

Show and Tell, Tell and Show

[Text - Mark 4:2-34]

Pastor Dave Shackle

June 7, 2015

Today, like every Sunday, we remember and celebrate the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Today, we also highlight and celebrate the marvelous gifts and ministry of our Sunday School teachers and students. Jesus was able to recognize Divine power and potential in the tiniest seed, and in the most humble people. So today is a wonderful day to think about how you and I are blessed, through the smallest acts of kindness; and about how we can bless others, through our own acts of kindness, just like our Sunday School classes have done.

Every year, our students and teachers take-on special projects that help put their faith into action. One year, they raised money for the United Church of Christ's Haitian Earthquake Relief fund, the next year for Japanese tsunami relief. They've provided goats, and chickens, and bees - for milk and eggs, honey and cheese - for impoverished communities, through the International Heifer Project. Two years ago they collected money, clothing, toiletries and cleaning supplies, that some of them took to New York, to physically assist victims of Hurricane Sandy. They've helped our older BUCC members with Spring cleaning and yard work; asking only that those who wanted to pay them, simply make a donation to our local food pantry. And once again, this year, their special offerings and efforts are helping boost our congregation's ongoing support for the Brookside Hunger Center. Little hands and big hearts, doing seemingly small things, that lead to tremendous results! I think that's terrific! And according to Jesus, that's what the Divine Realm is really all about.

Jesus shows us that when we share even the *simplest* gifts, that Divine *Abundance* can be experienced and enjoyed by all. He reminds us, that within the Divine Realm, little things really do become BIG! That the lowly *are* raised-up; and that the meek, not the mighty, shall inherit the earth. Jesus has this amazing ability to look beyond the

small and humble appearance of things - and people - and to see the tremendous potential and possibilities. He transforms a little group of lowly fishermen, tax collectors, humble men and women, into a powerful community of faith. A community not unlike our own: relatively small in number, yet remarkably strong in its mission of compassionate service and gracious outreach.

Throughout his life, Jesus teaches about the tremendous importance of the little things in Life: the poor widow's small coin offered in faith; a cup of cold water, given with a warm and caring heart; the little acts of kindness done "to the *least* of these" our brothers and sisters. In the Divine Realm, our faith - and our lives - have a tremendous capacity to develop and grow and flourish - just like that tiny mustard seed. With time, patience, and persistence, even the smallest steps forward that you and I take, can bring us Light-Years closer to embracing and reflecting the Divine Image of the Living, Loving Christ. So even in those times when it feels like our faith is stagnant or struggling, dormant or *dead*, it doesn't mean that it isn't deepening, and growing, and preparing to spring-forth in spectacular ways!

This past year, our dedicated Sunday School teachers not only *told* our children about the God of Love, they *showed* them Love of God; and inspired them to share that Love with one another and with people in need. They faithfully planted within these little ones those precious seeds of kindness and compassion, generosity and grace. You and I now have the remarkable privilege of watching - and helping - those seeds sprout and grow and blossom among us for many years to come. And while we can rightly look at these wonderful children around us and think, "This is the Church's bright and hopeful future", we should also recognize that they are a critically important part of the Church's present moment and ministry. For that, we give thanks to our teachers, and we give thanks to God!