ashes until God’s new life breaks forth.

Reflecting on global injustices often brings to mind Habakkuk’s question, “How long, O Lord, will you not listen?” This expresses the struggle with the perceived silence of the divine in times of suffering. Observing the success of exploitative individuals mirrors the psalmist’s inquiry: “Why do the wicked seem to succeed while the righteous struggle?” Additionally, in a sceptical culture, many relate to Timothy’s feelings of timidity and the temptation to remain quiet about their faith.

Like the apostles, we think, ‘If only I had more faith, then I could hold on.’ Then I could make a difference. But Jesus’ reply is startling: you don’t need more faith. Even a mustard seed is enough.

## 2. Habakkuk – The Honest Questioner

Habakkuk begins with a complaint: “O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not listen?” He gives voice to human frustration with delay, injustice, and God’s silence.

God’s answer is not a timetable but a vision: “There is still a vision for the appointed time... if it seems to tarry, wait for it... the righteous lives by their faith.”

Faith, here, is not an instant solution. It is patient endurance. It is waiting on God’s purposes, even when the answer is delayed. When life feels uncertain, faith waits. It looks out on the horizon, trusting God is still at work, even when we cannot yet see.

## 3. Psalm 37 – The Wisdom of Patience

The psalmist advises against fretting over the actions of the wicked, encouraging individuals to trust in the Lord and engage in good deeds. The text emphasises the importance of being still before the Lord and waiting patiently for Him.

In this context, faith is presented as a form of quiet trust, suggesting that the path of the wicked will ultimately diminish while the path of the righteous will persist. Patience is defined as an active decision to trust in God, rather than succumbing to feelings of envy or anxiety. Faith is characterised by trust.

## 4. 2 Timothy – Guarding the Treasure

Paul passionately encourages Timothy: “Rekindle the gift of God that is within you... for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but of power, love, and self-discipline.”

Faith embodies courage—holding steadfast to the priceless truth of the gospel, even at a cost. It transcends mere optimism; it represents loyalty to Christ amidst adversity.

Faith perseveres, strengthened by memory (those who guided us), empowered by the Spirit, and expressed through courage and resilience.



## 5. Luke – Mustard Seed and the Meaning of Faith

In a pivotal exchange, the apostles ask Jesus to “increase our faith,” to which He replies that even faith as small as a mustard seed is enough. Jesus is addressing those who will be tasked with spreading the Good News, rather than just His disciples or the larger crowd, at the time of His Ascension. This highlights that ‘faith’ here signifies a commitment to embodying faithfulness, beyond mere agreement or consent.

To truly grasp the meaning of “faith” in Luke’s Gospel, we must examine the Greek term “πίστις.” While we often associate “faith” with beliefs and doctrines, in Jesus’ time, it represented much more. Pistis conveyed loyalty, trustworthiness, and fidelity in relationships. It was about how trust is demonstrated through action, highlighting a commitment to living out that faith rather than simply holding intellectual assent.

In Luke’s Gospel, faith is a powerful force for healing and acceptance. It can restore the marginalised, reminding us that even a tiny seed of courage can create change.

True faith means living in alignment with God’s vision of justice and compassion. It’s about loving God and neighbour, supporting the vulnerable, and acting with kindness, focusing on embodying that faith step by step rather than accumulating more of it. Jesus adds a parable about servants who do their duty without demand for reward. Faith expresses itself in humble service, not entitlement.

Faith is not grand feelings or endless certainty. It is trust in God that takes flesh in action: forgiving, serving, loving, standing with the broken.

## 6. Faith encompasses several key principles.

In Habakkuk, we learn that faith waits patiently, trusting in God’s timing. Psalm 37 teaches that faith embodies trust in God’s goodness. In 2 Timothy, faith endures through challenges, while Luke shows that faith is expressed through humble service and loyalty. These elements—waiting, trusting, enduring, and serving—define a life rooted in faith.

Together, they paint a picture of faith not as a quantity, but as a quality. Not as belief alone, but as loyalty, trust, and embodied love.

