

Beginning Small

Many things start out incredibly small. Tiny. Infinitesimal. You and I both, all of us. Everyone started out small. Microscopically small.

Jesus talked about the faith that can move a mountain being the size of a mustard seed. Consider the size of an acorn compared to the size of an oak tree.

Numbers are important in many cultures for more than what they may represent at face value. In the Bible, we notice the repetition of several numbers: 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 12, 40.... Two of these numbers are going to be important for us today.

The first number has been called the Number of Perfection or Completion. On the 7th Day, God rested. His work of Creation finished, He began the Sabbath. As the Sabbath ends, the next day begins. Eight has been called the Number of new Beginnings. The first day of the week. Starting over.

Looking deeper than what most might do, I can see that where we are at this point as a Church, as Vineyard Church of the Peninsula, is far more than mere coincidence. We ended our stay in the building on Route 17, our cocoon at the very end of 2017. And if you're thinking ahead, you've already figured out that we've begun here, in another temporary meeting place, at the beginning of 2018.

A seven in 2017 signifies an ending, but more than that, a completion. It's time for the next chapter in our journey together to be written. Maybe it's not just a new chapter.

Perhaps it's a whole new volume which has just begun here in 2018. An 8 signifies a new beginning.

The most obvious and material reason we've had to start meeting in a new place is because we have grown small in number. It became impossible to pay the bills when so few people were still coming and bringing their offerings. That's okay.

We're small now. And that's nothing to be ashamed of or to be angry with God about.

Let's take a look at ***Zechariah 4***.

***The name *Zechariah* means "Jehovah Remembers"

****Zerubbabel* (seed of Babel or Babylon) was an ancestor of Jesus according to the genealogy in Matthew 1. Had it not been for the captivity of Israel in Babylon he would have been king. As it happened, Zerubbabel was set up as a governor and given the task (Ezra 4) of rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem.

Zechariah 4:5-10 So the angel who was speaking with me answered and said to me, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my Lord." ***Then he said to me, "This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel saying, 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the Lord of hosts. 'What are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become a plain; and he will bring forth the top stone with shouts of "Grace, grace to it!"***" Also the word of the Lord came to me, saying, "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, and his hands will finish it. Then you will know that the

Lord of hosts has sent me to you. ***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."

***Now we'll close today by looking at Mark 4.

***In the first part of the chapter, Jesus teaches a couple of parables using seeds in his object lesson about The Kingdom of God.

Mark 4:30-32 And He said, "How shall we picture the kingdom of God, or by what parable shall we present it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the soil, though it is smaller than all the seeds that are upon the soil, yet when it is sown, it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and forms large branches; so that the birds of the air can nest under its shade ."