

Sermon Discussion Guide

April 26, 2026 - Pastor Todd Pellowe

Faith That Moves Mountains (Matthew 17:14-21)

Summary: This week, we explored Matthew 17:14-21, where Jesus heals a boy the disciples could not. We discussed the sobering reality of spiritual warfare and why our little faith often hinders us. Ultimately, the sermon challenged us to move beyond a stagnant belief system and embrace a “mustard seed” faith. It is a small but living trust that relies entirely on the power of a big God.

Discussion Starter

- Was there anything in this week’s sermon that was particularly convicting or particularly encouraging to you? Why?
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Reflection Questions

- In the passage, the father approaches Jesus with a desperate plea because the disciples could not help his son. Have you ever been in a situation where you felt like you "tried everything" but saw no results? How did that affect your faith?
 - C.S. Lewis suggested that the enemy's greatest tactic is to remain concealed. Do you tend to lean more toward "seeing a demon behind every bush" or "ignoring the spiritual realm entirely"? How does acknowledging the reality of spiritual warfare change how you view your daily struggles?
 - The father in the story approached Jesus by kneeling in a desperate plea. When was the last time you felt truly "desperate" for Jesus? Does your current prayer life reflect a person who has "figured it all out," or a person kneeling in need of mercy?
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Application Questions

- What is the specific "mountain" in your life right now? (a broken relationship, a diagnosis, a spiritual struggle, or "tribalism" in your community). Share it your group. What would it look like to "bring it to Jesus" instead of just worrying about it?
- If "little faith" is like a batch of bad cookies, we don't need *more* of it—we need the *right kind*. This week, identify one area where you are relying on your own "ability" or "expertise." How can you intentionally shift that reliance to Jesus' ability instead?

- Based on the *Screwtape Letters* reference, where do you feel the enemy is currently trying to "conceal" himself in your life? (Perhaps through bitterness, apathy, or distraction). What is one scripture you can memorize this week to "rebuke" that specific distraction?
- Think of a current struggle. Instead of asking for "more faith" to handle it, try praying: *"Jesus, I have very little strength, but I trust in your absolute ability to handle this."* How does that shift in language change your anxiety level?
- Jesus told the disciples, "Bring the boy here to me." He responded to the mess. Most of us try to "clean up" our mess before we bring it to Jesus. What is one "messy situation" in your life right now that you've been trying to fix *before* you bring it to Him? How can you "bring it to Him" in its current, messy state today?

Closing Activity Idea:

The Item: Provide a small pebble or a tiny scrap of paper to each one.

The Instructions for Leaders:

1. **Distribute:** Hand out the item and say: *"This is small, maybe even annoying to keep track of—that's the point. Faith isn't a trophy; it's a persistent trust in Jesus."*
2. **The Placement:** Have everyone put it in their pocket or phone case **immediately**.
3. **The Script:** Tell them that every time they feel it this week, they must stop and say:

"It's not my grip on Him, but His grip on this."

4. **The Commitment:** Ask them to silently name one "mountain" (a mess, a fear, or a diagnosis) they are handing over to Jesus' power right now.
5. **The Prayer:** Close with a brief prayer: *"Lord, use this small reminder to break our habit of worry and turn our focus to Your absolute ability. Amen."*

(Guide written by: Jonathan Hernandez)

Tips for Group Leaders

- DO ask open-ended questions. DON'T ask questions where a short "right" answer ends the discussion.
- DO encourage mutual participation by every group member. DON'T feel the need to respond or weigh in after every contribution. Avoid monologuing. As the leader, your goal is to facilitate mutual discussion between all group members (Eph 4:15–16).
- DO ask follow-up questions: "What do you mean by that?" "Tell me more!" "Has anyone else experienced something similar (or different)?"
- DO feel free to pick and choose questions that are a good fit for your group. DON'T feel the need to get through every question, and don't worry if you spend most of your time on a few questions that generate a lot of good discussion.
- DO keep the main thing the main thing. Steer your conversation toward the main theme of the sermon and the biblical text. DON'T get sidetracked on less important matters, theological debates, etc. A rabbit trail might sometimes be worth pursuing—if group members are wrestling deeply with the implications of biblical truth for their lives. Otherwise, steer conversation back to the main topic.
- DO get into the text. It could be helpful to read over the passage together or ask questions directly related to the text. Help group members engage the text for themselves and respond to what they see there.
- DO revisit important moments from the sermon—a memorable story, an impactful quote, a convicting point of application. "Remember when pastor X talked about Y? What impression did that make on you?"
- DO allow space for reflection, silence, and thoughtful answers. DON'T feel that you need to jump in or ask a new question just because the group has been quiet for a few seconds. A good rule of thumb is to wait until the silence gets awkward, then count silently to ten before jumping in.
- DO bring discussions home to practical, concrete everyday life. DON'T let discussion and application stay in the abstract realm. Steer discussion toward *what does responding to this sermon look like for me?* If comments are vague or general, ask "what would that look like, practically?"