

# The Day of Small Things

“For who has despised the day of small things? But these seven will be glad when they see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel—these are the eyes of the LORD which range to and fro throughout the earth.” - Zechariah 4:10

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## Ian Paisley - The Tiny Day

"For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth" Zechariah 4:10

### **The Day Defined** "the day of small things"

Here we have the world's estimate of the day of our labour for Christ and His church—a tiny day with tiny things devoid of greatness and glory. Aye and sometimes in our faithlessness we are overcome with the same deceptive assessment.

### **The Day Despised** "Who hath despised"

The religious world despises the labours of the true servant of God. They slander them as Tobiah of old and the other opponents of faithful Nehemiah. They mock our work, deride our efforts and scorn our building.

### **The Day Developed** "They shall rejoice for they shall see"

As this tiny day wears on we shall see the plummet in the hand of our greater Zerubbabel and we shall hear the shouting—Grace, Grace unto it

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The day of small things is the day of precious things, and will be the day of great things.

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Small things Zech. 4:10

It is the little words you speak, the little thoughts you think, the little things you do or leave undone, the little moments you waste or use wisely, the little temptations which you yield to or overcome—the little things of every day that are making or marring your future life.

## **David Roper - In Praise Of The Small Warm-up: Haggai 2:1–9**

How does it look to you now? Does it not seem to you like nothing? Haggai 2:3

The little structure seemed like nothing compared to Solomon's magnificent temple. Those who were engaged in building it were mostly farmers, with little time to invest in labor and no money with which to hire professionals. It was a do-it-yourself project, pieced together by local effort.

The workers were faithful and were forging on, but the building still wasn't much to look at—no gold, silver, or precious stones. Those who had seen the glory of Solomon's eight-million dollar building sat down and wept.

That's when Haggai spoke up:

“Who of you is left who saw this house in its

former glory? How does it look to you now? Does it not seem to you like nothing? But now be strong . . . all you people of the land,” declares the LORD, “and work. For I am with you,” declares the LORD Almighty. . . . “My Spirit remains among you. Do not fear.” This is what the LORD Almighty says: “In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. I will shake all nations, and the desired one of all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory,” says the LORD Almighty (2:3–7).

And He did. This little house, embellished by Herod, was the temple to which Jesus came, filling it with His glory. There's no end of good that God can do with a very small thing.

“Who despises the day of small things?” asks one of Haggai's contemporaries (Zechariah 4:10). We do! Small has fallen on hard times, inclined as we are to equate size with success. Small is now a value judgment: If we're little we're limited or worth nothing at all.

We know in theory that it's “not by might nor power but by God's spirit” that God's work is done, and yet in practice we keep counting noses and falling short and feeling that what we're doing is insignificant. “We have become fascinated by the idea of bigness, and

we are quite convinced that if we could only stage, yes, that's the word, stage something really big before the world, we would shake it and produce a mighty religious awakening" (Martyn Lloyd-Jones).

But what is highly valued among men is detested by God (Luke 16:15). He delights in smallness, and always seems to do His best work through a tiny remnant, like Gideon's army, whom God dismantled, reducing it from 22,000 to 300 because, as he said, "You have too many men for me" (Judges 7:2).

No, small is not too few; it's just about right. We can be pleased when two or three are gathered in Jesus' name. Size is nothing; substance is everything. It's a matter of perspective.

A small place has fewer distractions. We can center more on the fundamentals of ministry—befriending others and imparting the truth to them.

Furthermore, everything can be simplified. We don't have to generate programs. We can gather around the piano and minister to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs; we can worship around the wood stove.

A small place invites intimacy and accountability, so no one gets left out. We can know one another more fully and engage in more meaningful pastoral and mutual care.

Evangelism is doable in a little place. Community involvement is almost mandatory. Church members may participate at any level, making Christ visible to the entire community.

And from a small place we can even embrace the world. Young people leave us for the big city but if our vision is greater than our own immediate needs, we'll view their imminent departure as good news. We'll equip them with our teaching, imbue them with our vision, and send them out with our blessing to the uttermost parts of the earth—a disposition my friend Bob Smith refers to as a "boot camp mentality." (A friend told me that the tiny church in which we grew up spawned five full-time workers and one martyr while he was there).

It's all a matter of perspective. God is "able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us" (Ephesians 3:20).

Oh, to be sure, there are challenges in small places, but they come not from smallness of place but from smallness of mind—short-sightedness, traditionalism, legalism, and the other cramping carnalities that initially frustrate God's purposes and leave us dismayed.

But we don't have to push such people over the edge. Our strength lies not in stubbornness and forcefulness but in speaking the truth in love—patient, long-term instruction from God's Word, humbly and prayerfully offered, "in the hope that . . . they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil who has taken them captive to do his will" (2 Timothy 2:25–26).

In due time God may work on the most rigid of them, softening their hard hearts and minds and setting them free to do His will.

