

A Little Town that Could

Scripture: Micah 5:2 - 4 and Zechariah 11:4 – 13

Jan. 12th, 2024

‘The Little Engine That Could’ is a beloved children’s classic that most of us have heard many times. We probably read it to our own children or grandchildren a time or two. In it, a long train filled with toys for little kids must be pulled over a very high mountain. The train has broken down!

All the larger and stronger engines refuse to do the job, believing it to be beneath them. Then a small blue engine offers to try to do the task saying ‘I think I Can!’ So the little blue engine take off on this task saying to himself ‘I think I Can’. The little Blue Engine poofs and chuggers pull all the toys and thing for the kids. ‘I think I Can!’ ‘I think I Can!’ ‘I think I Can!’ Say it with me - ‘I think I Can!’

And as the Little Blue Engine finally completes this task, he headed down the very steep hill saying ‘I knew I Could’ ‘I knew I Could’!

Hope you have a smile on your face from the wonderful memory of the book ‘The Little Engine That Could’ or the ‘Little Blue Engine’.

Micah 5:2 says ‘But you, O Bethlehem, are only a small village among all the people of Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel, whose origins are in the distant past, will come from you on my behalf.’

The lesson here is not to be overlook – from smaller things comes great joy! We cannot ignore this message in the weeks that will follow because we can do great things as well!

Bethlehem was a tiny and seemingly insignificant village. And when the prophet Micah prophesized hundreds of years before Jesus' birth that out of Bethlehem would come a ruler over Israel. This truly would seem like a far-fetched notion!

Let each of us think of an insignificant village or town... Can you hear a prophet saying that in the future, near or far away, that a ruler will come from this insignificant village or town? What is your reaction?

The town that comes to my mind is South Williamsport! Nothing good ever came out of South Williamsport! That town is located across the Susquehanna River from Williamsport. It was the home of people that we called 'River Rats'. I took great proud to travel across the river and play some of their young people on a playground – basketball – and bet them!

The other town I thought of was not a town that I had ill feelings toward but it was a town that people in the church I served for 20 years HATED – Benton PA. The people in Millville PA, just 20 miles from Benton. Hated the Benton Tigers! They hated their High School soccer teams, basketball teams, and baseball teams. Millville people took great pride in beating their teams and when I was there, we did this quite often! When we won both home and away soccer games with Benton, we would get the 'Cider Jug' and parade around the soccer field carrying the jug. The joy the Millville Soccer players had to stand in front of the Benton side of the field and hold this jug up high. In fact, one of our fans would not travel to Benton to watch a game because he did not want to give that town a single penny of his money!

We see time and time again that in God's world, God chooses the small and unimportant things for his great purposes. And that is just what he did with the tiny town of Bethlehem. Out of this overlooked and unassuming village came the King of Kings, came the Messiah!

God chooses to use the small, the weak, and the unimportant to do his perfect will!

In our second scripture reading from the Book of Zechariah we are told that God loves Israel, but when he asked them what he was worth, they said 'we paid you thirty pieces of silver.' This was the price of a slave. This is what the master must have reimbursed someone if their slave was accidentally killed.

God was insulted to be offered the lowest possible value. God must have wondered – look at the handsome price at which they value me! God said this sarcastically and he had Zechariah throw the money away!

Jesus also understands! He was not merely betrayed by his disciples and friends, he also was betrayed by contempt. The Jewish leaders despised Jesus so they offered Judas thirty pieces of silver – the lowest price you could put on a person – and Judas took it! Judas thought so little of Jesus that he sold him for nearly nothing!

What price do you put on your faith in Christ? Do you take the bare minimum for Jesus?

So today let us remember that the Little Blue Engine thought he could and he did it! Let us do the same – Let us think we can serve Jesus Christ fully through the ministry of the BBCC (DOC)! And let us think about what price we put on our faith in Jesus Christ.

Let us pray:

O God, show us how you want to work through our lives. May we accomplish great things for your kingdom. May we say – We think we can!

And may we put a great value on your presence in our life!

AMEN.