## 7. Conclusion – Living by Faith Today

In contemporary society, there is widespread concern regarding issues of injustice, conflict, and hardship. Many communities express a desire for hope. Additionally, individuals often question the validity of their faith or beliefs in the face of these challenges. God’s word to us today is this:

- Wait with hope.
- Trust in God’s justice.
- Endure with courage.
- Serve loyally and humbly.

Even a mustard seed of faith is enough—because what matters is not its size but its direction: faith lived as loyalty to God’s vision of justice and mercy.

### Closing line:

Just as the Australian bush comes alive with vibrant growth after devastation, our faith can also face trials. We may be tempted to dwell in the silence of despair, but we can also choose to nurture new beginnings, carefully tending to the fragile shoots of hope.

This intensely personal journey cannot be measured or commodified. In Jesus’s view, true faith often starts as a small seed, yet with care, it can flourish into something truly remarkable. “Faith isn’t about size; it’s about unwavering loyalty and trust. The righteous will move forward in faith.

With this conviction, we look ahead to a future where the Gospel thrives for generations to come, a gift to the world and to us as devoted members of Christ’s body.”

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR GROUPS

The sermon compares faith to the Australian bush regenerating after a fire. How does this metaphor help us understand the nature of faith during difficult times?

- The sermon describes how, after devastating bushfires, green shoots burst forth from the ash and charred trees begin to sprout new life, even when recovery seems impossible.
- Think about a time in your life when you felt spiritually

'burned out' - how did your faith eventually show signs of new growth?

In Habakkuk 1:1-4, the prophet cries out 'How long, O Lord?' When facing injustice or suffering, how should we balance patient endurance with active pursuit of change?

- The sermon explains that God's answer to Habakkuk wasn't a timetable but a vision, emphasising that faith is about patient endurance.
- What situation in your life right now requires you to balance patient waiting with active faith?

Jesus says faith as small as a mustard seed is enough. Why do you think we often feel we need 'more' faith rather than focusing on using the faith we have?

- The sermon emphasises that faith isn't about quantity but quality - it's not about having more, but about loyalty and trust in action.
- What would change in your life if you focused on acting on the faith you have rather than waiting to have more faith?

The sermon presents faith as having four key elements: waiting, trusting, enduring, and serving. Which of these aspects do you find most challenging and why?

- These elements are drawn from various scripture passages: Habakkuk teaches patience, Psalm 37 demonstrates trust, 2 Timothy demonstrates endurance, and Luke emphasises service.
- How might strengthening your weakest aspect of faith impact your relationship with God and others?

How does understanding 'pistis' (the Greek word for faith) as loyalty and trustworthiness, rather than just belief, change how we might live out our faith daily?

- The sermon explains that in Jesus' time, 'pistis' meant loyalty, trustworthiness, and fidelity in relationships, demonstrated through action rather than just intellectual agreement.
- What specific actions could you take this week to demonstrate 'pistis' in your relationships with God and others?

This five-day devotional will serve as a seed to inspire you in the days following this weekend's sermon. We will explore the themes of faith, trust, patience, endurance, and humble service, drawing inspiration from the scriptures to enrich our spiritual journey.



### Day 1 Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:1-4

The Book of Habakkuk opens with the prophet's lament about the rampant injustice and violence in his world. He calls out to God, questioning, "How long, O Lord?" Yet, God's response is simple and profound: "The righteous shall live by their faith." This declaration signifies that faith is not a quick fix but a steady and enduring trust in God's vision, even when immediate circumstances appear dire.

Faith, akin to the resilience seen in nature after a devastating bushfire, holds on through despairing phases. While everything seems bleak, faith assures us that renewal is possible. Such faith doesn't ignore the harsh reality but dwells in confident expectation of God's promise of restoration and justice that awaits it.

- Have you ever experienced a time when it was hard to trust in God's timing? How did you navigate it?
- What does living by faith mean to you personally in challenging times?
- How can you cultivate resilience in faith when facing adversities?
- Pray for patience and strength to trust in God's timing even when answers seem far off.
- Reflect on moments when God has come through in expected and unexpected ways in your life.