And so I say, we don't have to move on. We can be content where we are. We all get a yen now and then to move up to a bigger place, but to be true to the gospel we should rather choose to move down (Luke 14:7–11). Upward mobility may be the American way, but it's not necessarily God's way for His own. True nobility is a matter of moving down the ladder, seeking to be the servant of all.

God may thrust us out—"extrude" us, to use Francis Schaeffer's colorful term. Some of us will get sacked; others will have to leave because we cannot provide for our families. In some cases we, like our Lord, will be unable to do any mighty works because of the hardness of folk's hearts. God has many ways to move us to another, perhaps larger site. But if we grasp for the bigger place we'll not be effective there. Grasping is sin. "Should you then seek great things for yourself?" Jeremiah asks. "Seek them not!" (Jeremiah 45:5). The higher seats "belong to those for whom they have been prepared" (Mark 10:40). In the meantime it's best to stay put as long as it pleases God—if it be His will, until we die.

Longevity means a lot: It matures us, deepening our devotion to Christ, making us more like Him than we ever thought possible and preparing us for a lifetime of service wherever He calls us. The fish-bowl effect of small communities demands authentic Christianity. If we move too fast we may never deal with flaws that must be addressed. Remaining is a character-building move.

Moreover, remaining matures our ministry. It's been my experience that nothing much happens for five to ten years. That's when the hireling is inclined to flee. But a good shepherd sticks it out, quietly manifesting Jesus' love, patiently tending God's flock, faithfully serving his neighbors—no matter how long it takes or how much it costs—until God makes His move.

Some churches will never get bigger. In a small, static community there are ceilings to growth. But there's no limit to spiritual growth. People can grow in grace forever. Every day we remain is a step closer to their maturity. As one of the early church Fathers said, "If

you happen to live in a community do not move to another place, for it will harm you greatly. If a bird leaves her eggs they will never hatch.”

The bottom line for me is just to know that serving in a small place is not a stepping stone to greatness. It is greatness.

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Robert Morgan - We think bigger is better, but the Bible tells us to despise not the day of small things.

“Little is much when God is in it;  
Labor not for wealth or fame.  
There's a crown, and you can win it,  
When you go in Jesus' name.”

Edward Payson, a nineteenth-century preacher in Portland, Maine, had but one hearer one stormy Sunday. Payson preached his sermon, however, as carefully as though the building had been thronged. Later his solitary listener called on him. “I was led to the Savior through that service,” he said. “For whenever you talked about sin and salvation, I glanced around to see to whom you referred, but since there was no one there but me, I had no alternative but to lay every word to my own heart and conscience!”

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**James Smith** notes that Elijah “Prayed Successfully. “Behold there ariseth a little cloud, . . . and there was a great rain” (1Ki 18:44, 45). Let us take heed when the little cloud appears that we do not despise the day of small things (Zech. 4:10). God's “little cloud” can be made broad enough to cover the whole sky and to meet all our need. The few loaves and small fishes are sufficient in His hands to satisfy the cravings of a multitude. Elijah asked, believing that he would receive, and he did have (Mark 11:24), and God

was glorified In so answering. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (John 14:15). Seeing that it is the chief desire of the Son to glorify the Father in answering our prayers, surely this is one of the most powerful of all reasons why we should "ask in prayer, believing that we will receive what we ask.

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## David Jeremiah - THE GREAT MULTIPLIER

Who has despised the day of small things? Zechariah 4:10

In 1912, Dr. Russell Conwell, pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Philadelphia, had a young student in Sunday school named Hattie May Wiatt. The church was crowded, and one day Dr. Conwell told Hattie May that he would love to have buildings large enough for everyone to attend.

When Hattie May became ill and died, Rev. Conwell was asked to preach the funeral. The girl's mother told him Hattie May had been saving her money to help build a bigger church. Hattie's purse contained coins amounting to fifty-seven cents. Taking the coins to the bank, Conwell exchanged them for fifty-seven pennies, which he put on display and "sold." With the proceeds, a nearby house was purchased for a children's wing for the church. Inspired by Hattie's story, more money came in, and out of her fifty-seven cents eventually came the buildings of Temple Baptist Church, Temple University, and Good Samaritan Hospital.

Perhaps you feel your gifts, your time, your talents, and your efforts are too small to make a difference. But have you ever given them to God completely and asked Him to bless them richly? He's the Great Mathematician, and He can take our words of witness, our undertakings, and our gifts and multiply them beyond anything we can ask or imagine. (Morning and Evening)

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Robert Neighbor -

"He first findeth his own brother Simon, ... and he brought him to Jesus." (John 1:41, 42.)

He first went and sought him,

To Jesus he brought him:

'Twas Andrew brought Peter that day;

When Jesus hailed Peter,

He then detailed Peter,

And called him to service that day.

O Andrew, remember,

Keep glowing that ember,

Let memory cherish that day;

Thank God for the story

Of Peter, his glory,

And think how you brought him that day.

When Christ gives His blessing,

The faithful confessing,

The Lord will remember that day,

When you sought your brother.

And, you brought your brother,

He'll bless you for that wondrous day.

