

HOW BIG ARE LITTLE THINGS?

Sermonette by Robert Schmid

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Happy Sabbath to all!

Several weeks ago my wife Erika went to Camp River Glen for 5 days. It's no earthshaking event in itself, nevertheless her absence at home provided the basis for my Sermonette today.

What happened was that, that first morning after I got up, showered and dressed, I was confronted with the monumental decision of whether or not to make the bed, as she of course always does. After analyzing the situation, I came to the only logical conclusion and that was that the bed could stay as it was, since I would use it again that very evening anyhow!

My logic carried me through the next few days alright, but not without a bad conscience every time I would look at the unmade bed. Then the dishes in the kitchen began to pile up. My dirty close on the bedroom floor didn't move, as they usually do when she is home.

I had no idea how fast weeds could grow, even without water.
By the way, the flowers and vegetables, in contrast, didn't fare so well.

So, after a few days I looked around and asked myself how a few little things could cause so much confusion and chaos. And so the title of my Sermonette is : HOW BIG ARE LITTLE THINGS.

How big - how important are little things? Take the case of whether or not to make the bed in the morning. I determined, and correctly so, that my bed was just as useable in the evening whether it was made up during the day nor not.

But I quickly realized that, that first decision in the morning influenced many of my subsequent decisions. I realized that my - **It makes no difference attitude** - in fact made a great deal of difference when a bunch of little, unimportant things all of a sudden would have bigger and bigger consequences.

So, let's first of all look at the Word of God and see what God has to say about the importance of little things and how they can affect our lives in a big way.

Let's begin with the general principle given to us in the book of Luke 16:10. Here Jesus Christ tells us that: "**He who is faithful in a very little, is faithful also in much.**"

The New English Bible says: "**The man who can be trusted in little things, can be trusted also in great things.**" So, this is the principle.

Now according to this principle, the issue is not whether the bed is made or not, the issue is whether I could be trusted with little things.

You know, it's so easy to say to yourself; never mind these little things, I will build up my character on the big things. When the big, important issues come along, then I apply the Word of God, not on the unimportant ones.

Well, that kind of reasoning can get you into one big heap of trouble. God gave us plenty of examples in the Bible to keep us from making the same old mistakes, that's why it says in I. Cor. 10:11 ***"These things - these examples, given to us in the Old Testament, happened to them as a warning, they were written down for our instruction."***

So, now let's look at one of the examples that was given for our instruction. We are all familiar with the story of the Exodus, the nation of Israel leaving Egypt on their way to the promised land. Sounds simple enough. From Egypt on the Nile to Canaan up around Moab, it's about 200 maybe 250 miles. With a good set of wheels a 4-5 hour drive. But God needed to teach Israel a few lessons, and so that 4 hour drive turned into a 40 year journey.

40 years of searching and yearning for the promised land of Canaan.

You know the story. Moses was their leader and you can be sure that he was as anxious to get there than anybody. And so after 40 years of teaching Israel, God decided to give Moses one last test, one last opportunity to prove his loyalty, his obedience, his faith in God.

And so, in the book of Numbers chapter 20, God tells Moses in verse 8: ***"Take the rod, and assemble the congregation, you and Aaron your brother, and TELL the rock before their eyes to yield its water."*** A simple, direct command. But Moses let pride and self-importance get in the way and instead of *telling* the rock to yield its water, he *struck* the rock twice with his rod. Now you might say: Ah, what's the big deal? Is it important whether you talk to a rock, or strike the rock, or just kick it with your foot? God - was going to do a miracle anyhow, so what difference does it make what Moses did?

Let's read verse 12 of Numbers 20: ***"And the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, 'Because you did not believe in me, to sanctify me in the eyes of the people of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land, which I have given them.'"*** Wow, can't you just see Moses? You have to picture this! His jaw probably dropped, I suppose he got red in the face, saying something like: Now just a minute - Lord, remember I've been looking for this place for 40 years. How big is this little thing anyhow?

But you see it wasn't a little thing, it was a big, important thing, because the issue was not whether he spoke to, or struck the rock, the issue was whether Moses, after walking with God for 40 years, learned to be obedient in little things. It was a final test, and Moses failed, and he had to pay a horrible penalty - by not being allowed to enter into the promised land that he searched for, for forty years.

And so we have to ask the big question! What little, what unimportant thing will keep you or me out of the promised land, out of the Kingdom of God, out of that first, that better resurrection? Remember, that this story of Moses was given for our admonition. But, will we learn from it?

Remember, when my wife asked me to do certain things, I asked myself: How important is it that I do them? That's where I went wrong. That was the wrong question to ask. What I should have asked myself was, how important is it to my wife that I do those things? Can you see the difference?

Let me give you now a few other examples of seemingly little things that can and often do have big consequences. This nation is drowning in a flood of trash. But do you know how it all starts, it starts with somebody leaving one piece of trash behind.

Individually, a small thing, but collectively, a big problem.
God wants us to be a light, a positive example, a part of the solution, not a part of the problem.

Let's look at another example. In the book of Hebrews there is a simple little command from God that says. That's Hebrews 10:25, *"that we ought not to forsake, or neglect assembling ourselves together with others, as is the habit of some."* In other words do we skip Sabbath services, or for that matter Bible Study for no good reason. God recommends that we assemble ourselves together with others. Could it be - now remember, I really don't know, Moses didn't know either -- could it be that, that is our test?

What about that little thing - the tongue, mentioned in James 3:5. It says *"so the tongue is a little member and boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire!"* It's a rhetorical question and we can ask ourselves what little thing will affect our relationship with our mates, with our children, or what little thing will separate us from our God?

How big, how important are little things anyhow? Well according to the Word of God little things are very big, and very important. In fact little things are so important that without them no big things would exist. This may sound very basic, but you know what they say: **"The journey of a thousand miles begins with that first little step."**

Let me conclude with a couple of more scriptures.

In Matt. 25, in the parable of the talents, The Master - that is Christ, said in verse 21: *"Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master."* What a wonderful promise.

And in Luke 19:17 the Lord said: *"Well done, good servant! Because you have been faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities"* Can you imagine! Authority over 10 cities just for being faithful in "very little". I wonder what reward God has in store for those who have learned to be faithful in big things?

But, we should also consider the warning in Luke 12:26. Here Christ is talking to His Disciples, he is talking to you and me about not being anxious. He is talking about trusting Him, and He says: *"If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that - that is simply trusting Him - why are you anxious about the rest?"*

Are we able to trust him? We should - because we have His promises and His Holy Spirit. You see all God requires, all God expects is for you and I to be faithful in a very little thing - that is that we trust him.

All we have to do is trust God, which means to believe him, and to do ALL that He says faithfully. When we do this, even the smallest matter, will be as important to us as it is to God.

So, remember that obedience in small things, is not a small thing.

