

The Gospels in Harmony

Grudging Compliance

June 17, 2018

Welcome to where we're learning that God's will won't be on our terms!

What percentage of your obedience to God is reluctant?



It's okay. **Grudging faith is better than *no faith*.**

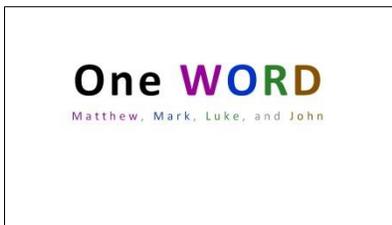
We all struggle to let go of the reigns and give 'em to God.

We often want *His will*, but on *our terms and timetable*.



For me, this had to do with moving a mountain. It was my final hurdle in harmonizing the Gospels.

As we've seen, the gospels can be *perfectly* harmonized *without guesswork* by recognizing and matching and anchoring their flashbacks and flash-forwards.



Then we can weave 'em and read 'em as One.

But, **we must never ever sever God's USB connections** (His unbreakable story blocks). **We can't add or subtract anything to 'em, nor rearrange anything within 'em.**

Now, there are locked gates that only open by faith:

We must trust every word.

We must trade in tradition.

We must beware of the snares (that blind the wisenheimers).

We must know Jesus' Bible.

We've discussed **the seemingly *un-weavables* that test our trust**. But, today we're talking about a set that proved to be the most difficult test for *me*: **the unbelievable weavables**.

These are stories that are obviously simple to weave; but as I now know, are brilliantly engineered to appear to obviously need our help.

My final hurdle concerned moving a mountain.

When Jesus was tempted three times in the wilderness, Matthew and Luke agree that the devil told Him to turn stones into bread.



Looking toward Mt Ebal from Mt Gerizim

[Matthew says] Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. ... **[And]** Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.” Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’” – Matthew 4:3-11 NIV

[Luke says] The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, “I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me, it will all be yours.” Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.’” **[And then]** The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. – Luke 4:3-13 NIV

They’ve obviously got their temples and mountains mixed up.

Everyone says it’s too minor to matter. *But, it isn’t.*

If God needs our grace He’s a manmade fraud.

But, the stories seem so identical.

Jesus even quotes the same Scripture from Moses’ speech in Deuteronomy.

I couldn’t make myself put it how it demanded to go: stones into bread, *Luke’s* mountain, the Temple, and then *Matthew’s* mountain. But, **that’s four temptations.**

It seemed so obvious that someone simply got the order wrong. And, someone did ... Me!

Now, hindsight being 20/20, I’m a bit embarrassed about this. But, I grudgingly surrendered, and threw a little heart fit as I moved Matthew’s mountain to the after side of the Temple story.

I kind of said, “Okay. Whatever. I’m *gonna* do it, but it’s stupid and it doesn’t work and it’ll undermine the power of what we’re doing here. But hey, *you’re* God. And I give up.”

Funny thing is, *that* was faith.

Albeit, the tiniest amount possible to still be called *faith*.

A lot of times we know what God would have us do, but it seems counterintuitive to trust Him.

So, what do you do when it's *your faith* being tested?

You just need to have enough faith to take that first tiny step in alignment with God's Word and ways, even though everything in you is doubting, resisting, opposing, and second-guessing.

That's when the devil comes to *you* with the mountain test.

Your mountain might be a broken relationship, a lost job, a seemingly hopeless future, or a devastating diagnosis. **Whatever it is, it seems obvious that God doesn't get it.**

And that's when we must do what He says *just because He says.*

It reminds me of the time Peter had fished all night.



Jesus said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But ***because you say so***, I will let down the nets." **[But] When they had done so**, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. – Luke 5:4-6 NIV

We can only see the first step of faith.

We can't imagine the second or third or fourth step.

And, *that's* why God's will won't be dictated by *our* terms or timetable.

It's okay to obey *just because He says so*; because until we've done so, He can't reveal or reward us with whatever comes next; which is why grudging compliance is better than none ... *barely*.

But, if we won't take even a grudging step of trust, we can never know what comes after.

Not that it'll always be good, mind you.

That's what makes it such a test of our trust and obedience.

But, it was only after I moved Matthew's mountain, that I read it in that new order and noticed something odd. Matthew says:

Again, the devil **took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor ... – Mat 4:8 NIV**

And I immediately had this sinking lack-of-faith feeling.

I was so focused on what I didn't want to do, that I had never stopped to consider that there could actually *be* two mountains.

So, I looked up Jesus' quote (that He now says *twice*), and found that everything He says is from Moses' speech in Deuteronomy.

Wherein Moses says that exact same thing ... *twice*. (Deut 6:13, 10:20)

And wherein Moses commands Joshua to go to two mountains at two separate times in order to see *all* the nations of the world!

And it doesn't stop there. It tells where *Jesus* went. What He was doing for forty days. And the stones the devil is referring to. The rabbit hole just kept going deeper and deeper and deeper.

But, that'll have to keep until next time.

Noah came in a few days after I shared this with him, and said he was listening to the Bible and thought of me when Jesus said.

If you have **faith as small as a mustard seed**, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you." – Mat 17:20b NIV

Because, all God requires of you is that first grudging step.

[Jesus also said] The **seed** is the **word of God**. – Luke 8:11 NIV



[And] ... a **mustard seed**, is **the smallest seed** you plant ... Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants ..." – Mark 4:30-32a NIV

[And] ... not **the smallest letter** [lit. "iōta" a mustard-seed-size Hebrew letter] ... will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. – Mat 5:17-18 NIV

[Therefore] ... if you have **faith as small as a mustard seed**, [refusing to ignore or disregard even the smallest letter of God's Word] you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. **Nothing** will be impossible for you." – Mat 17:20b NIV

It was with the tiniest faith that I finally moved the mountain.

And, the *only reason* I did is because I know that I know that **He's God and I'm blind**.

And, that reluctant act of faith set off a stunning series of discoveries, **including the mountain that Jesus had to move**, which led me to the *first* Jesus that crossed the Jordan and was sent by God's Spirit into the wilderness to establish the stones that the devil tells Jesus to turn into bread.

If grudging compliance is all you got ... it'll do just fine.