Andrew first found his brother, Peter. Little did Andrew realize the far-reaching results of that day's work. However, in after years as Peter was pressing his way to greater and greater achievements for God, Andrew must have found great satisfaction in knowing that he had led his brother to Christ. Perhaps Andrew never felt that he would become a joint-partaker in Peter's rewards for service.

None of us ever know what lies hidden away in any act of service. A seemingly insignificant deed may start waves of blessing that shall reach the shores of eternity.

## Let no one despise the day of small things.

'Twas just a little light,

And yet, it blessed a pilgrim groping in the night;

'Twas just a little word,

And yet it carried comfort unto one who heard;

'Twas just a little deed,

And yet it gave assistance to a soul in need;

So let us fill our time  
With little things, that God may turn to things sublime.

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**Robert Neighbor - "Who hath despised the day of small things?" (Zech. 4:10.)**

The trivial tasks, the common-place,  
    Oft prove uncommon in their power;  
The little things you daily face,  
    And do with gentleness and grace,  
Yield fragrance like a flower.

Then, watch with care the little things,  
    For they may lead to greater,  
The common-place, the smatterings,  
    The trivials, and scatterings  
Well done, will bless you later.

Too many of us are looking for something big to do. We want to live in the lime-light. We want to be found faithful in much. Have we forgotten that the stepping stones to our large successes, are the faithful accomplishment of the small and seemingly insignificant trifles which are the general run in our lives?

He who does each little thing well, will find some bigger thing awaiting ere the end of his day. If the common-place things are well wrought, the heart and mind will be prepared to meet and conquer in the uncommon things.

Our Lord was as faithful as "Jesus, the carpenter," as He was as "Christ, the preacher." He was as faithful at Nazareth, as He was at Gethsemane, or Calvary. He was as faithful on earth as He was in heaven.

Let us learn to be faithful even as He was faithful.

Let us do well all that we do;  
    What say you?  
And then, ere ends the coming day,  
A greater task you may assay,  
A task which God puts in your way,  
    As your due.

If in small things you should do well,  
    And excel,  
The Lord will then guide you along  
To do the "big thing" with a song,  
And you, among the great and strong  
    Soon will dwell.

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**Prophets to the Discouraged**

The messages of Haggai and Zechariah were specifically given to encourage those whose work seemed small in their own eyes. "How does [your work for the Lord] look to you now? Does it not seem to you like nothing? But now be strong ... and work. For I am with you ... I will fill this house with glory ..." (Haggai 2:2-3, 7, NIV). "Who despises the day of small things?" (Zechariah 4:10, NIV). We both walk and work by faith, seeing in this life only a small fraction of our results. We are doing more good than we know.\*

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**Herbert Lockyer** - Faith may be only as a grain of mustard seed, but the tiny seed will grow. **The day of small things must not be despised.** Through continual yieldedness to the Spirit, the soul is not sluggish growing in grace and knowledge. The keynote of Hebrews is "Let us go on;" plus altra—"onward still!" must ever be our ideal. The trickle must become a torrent. "Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase" (Job 8:7). The tragedy is that so many of the saved never get beyond the trickle (CONTRAST Jn 7:37-39+). They have just enough grace to keep them alive and get them into heaven. Life they have, but not life more abundant. (John 10:10)

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**Valley of Vision - MORTIFICATION**

O divine Lawgiver,  
I take shame to myself

for open violations to thy law,  
for my secret faults,  
my omissions of duty,  
my unprofitable attendance  
upon means of grace,  
my carnality in worshipping thee,  
and all the sins of my holy things.

My iniquities are increased over my head:  
My trespasses are known in the heavens,  
and there Christ is gone also,  
my Advocate with the Father,  
my propitiation for sins,  
and I hear his word of peace.

**At present it is a day of small things with me,**

I have light enough to see my darkness,  
sensibility enough to feel the hardness of my heart,  
spirituality enough to mourn my want of a  
heavenly mind;  
but I might have had more,  
I ought to have had more,  
I have never been straitened in thee,  
thou hast always placed before me an  
infinite fullness,  
and I have not taken it.

I confess and bewail my deficiencies  
and backslidings:

I mourn my numberless failures,  
my incorrigibility under rebukes,  
my want of profiting under ordinances of mercy,  
my neglect of opportunities for usefulness.

It is not with me as in months past;  
O recall me to thyself, and enable me to feel  
my first love.

May my improvements correspond with my  
privileges,

May my will accept the decisions of my judgement,  
my choice be that which conscience approves,  
and may I never condemn myself  
in the things I allow!

