

Accept the Challenge & Go Big!

JVI, Long Lake Friends Church, 10.25.20, 1

2 *Themes Today*, and please... I know there are different ways to use these terms¹

Theme 1: Get Small, Mark 4.10-12, 33-34 (NIV 1984), Mentor & Disciple

a Jesus calls, or summons, people to follow Him and some do

1 There is a formality to discipleship, characteristic to that culture

2 The formal discipleship relationship is missing today, we've forgotten

b Mark says Jesus constantly pours into *The 12* away from Large Crowds

1 *Parables*, JC teaches parables to crowds, but speaks plainly to *The 12*

2 JC shares deeper truths with *The 12*, Large Crowds to Small Groups

3 JC is not afraid to *Get Small*, There is great humility when we *Get Small*

Theme 2: Accept the Challenge & Go Big! Mk 4.8, 20

a Series of 4 Parables in Mark 4, but I feel led to share this one, **Mark 4.30-32**

1 The "mustard seed" does NOT represent one person's faith²

a) It is the beginning of our *Common Faith*, the *Christian faith*

b) As seeds must die, or be crushed, to sprout and grow

c) Mustard seed represent Christ, also suffering of His people

2 The growth of the tree represents the worldwide growth of the Church

3 The birds represent the way that the church even houses the angels

b This is KINGDOM FAITH, so we must **Accept the Challenge & Go Big!**

1 Don't tell me we CAN'T do something

2 Don't tell me to ONLY focus on what we CAN do

3 I confess I try to ONLY focus on what we CAN do, if I'm not careful

4 Doing ONLY what CAN be done, is another way of saying CAN'T

* CAN'T is not FAITH! CAN'T is not of God! CAN'T is not Kingdom language! My Bible says in Mark 4 the KINGDOM grows to *outlandish proportions!* I have limits, but God does not! I have limits, but the *People of God* do not! If you expect me to give-up, give-in, slow down, roll over into the infield, or sit on a shelf... then you've hired the wrong pastor. My Lord still produces miraculous results! My Lord still starts with 1 little mustard seed and our faith! It's Gospel! **Accept the Challenge & Go Big!**

Last week, I shared a story about William Taylor

He was a Christian Overseer in California in the 1800's. In the story last week, he preached on *Long Wharf* in San Francisco, California. At that same time another crowd gathered to welcome some California officials. Wm. Taylor preached louder, so both crowds could hear. He was not afraid to **Accept the Challenge & Go Big!**

¹ *Google Trends, Past 90 Days*, accessed October 22, 2020, trends.google.com. Repeated words not listed twice. 1) *SF Topics*: California, Google, Google Search, San Francisco, YouTube, Film, Video, United States, Facebook. *SF Queries*: gmail, instagram. 2) SF keywords in order: California, San Francisco, Mark, The City, Faith, Get Big, Mentor, Frisco, Get Small, William Taylor.

² Clement of Alexandria, *Fragments.ii.iv.Matthew xiii.31*; Athenagoras, *Luke vii*; Augustine *Letter 32, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*, accessed October 14, 2020, Biblia.com.

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A few months later, someone asked to meet with Wm. Taylor anonymously. He was part of one of the crowds when Wm. Taylor preached in Frisco. Wm. Taylor knows how to *Get Small* and mentor an individual. *Listen to that man's testimony:*

* QUOTE: "I was up to that morning a confirmed Universalist, and was withal a very wicked sinner. [Universalism is heresy. It can mean that God lets everyone into Heaven, or something like it. Universalism can also mean that there is no Hell. When there is no Hell, there is no need for salvation... so the man was a "wicked sinner."]

As I was walking leisurely down the wharf that morning I heard you singing, and went into the crowd through curiosity to hear what was to be said on the occasion.

While you were preaching a strange fearfulness which I cannot describe came over me. I felt a smothering sensation at my heart and thought I was dying. My Universalism all vanished like smoke, and I felt that if I died then I should certainly go to hell. For some time, I knew not what to do.

I came very near crying out, but something seemed to say to me, 'Pray, pray to God in the name of Jesus Christ for pardon.' So I began earnestly to pray.

For three weeks I suffered a constant fearfulness and trembling. I was afraid to go to sleep at night lest I should way up in hell, and every day there seemed to be literally a heavy mist before my eyes, which made everything look dark and dreary.

But all these three dreadful weeks I continued to pray, and suddenly, while I was praying and trying to trust in Jesus Christ, it appeared to me that a stream of light shone right down from heaven into my heart, and in a moment I realized that my burden of sin was gone, and instead of fearfulness and a nervous tremor I felt all the vigor of renewed youth. The mist of my eyes gave way to the brightness of morning. I praised God for his pardoning mercy."³

Wm. Taylor knows how to mentor and *Get Small!* But how does he *Go Big!*

Let me just ask some Q's, you can apply them, so we can ***Accept the Challenge!***

1. Do you remember last week that 1 of the crowds in Frisco was with the California Legislature? What crowd do you think this man was most likely with? How many people do you think he influenced with the Gospel after this? ***Go Big!***
2. Why do we have Wm. Taylor's autobiography in our library? How many churches has he influenced across America and Globally? ***Go Big!***
3. Why does Wm. Taylor's name still "rank-up" on *Google* searches in Frisco, his HQ in Cal? Does he still influence *The City*?

Accept the Challenge & Go Big! Mark 4.30-32

³ source quote, paragraphs added, italics mine: William Taylor, *Story of My Life: An Account of What I Have Thought and Said and Done in my Ministry of More Than Fifty-Three Years in Christian Lands and Among the Heathen* (New York: Hunt & Eaton, 1895), 190-191.