

Proper 27 Year B: St. Barnabas, Florrisant
November 8, 2009

The Bible has plenty of what is *big and audacious*.

- Creation, flood, Red Sea waters, resurrection— these are all big, audacious movements by God.
- But the Bible also settles into a pattern of attending to what is little, what might otherwise get lost:
 - Old people who can't have babies. Second-borns who prevail. The least significant son in a least significant family in a least significant clan who becomes Israel's greatest king, the one named David.
 - A savior born in the place for cattle.
 - (And a savior who speaks with a noticeable upcountry accent.)

God takes what looks little and *insignificant*, in the scheme of things, and uses them to build new worlds.

- Jesus uses the likes of these a lot in his stories and parables.
He tells about a *mustard seed's* amount of faith. That's all it takes, he says, to turn a world.
- He tells about a shepherd searching for the one dumb lost sheep, and a woman sweeping her house to a polished sheen, for the sake of one lost coin: *Because there is something about life in God's world that says nothing is insignificant, no one is too little.*
- He tells about a widow giving away two small copper coins, each about the half the size of my little fingernail.
 - That is hardly impressive— but this is all she's got.
 - Of course these two-cents' worth put into the temple treasury will not finish up the immodest building project started by Herod some fifty years earlier.
 - Two little bitty coins of base metal won't top off the building fund. They are a throwaway.
 - But they make all the difference in building God's new world.

Sometimes our fantasies tell us about the slam-dunk, the power play, the spectacular move **we can make**.

- That's fine. There is a place for the audacious move in God's world. The problem is that this kind of move can get all contaminated with ego. (I mean look at what I did.)
- Long robes, and due respect, and best seats, and places of honor. We may be impressed with the likes of these, Jesus says, but God is not.

Folks who have all these things can give so much—and still hold back *all that they are* and *all that they have*. Which is what God is after. All that we are. All that we have.

- If that is two cents' worth, fine. God is much more impressed with those two cents than with long robes and best seats in the house, from folks who have them and still hold back.
- God is the worker of wonders with the ordinary and insignificant, what is miniscule and easily lost. God built a world from *dirt*, and built a people from old folks who couldn't have babies, and built a kingdom from David, the scrawny redheaded one.
- Look at what God has built from Jesus. Executed criminals are probably the least significant of all: Look whom God has chosen to use.

God's delight in the insignificant is some of the best news I know.

- With all the changes and chances of life, we may feel like we don't bring very much with us ever, and especially when it comes to the life of faith.
- Wounded and worn out, may be more like it.
- Listen to the good news, my friends, God is able to take the *miniscule* or insignificant or *used up* or *worn out*. And grow a new world out of it. It doesn't take much. If a mustard seed's amount of faith is all you have, that is enough. There is rejoicing in heaven for the likes of that much.
And God grows great stuff from such seeds.
- Scripture does not tell us that anyone with two little coins to rub together will ever become wealthy. It does tell us that they might become rich. / In what matters.
- From the tiny things are made the people of God. Who have inadequacies and unmet expectations running out their noses. All of us do.
- But we are enough. All that we are, all that we have. Keep working on it, Mustard seeds and two little coins count, when that's all we've got. The kingdom of God takes its life from what is little. Not from our long-robed, best-seat-in-the-house egos. Thank goodness for that.
- What is that little piece of our life that we can tease out today, to hold in God's presence and say: It's not much, God, but it is what I've got and what I can do? Blessed are we, when we know ourselves not in our grandiosity—but in the littleness, which God truly treasures.