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The Right Start

The great revival under Jonathan Edwards, in the eighteenth century, began with his famous call to prayer. The marvelous work of grace among the Indians under Brainerd had its origin in the days and nights that Brainerd spent before God in prayer for an enduement of power from on high for his work. The great revival of 1859 in the United States began in prayer and was carried on by prayer more than anything else. "Most revivals," writes Dr. Cuyler, "have humble beginnings, and the fire starts in a few warm hearts. **Never despise the day of small things.** During my own long ministry nearly every work of grace had a small beginning... a humble meeting in a private home... a group gathered for Bible study by Mr. Moody in our mission chapel... a meeting of young people in my home." —Alliance Weekly

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**Zechariah 4:10**

**Pay Attention to Little Things!**

**For who hath despised the day of small things? - Zechariah 4:10**

That well-known Christian, Horatius Bonar, once aptly re-marked: "It is well to remember that a holy life is made up of a number of small things: little words, not eloquent speeches and sermons; little deeds, not miracles and battles. These, not one great heroic act

of mighty martyrdom, make up most Christian lives. So, too, the avoidance of little evils, little sins, little follies, and small indiscretions and indulgences of the flesh, will go far to make up at least the negative side of a holy life."

I have read somewhere that the merchants of Panama, to be secure from fire, build (their houses on wooden piles driven deep into the sand beneath the water of rivers and lakes. Soon, however, a minute species of the madrepora, which are microscopic in size, begin to do their destructive work unseen by human eyes. They bore, saw, and eat away until the strong posts undergirding the homes become completely honeycombed. Then on some windy day when the sea dashes against such dwellings, they crumple and fall because the weakened pilings cannot stand the strain. In a similar fashion sin honeycombs a man's character, and when the testing days come, he may fall before the onslaughts of temptation.

It is important for us to keep in mind that it was the one act of eating of the forbidden fruit which led to the fall of the entire human race. Only one moment of weakness lost Esau his birth-right. One wrong decision landed Lot in Sodom, where he first lost his testimony, then his wife, and finally almost all of his possessions. A kiss, too, is a very small thing, but it betrayed the Son of God into the hands of His enemies. This day pay attention to little things; they often are of tremendous importance! (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

God often uses foolish things,  
The base things and the small,  
To bring to naught the mighty ones,  
So men can't boast at all.

—Roberta Beck

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**F. Whitfield** -- They shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel Zech. 4:10

It is joy to the Christian to know that the plummet is now in the hands of our great Zerubbabel, and that when He comes forth, the world's misrule shall be over. The false standards and false estimates of men shall be swept away. The standards of "expediency," of "conscience," of "every man thinking as he likes, if he is only sincere"—these, and all similar refuges of lies shall be like a spider's web. The measure of all things will be Christ, and Christ the Measurer of all things.

How everything will be reversed! What a turning upside down of all that now exists!

Blessed day, and longed for—the world's great jubilee, the earth's long-looked-for Sabbath, groaning creation's joy, and nature's calm repose! Who would not cry, "Come, Lord Jesus, and end this troubled dream! Shatter the shadows of the long, dark night of sin and sorrow, sighing and tears, despair and death!"

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### **John Butler - Despising Smallness**

"Who hath despised the day of small things? For they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth." (Zechariah 4:10)

EVERY age despises "small things." At the time of this verse, the work on rebuilding the Temple was being ridiculed. Progress had been slow and the small efforts were laughed at by the enemy. But God promised the Temple would be rebuilt. Our day also despises "small things." In marketing we have the "giant" and "blockbuster" sales. In sports we have the "Super" bowl. If it is not big, it does not seem to count in our age. But that is not a good philosophy, and God's children need to stop despising "small things."

We need to stop despising small things in purity. Small sins should not be despised, for they can cause big trouble. Small sins are seeds of big sins which can ruin our lives.

We need to stop despising small things in prayer. Some times we do not pray for things because they do not seem big enough to bring to God. But if these things bother you, they need to be brought to the Lord in prayer. He does not despise small things.

We need to stop despising small things in progress. Are you discouraged because progress in some area of your life is slow? Do not despise the small progress. Instead thank God for it. And make sure the progress continues. If progress continues, though it is small, it will soon be big progress.

We need to stop despising small things in our performance. Little duties need to be done faithfully just as well as big duties. Small opportunities need to be attended to just as well as big opportunities.

We need to stop despising small things in piety. Small churches are not necessarily bad churches and big churches are not necessarily good churches. Christ was born in the small town of Bethlehem. When He went to the big city of Jerusalem, He did not stay there overnight but stayed in the small town of nearby Bethany. Piety to the world is a small and unimportant thing, but God

does not despise it.

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## **C H Spurgeon - Morning and Evening - Evening, November 26**

“They shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel.” —Zechariah 4:10

Small things marked the beginning of the work in the hand of Zerubbabel, but none might despise it, for the Lord had raised up one who would persevere until the headstone should be brought forth with shoutings. The plummet was in good hands. Here is the comfort of every believer in the Lord Jesus; let the work of grace be ever so small in its beginnings, the plummet is in good hands, a master builder greater than Solomon has undertaken the raising of the heavenly temple, and he will not fail nor be discouraged till the topmost pinnacle shall be raised. If the plummet were in the hand of any merely human being, we might fear for the building, but the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in Jesus' hand. The works did not proceed irregularly, and without care, for the master's hand carried a good instrument. Had the walls been hurriedly run up without due superintendence, they might have been out of the perpendicular; but the plummet was used by the chosen overseer. Jesus is evermore watching the erection of his spiritual temple, that it may be built securely and well. We are for haste, but Jesus is for judgment. He will use the plummet, and that which is out of line must come down, every stone of it. Hence the failure of many a flattering work, the overthrow of many a glittering profession. It is not for us to judge the Lord's church, since Jesus has a steady hand, and a true eye, and can use the plummet well. Do we not rejoice to see judgment left to him?

