

'Size' of faith? Luke 17:6, Matthew 17:20

In the NKJV, Luke 17:6 reads like this: "If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you." Perhaps because of the parables just discussed, I don't remember ever hearing any other interpretation for this than the size of the faith. (The same holds for Matthew 17:20.) But that usually left me disgruntled: surely my faith was bigger than a seed, but I was never able to make a tree or hill obey me! But looking at the Text again, might the intended meaning of 'as a mustard seed' be different? Is the phrase not ambiguous? Could the verb 'has' be implied? Well then, what kind of 'faith' might a mustard seed have? Albeit so small, it reacts without question to the climactic circumstances, and grows to remarkable proportions. If we reacted similarly, without question, to the Holy Spirit's promptings, our spiritual 'climactic circumstances', we should indeed move mountains, literally. Or to put it another way, a seed has the faith to die, like the Lord Jesus said in John 12:24: "unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone". In 1 Corinthians 15:31 Paul said that he died daily. How so? Obviously he didn't die physically; he died to himself, his own ideas and ambitions, so as to embrace God's will. Dying to self is a prerequisite for moving mountains, because then we will only attempt to do what we see the Father doing (John 5:19).