

I'm not going to pretend to be a fan of country music. The only time that I listen to country music is when I get in the car of one of my two daughters and music starts blaring out of their car radio that is obviously country music. I don't know where they grew to appreciate country music because it did not come from me.

But I do occasionally come across a country music song that seems to speak to a specific occasion. This song by Rodney Adkins seems to be appropriate for today for a couple of different reasons. So let's watch the music video to the song entitled "I'm watching you Dad."

### **Show video clip of song "I'm Watching You Dad"**

This clip is a marvelous clip to watch on this day that our country celebrates fatherhood. Here we have a dad who celebrates the relationship that he has with his son. But in the song the Dad comes to recognize that what he does is being watched by his son.

So when the son spills his food on the floor and yells a cuss word and the Dad is then told by his son that he learned to say this from his Dad then Dad is forced to acknowledge the influence that he has on his son. Good or bad the Dad influences the behavior of his son.

This song recognizes that the little things that we do impact the environment around us. The little actions we do can grow in others to become much bigger actions. Little actions can lead to much bigger actions.

In the two Scriptures we are reading today, we have stories of smallness making big impacts. In the first Scripture that we read the kingdom of God is described by Jesus as being like a mustard seed. The mustard seed is the smallest of seeds but it grows up and becomes the biggest of all of the shrubs.

It does not matter that it starts out very small. Starting out small does not matter. But it is what happens next that counts. And so God's kingdom grows from the smallest and becomes bigger and bigger and bigger.

But this small mustard seed is important because as it grows into a giant mustard plant it then provides the shade so that birds are able to make nests. This small mustard seed allows for life to continue and prosper.

The second Scripture we are going to read is the story of David and Goliath.

**Read I Samuel 17 from The Message. Include the following info as I read the story:**

Between the mountains is a wadi which is a dry river bed. Having been in Israel I got to see these dry river beds in several locations. I always found it humorous that we would be traveling along a dry desert road and then you would see a sign that says, "Watch for flooding." The place was completely dry but flash floods would occur when torrential rains would happen.

And the result of these torrential rains was that the rain waters would push small rocks into the valleys between the desert mountains. Pebbles like these that I hold up. These pebbles come from the actual wadi or dry river bed where the so called battle between David and Goliath was said to have taken place.

Goliath is described as being about 8 or 9 feet tall but the assumption is that this is an exaggeration. We are probably talking about a big and robust 7 footer.

Goliath taunts for 40 days. 40 days is an interesting number. The number 40 in the Bible usually comes to symbolize a period of completion.

Confusing part of this story is at the end when Saul does not seem to know who David is even though in what we read last week we say that Saul chose David to be the king. This is a sign that we have two different writers who are contributing to the stories found in I Samuel and there is not a desire to try to make them fit together by biblical translators.

In both of these stories, God uses something small to make a big impact. When we reflect on the massacre in Charleston, something that becomes obvious is that the shooter Dylann Roof was influenced by the culture around him. In the news reports Dylann was living in the community of Lower Richland outside of Columbia. I grew up in that same community of Lower Richland.

And Dylann grew up in a culture where racist language was allowed. I know that culture because I grew up in Lower Richland. I shopped and ate in Mr. Bunky's in Eastover just like him. I know the jokes shared and I know the attitudes expressed. I know the flags that were on student's jackets and cars. It's what I grew up around.

But I am thankful on this Father's Day for a Father and a Mother who did not share those subtle attitudes in the things they said. I am thankful for a Dad that in 1972 decided to run for school board in order to make integration work. He lost badly in 1972 and former friends became his political enemies.

But that did not stop him for continuing his journey that led him to being elected to the school board 2 years later and working to bring about as peaceful of a transition into racial integration as seemed possible in that area of South Carolina.

The words that we say and the attitudes that we express do make a difference. So what is the mustard seed that we want to grow into a big shrub?

Do we want our attitudes and bigotry against people who look different and worship different and who may love someone different be the seed that grows into something bigger? Or do we want a seed to grow where we express love and a willingness to accept people into our lives and culture?

What tiny seed do you want to grow through you?

The little things and actions we do make a difference.

I hope and pray that we are planting those little seeds that reflect the kingdom of God rather than any other kingdom that may try to take root in our world. AMEN.

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-Text: I Samuel 17 and Mark 4:26-34

-Given: June 21, 2015 in Allison Creek Presbyterian (York, SC)