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### **Small Things**

A man once wrote that mountains are made of small sands, that moments make years, and trifles, life.

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**Robert Hawker** - Blessed LORD! teach me, in the view of the humble instruments thou wert pleased to make use of for the deliverance of thy people, never to despise the day of small things, but to learn the full assurance of that precious doctrine, that it is not by might, nor by power, but by the SPIRIT of the LORD. Oh! for grace to be forever leaning upon thy strength, thou dear Redeemer, and to know, that thy strength is perfected in weakness. Ever, dearest LORD, be thou my strength, my hope, and song of rejoicing. I shall be more than conqueror through thine arm helping me.

**Robert Neighbor** - Who hath despised the day of small things? God is not dependent on the great multitudes. He is in the midst of the few. Describe Gideon and his battle. He began with 32,000 and then the number was cut down to 10,000 and then still cut down to 300. Yet with Christ in the midst as the leader of the hosts, there is victory — and God gets the glory.

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### **Small Beginnings**

Now that man has walked on the moon, we easily forget how it all began. After World War II, U.S. Army scientists were debriefing men like Wernher von Braun, who built the first long-range ballistic missile. He said, "Why don't you ask your own rocket pioneer, Dr. Robert Goddard?" Now, the Goddard Space Center is named for him! On March 16, 1926, on the farm of his Aunt Effie Ward, Goddard and a couple of friends launched the world's first successful rocket. It rose 41 feet in the air, flew for two and one-half seconds, and landed 184 feet from the launch pad. But it was a beginning. In the words of Scripture, despise not "the day of small things" (Zechariah 4:10).

Adrian Rogers - "Don't despise the day of small things" (Zechariah 4:10), because wonderful things come in small packages. Look, if you will, in Micah 5:2: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee"—out of Bethlehem—"shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2)

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Ray Pritchard - "Who despises the day of small things?" (Zechariah 4:10) A simple but profound question. God never despises small things. In fact, the most important things God is doing today are unseen, unknown and usually unappreciated!

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"The true Christian is the true citizen, lofty of purpose, resolute in endeavor, ready for a hero's deeds, but never looking down on his task because it is cast in the day of small things; scornful of baseness, awake to his own duties as well as to his rights, following the higher law with reverence, and in this world doing all that in his power lies, so that when death comes he may feel that mankind is in some degree better because he lived." —Theodore Roosevelt

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### **John MacArthur - PARABLE OF THE LEAVEN, PART 2**

He spoke another parable to them, "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three pecks of flour until it was all leavened."—Mt 13:33



In order for it to have the positive influence we referred to yesterday, the leaven of God's kingdom must be hid. And that does not mean hiding to be invisible but hiding to penetrate deeply, completely permeating the world as leaven thoroughly permeates bread dough. Believers are not to be of the world, but they must be in the world to reach and change it with the gospel (cf. Mark 16:15; John 17:14–16, 18).

When we faithfully serve as the moral and spiritual leaven of the kingdom, our influence in the world will be both positive and pervasive. And for this to happen, we don't have to be powerful national leaders, wealthy entrepreneurs, or popular sports figures—just obedient servants of Jesus Christ.

Evangelism and other aspects of kingdom ministry often seem to have little immediate effect. As the church grows bigger, the world's population grows at a much faster rate, and the church remains a remnant by comparison. But the Lord continues to add to His kingdom by reaching millions through radio, television, publications, and the Internet—means that were largely unavailable or untapped just a century ago.

The leavening work of the kingdom may seem invisible or ineffective to you—**"a day of small things"**—but that does not mean the Lord is not at work. Jesus' purpose in this parable and the previous one on the mustard seed was to assure the apostles as well as believers of every era that the kingdom would not fail but ultimately prosper and triumph (cf. Matt. 16:18).

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### **When Small Things Are Big**

The day of small things can become the life of biggest and best things. A small word spoken at the right time may set a whole life straight. A gentle smile may brighten the way for the man with a heavy load. The small bit of time with the Book and the knee bent will hallow the day's task. The still, small voice listened to may turn the world's tide. "The small in God's hand becomes big." —A. J. Gordon in *The Bent-Knee Time*. *Christianity Today*, Vol. 31, no. 18. See: Psalms 8:2; 1 Corinthians 1:27; 2 Corinthians 12:10.

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### Small Places

Some of our best-known and best-loved hymns came from a small village church in England. It was in the little town of Olney that William Cowper and John Newton lived. Who can ever forget Cowper's "There Is a Fountain"; and who has not been blessed by Newton's "Amazing Grace"?

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### **[James Butler](#) - DESPISING SMALLNESS**

"Who hath despised the day of small things" (Zechariah 4:10).