### Day 2 Psalm 37:1-9

The psalmist instructs us against envying wrongdoers or succumbing to anxiety over life's injustices. Instead, there is a call to "trust in the Lord and do good." This encouragement reminds us that faith in God's goodness involves an active choice—to find calm in the storm by resting in God's unfailing promises and responding with kindness and integrity.

Patience is central to this psalm, positioning faith as a composed trust. It advises us to focus not on the apparent success of the wicked, but on maintaining a life of righteousness. Such deliberate faith assures us that, in the grand scheme, the path of the godly

will endure, highlighting faith as a journey of development rather than a specific destination.

- Where might you be tempted to compare your journey to those around you?
- What steps can you take to ensure your actions align with a life of trust in God?
- How does patiently waiting on God shape your character?
- Seek guidance in moments when you feel anxious about your circumstances.
- Pray for the strength to remain faithful and still before God, trusting His faithfulness.

### **Day 3 2 Timothy 1:1-14**

In his letter to Timothy, Paul urges him to "rekindle the gift of God" and acknowledges that God has given us "a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-discipline." Faith is here portrayed as a fortifying force, empowering believers to face persecution and uphold the integrity of the Gospel with courage and resilience.

Paul emphasises the importance of drawing on the spiritual strength that informs and supports our growth amid life's challenging trials. It is a call to boldly affirm our faith, standing firm in our convictions, supported by the memory of those who inspire us and God's enduring promise.

- When have you been challenged in expressing or living out your faith?
- Who are the influences that keep you grounded and passionate about your faith?
- What gifts has God entrusted to you, and how can you nurture them in service to others?
- Pray for courage to uphold the Gospel in adversity.
- Reflect on the spiritual gifts you have been given and how you can use them to serve faithfully.

### **Day 4 Luke 17:5-10**

In response to the apostles' plea to "increase our faith," Jesus illustrates through the mustard seed that faith, no matter how small, is potent when it is lived out sincerely. It reflects loyalty and dedication rather than the amount of faith that counts; it's the authenticity of its expression in our everyday actions.

Jesus further explains this concept through the parable of diligent servants who fulfil their duties without seeking acclaim or reward. Faith is an extension of humble service—rooted in action rather

than words, compelling us to lead lives that embody love, forgiveness, and humility, thus becoming faithful disciples.

- How does the notion of a 'mustard seed' faith challenge your understanding of faith in action?
- Can you identify ways in which you serve quietly but meaningfully in your community?
- What does humble service mean to you in the context of your faith journey?
- Ask for guidance to live out your faith each day, no matter the size of your beliefs.
- Pray for humility to serve others in love and selflessness as modelled by Christ.

### **Day 5 James 2:17**

The culmination of our devotional journey arrives with a reminder from James that "faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead." Faith is a dynamic, living trust in God that manifests in our deeds—waiting, trusting, enduring, and serving. These actions ensure our faith is genuine and evident in the world around us.

As the Australian bush regenerates after devastation, so does our spirit rejuvenate through commitment to God's vision. We must carefully nurture small seeds of hope and kindness in our daily encounters, fostering a robust, fertile ground for faith that grows into something beautiful and everlasting, touching generations to come.

- Have you ever seen faith come to life through acts of kindness and service?
- What are practical ways you can nurture and grow your faith within your community?
- How does serving others influence your personal faith journey?
- Pray for perseverance in embodying faith through compassionate acts.
- Reflect on your faith journey and seek ways to translate it into actions that bring blessing to others.

# End notes and further reading

Sacra Pagina: The Gospel of Luke (St Paul's Press) (Johnson)

Rev Dr Andrew McGowan: Andrew's Version: <https://substack.com/@abmcg>

David Adams, Glimpses of Glory, Year C

The following authors as featured at The Worship Cloud

[www.theworshipcloud.com](http://www.theworshipcloud.com)

N. T. Wright,  
Jane Williams,  
P James Woodward,

Paula Gooder  
Mark Pryce,  
David Perry

## Brabarlung Totem

This is produced on  
Gunaikurnai Country and  
our respects are made to  
the First Nations people  
everywhere.

Prepared by Rev'd Dennis Webster, Rector of the Anglican Parish of Paynesville, Diocese of Gippsland for personal or small group use.

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