It seems that every age despises "small things." At the time of this verse, the work on rebuilding the Temple was being ridiculed because of its small progress. The seemingly small efforts were laughed at and to many of the Israelites the Temple looked as "nothing" compared to Solomon's Temple (Ezra 3 and Haggai 2:3). We live in a day that esteems bigness. We have spectacular sales, and super stores. We have "giant" and "blockbuster" sales. It is the "super" bowl in football, the "big" dance in basketball and the "world" series in baseball. Everything must be big, including churches, or it is not considered successful. We have lost the excellence of quality in the emphasis on quantity. And this thinking, unfortunately, has gotten into our spiritual thinking and corrupted it as worldly thinking usually does. We seem to forget that a small toothache is a major disturbance, that small snowflakes can cause major problems, and that small affronts can create major disagreements. We consider a few items that are small but need to be esteemed, for they are also large.

### FIRST—THE SMALLNESS OF PURITY

"Who hath despised the day of small things." We are often not concerned much about small sins and tolerate them, but small can cause big trouble. Small sins are the seeds of big sins which ruin our lives. Purity is a result of faithfulness in small areas.

### SECOND—THE SMALLNESS OF PRAYER

"Who hath despised the day of small things." Prayer is belittled in our apostate day. and we belittle prayer by not taking some things to prayer that seem, we think, too small for prayer. But if something is major enough to disturb you, it is major enough for prayer

### THIRD—THE SMALLNESS OF PROGRESS

"Who hath despised the day of small things." When progress in something is slow and small, we think we are not making any progress and often quit our efforts that could have brought big gains eventually.

### FOURTH—THE SMALLNESS OF POSITION

"Who hath despised the day of small things." Sometimes we look at our position, our job, our task and perceive it as very small

compared to the overall picture of life. However, if that task or job of position is given you by God, it is a major responsibility. If it was big enough for God to assign it to someone, it is big enough to be done. Do not neglect your responsibilities just because your position seems small and ineffective.

#### FIFTH—THE SMALLNESS OF PIETY

“Who hath despised the day of small things.” Small churches are considered unsuccessful and large churches successful according to the current thinking. However, many large churches are very corrupt. Their methods and multitudes are worldly. Small churches can be true to the message and the Master. That is big with God.

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#### Spurgeon - Sermon Notes Zechariah 4:10—“For who hath despised the day of small things?”

Great numbers of persons do despise “the day of small things.”

If they were wise, they would not do so; for it is not wise to despise anything, and to despise a thing because it is small is great folly.

A small thing may be greatly good, or terribly evil; and in neither case would it be prudent to despise it.

It is usually God’s way to begin his great works with a day of small things.

Thus it is seen that there is nothing in the means themselves.

Thus the divine power is more fully displayed.

Thus faith is exercised, and made to learn many lessons.

Why should men despise what God ordains?

Who are those persons who dare act thus contemptuously? They are not entitled to give themselves such airs: yet they dare to do so.

They show their contempt in various ways.

They affect pity for such feebleness. Nehemiah 4:2.

They decry, and find fault. 1 Samuel 17:28.

They sneer, and ridicule. Matt. 13:55. Acts 17:18.

They leave alone, with silent neglect. Acts 5:38.

It is a sad pity when this contempt is poured upon a beginner in grace, for it may cause him sad distress and discouragement.

Our object at this time is to reprove those who despise the earlier and weaker works of grace in the soul. True it is “the day of small things,” but this is to be rejoiced in, and is not to be despised.

Let us commune with—

#### I. THOSE WHO DESPISE OTHERS WHO ARE IN THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS.

1. Do you not know that there are babes in grace, and that these are true children of God? Do you doubt that evident fact?

2. Were you not once such little ones yourselves? If you never were, who are you to despise your betters?

3. Were not the greatest of the saints once very feeble? Would you have acted thus to them?

4. May not the strong be glad at times to be as sure of salvation as these little ones? Why despise those whom you may yet envy?

5. Does not our Lord care tenderly for the lambs? Is. 40:11.

6. Has he not threatened all proud despisers? Matt. 18:6.

Who then dares despise the day of small things?

Who are those who are so wicked? They are the proud, the ignorant, the thoughtless, the unfeeling, the profane, and such like.

#### II. THOSE WHO DESPISE THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS IN THEMSELVES.

1. They will frequently fail to notice and nurture thoughts and feelings which would lead them to Christ.

2. They cannot believe that salvation can come by ordinary means, or through their present knowledge and emotions: these are too small in their esteem, they crave for signs and wonders.

3. Therefore they endeavour to kill their own thoughtfulness at its birth, and quench the spark of desire before it can become a flame. Yet these despised things might have led on to salvation.

4. If they would nurture their weak desires, and feeble resolves, and faint beliefs, and trembling hopes, good would come of them.

5. No doubt many think ill of their own condition when God thinks well of them. They judge that little faith, and little life, and little strength are useless; but the Lord thinks not so.

It is wise to look away, both from small things and great things, to Jesus. Let us see his day, and be glad. John 8:56.

Let us trust in his finished work, and rejoice in his continued work. “Rejoice, and see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel.” See context.

#### III. THOSE WHO DO NOT DESPISE THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS.

1. Hopeful pastors. We are looking out for gracious signs, and are more apt to be misled by our sanguine hopes than to fall into the opposite fault of despising the day of small things.
  2. Anxious parents. They long to see buds of grace in their children. The smallest signs of spiritual life would charm them.
  3. Wise soul-winners. They rejoice to see "first the blade."
  4. Jesus himself. He loves the little ones. Mark 10:14.
- Come ye to him, all ye trembling souls!

### **MULTUM IN PARVO** ("much in little")

When the boy began to draw portraits upon his slate, and to sketch with charcoal, the great artist was in him in embryo. It was not every eye that could perceive his budding genius, but he who did so, and encouraged the youth to pursue art as his vocation, found a life-long satisfaction in having helped him. Had he sneered at the young draughtsman, he would have lived to see his folly; but now he takes pleasure in every triumph of the renowned painter. Some such joy, only of a higher and more spiritual order, will be yours if you stimulate early piety, and teach the tender heart the way to peace and holiness. To repress desires which are heavenward, because they are attended with something of childishness, is wicked cruelty: prune the vine of its wild shoots, but do not uproot it. Foster and nurture even the tiniest sign of grace. "Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it": Is. 65:8.

FEEBLEMIND.—I do not yet know all the truth; I am a very ignorant Christian man; sometimes, if I hear some rejoice in the Lord, it troubles me because I cannot do so too. It is with me as it is with a weak man among the strong, or as with a sick man among the healthy, or as a lamp despised. "He that is ready to slip with his feet is as a lamp despised in the thought of him that is at ease": Job. 12:5. So that I know not what to do.

GREATHEART.—But, brother, I have it in commission to comfort the feeble-minded, and to support the weak. You must needs go along with us; we will wait for you, we will lend you our help, we will deny ourselves of some things, both opinionative and practical, for your sake; we will not enter into doubtful disputations before you, we will be made all things to you rather than you shall be left behind. (Rom. 14, 1 Cor. 8, 9:22.)—Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress."

One afternoon, I noticed a young lady at the service, whom I knew to be a Sunday School teacher. After the service, I asked her where her class was. "Oh," said she, "I went to the school, and found only a little boy, and so I came away." "Only a little boy!" said I; "Think of the value of one such soul! The fires of a Reformation may be slumbering in that tow-headed boy; there may be a young Knox, or a Wesley, or a Whitefield in your class."—D. L. Moody.

The little lichen imperceptibly deposits the first layer of soil upon barren rocks in mid-ocean, from which grow up all the luxuriant wealth and beauty of the spice-island. Ferns have seeds so extremely diminutive that for a long time it was doubted if they existed at all. Yet such a seed, altogether invisible to the naked eye, floats on long journeys through the air, and falls on some lichen-covered island, where it immediately fructifies, and covers the place with vegetation.

The moss is but a very little plant, yet when its seeds fall on deep, swampy, treacherous morasses, they grow up, and bind the ground together with such bands that it becomes quite safe to pass over,—building, in fact, a broad and durable bridge. "Throughout creation the grandest and most complicated ends are obtained by the employment of the simplest means."—James Neil, in "Rays from the Realms of Nature."

### **Henry Blackaby - Small Things Are Not Despised**

For who scorns the day of small things?—Zechariah 4:10a

The world loves the spectacular. God has proven that He is certainly capable of the extraordinary, but He often chooses to work through the ordinary and seemingly insignificant. In this way He demonstrates His love and His power.

Throughout history, God's answer to a critical time was to send a baby. Isaac, Moses, Samuel, John the Baptist, and Jesus were all born as answers to a time of need. When God delivered the Israelites from the Midianites' oppression, He intentionally used an army of merely three hundred men to defeat a vastly larger army. He had more soldiers available, but He preferred to demonstrate His power in the way He accomplished His purposes. When Jesus selected His first disciples He could have enlisted a multitude to follow Him, but He chose twelve. It was not the number of disciples but the quality of their walk with Him that would determine how they affected their world. When Jesus fed a multitude, five loaves of bread and two fish from a boy's lunch were sufficient in the hands of the Lord.

Jesus compared the kingdom of God to a mustard seed (Matt. 13:31–32). The mustard seed was the smallest seed known to the Jews, yet it grew into an enormous tree. He also likened God's kingdom to leaven that is hardly noticeable but raises the entire batch of dough (Matt. 13:33). When children came to Jesus, His disciples assumed they were an annoyance and chased them away (Matt. 19:13–15). But Jesus said that in order to enter His kingdom, people must approach God as a child.

Christians often accept the adage "the bigger the better." We measure success by the number of people involved in our ministry. We

seek spectacular displays of God's power. We must learn to view success as God does. God is interested in the heart; He is pleased with obedience. (Experiencing God Day by Day)

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### **Small Ways In Small Places**

Read: Isaiah 49:1-6

For who has despised the day of small things? — Zechariah 4:10

Often I meet with people who serve in what they think are seemingly small ways in small places. They are frequently discouraged by loneliness, feeling that their acts of service are insignificant. When I hear them speak, I think of one of the angels in C. S. Lewis' book *Out of the Silent Planet*. He said: "My people have a law never to speak of sizes or numbers to you. . . . It makes you do reverence to nothings and pass by what is really great."

Sometimes culture says bigger is better—that size is the truest measure of success. It takes a strong person to resist that trend, especially if he or she is laboring in a small place. But we must not "pass by what is really great."

It's not that numbers aren't important (after all, the apostles counted their converts; see Acts 2:41). Numbers represent living people with eternal needs. We should all work and pray for large numbers of people to enter the kingdom, but numbers mustn't be the basis for self-esteem.

God doesn't call us to find fulfillment in the amount of work we do for Him, or the number of people who are a part of that work, but in faithfully doing our work for His sake. Serving our great God with His strength in a small way is not a stepping-stone to greatness—it is greatness. — David Roper Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Lord, help me remember that there are no small places or small people. All are precious in Your sight. May I see the value of my work and cherish it as You do.

Anyone doing God's work in God's way is important in His sight.

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### **Zechariah 4:1-14**

#### **The Power of Small Deeds**

**July 19, 2001 — by Joanie Yoder**

Many great accomplishments for God had small beginnings. When Zerubbabel was called to rebuild God's ruined temple, one of the first things he did, with the help of God's people, was lay a foundation. Then they began building on that foundation, stone upon stone. Many shortsighted citizens balked at those basic efforts and "despised the day of small things" (Zechariah 4:10). But God promised Zerubbabel success, not by mere human might and strength but by His Spirit.

Author Mike Yaconelli illustrated this principle by writing about a teenager who became burdened for homeless people in Philadelphia. He decided to go around his neighborhood and collect blankets, which he gave to people living on the street. The following week he made another collection. Others soon followed his example. As a result of that first small act, there's now an organization that gives blankets to homeless people around the world.

Do you long to have an impact on others' lives but feel overwhelmed by the enormity of the task? Don't despise small beginnings. Like that teenager, start helping people in the name of Christ, one small deed at a time. You'll soon prove that little is much when God is in it. (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

The work we do in Jesus' name,  
When strengthened by His might,  
Can start off small but grow in time  
And bring the Lord delight. —Sper

The smallest deed is better than the greatest intention.

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### **Zechariah 4:10**

### **John 6:1-12**

"For who has despised the day of small things?" (Zechariah 4:10).

When a young boy offered his bread and two tiny fish to Jesus, the Lord blessed his small lunch and it became a bountiful provision for many hungry people. God does the same when we offer Him our insignificant actions. He takes what little we have and uses it mightily for His glory.

One night in London two Christian men were trying to decide whether to cancel a missionary society meeting because the weather was so bad.

"Is it worthwhile to hold this service?" one man asked.

"Perhaps not," the other answered, "but I don't like to shirk my responsibility. Besides, the meeting has been announced, and someone might come."

So, as thunder rumbled and torrents of rain poured down, they started the service, even though only one person had showed up. A man who was walking past the brightly lighted chapel stepped inside to take refuge from the storm and doubled the size of the audience. As he sat down to dry off, he heard the speaker make a powerful plea for workers among the Indians in North America. After the service, one of the leaders remarked to the other, "Time thrown away tonight." But he was wrong. The passerby had heard God's call and yielded his life to Him. Within a month he had sold his business and was preparing himself to work among the Indians in British Columbia, where he would stay for thirty-five years. The title of a gospel song is true: "Little Is Much When God Is In It." When we link our faith with God's omnipotence, we can expect results. —P.R.V. (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Don't despise little things; a lantern can do what the sun never can—shine at night.

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## **Zechariah 4:10**

### **Small Is Beautiful**

**January 24, 2009 — by David H. Roper**

Just the other day someone said of a friend, "This man is destined for a great ministry," by which he meant he was headed for the big time—a high-profile church with a big budget.

It made me wonder: Why do we think that God's call is necessarily upwardly mobile? Why wouldn't He send His best workers to labor for a lifetime in some small place? Aren't there people in obscure places who need to be evangelized and taught? God is not willing that any perish.

Jesus cared about the individual as well as the masses. He taught large crowds if they appeared, but it never bothered Him that His audience grew smaller every day. Many left Him, John said (John 6:66), a fickle attrition that would have thrown most of us into high panic. Yet Jesus pressed on with those the Father gave Him.

We live in a culture where bigger is better, where size is the measure of success. It takes a strong person to resist that trend, especially if he or she is laboring in a small place.

But size is nothing; substance is everything. Whether you're pastoring a small church or leading a small Bible study or Sunday school class, serve them with all your heart. Pray, love, teach by word and example. Your little place is not a steppingstone to greatness. It is greatness. (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

The Lord will give you help and strength  
For work He bids you do;  
To serve Him from a heart of love  
Is all He asks of you. —Fasick

Little is much when God is in it.