

A Mustard Seed

By Angela Melinda, Romania

My family lives in a small town where everyone knows each other, at least by sight. My best friend and I were the town's only hippies, considered crazy because we always tried to be different, no matter what people thought.



Jesus asked, "How can I describe the Kingdom of God? It is like a tiny mustard seed! Though this is one of the smallest of seeds, yet it grows to become one of the largest of plants, with long branches where birds can build their nests and be sheltered." (Mark 4:30-31 TLB)

When I received Jesus as my Savior, I changed. All I wanted to do was serve Jesus by telling other people how they could have His love too. I took some time to explain this to my relatives, as some of them worked for the police and could have caused me a lot of problems if they did not understand my new life.

One uncle who is on the police force didn't like me because I had been a hippie. He is a former communist and a morose, strict man—very hard to talk to. He spoke against me to my parents and threatened me over the phone, so I

started to fear and avoid him. He was the last person I expected to understand this new part of my life. But three years ago something happened that completely broke his heart.

My uncle and his wife were in an auto accident. She died on the spot, in his arms. He had been driving, and almost lost his job on the police force because of it. He was in shock and felt very guilty. He never drove again. For the next two years he was a horrible father to his 16- and 18-year-old children, cursing and beating them.

Then in March of 2002, he suddenly got very sick. He couldn't walk or even stand on his feet anymore. No doctor could help him because they had no idea what was wrong. He became even nastier and blamed everything on his children.

He came to spend a few months in a hospital in the city where I was living and working with other members of The Family. Because I was his only relative in the city, I began visiting him out of duty, but as rarely as possible. It was then that I realized the desperate situation he was in, but I was still afraid of him. His tough attitude and the fact that he rejected any comfort I or anyone else tried to show him didn't help matters.

For four months he mocked God. His condition worsened to the point that he was unable to eat. He broke his right arm and developed tumors on his lungs. He was completely without hope.

At this time, the Lord showed me that my uncle was at last ready to receive Him, and that it was time for me to talk with him about Jesus' personal love for him. I felt like Jonah when God sent him to the city of Nineveh to deliver what Jonah expected to be a *very* unpopular message—I didn't want to do it! Still, I felt compelled by the Lord to try, and so prayed for wisdom and more faith.

I asked the Lord to fulfill His promise in Matthew 10:20, which says, "It is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you." So I went to the hospital. My cousin was also there, helping my uncle.

The Lord made it easy for me that day. My uncle was bedridden and in horrible pain. He had big bleed-

ing wounds all over his body, a side effect of some of the strong medication he was on. He didn't have his tough mask on that day, but admitted that he was helpless.

I started by telling him how the Lord had helped me in my hardest times, when I had had nobody else to turn to. I went on and on, and because he was just listening, I told him that Jesus wanted to work in his life, and was trying to get to him through his sickness. But because he was resisting the Lord's Spirit, his situation was getting worse and worse.

Jesus wanted to first heal his soul, I explained. After he got his heart right with the Lord, He would heal his body. My uncle listened quietly to everything I said, only asking every once in a while, "Do you really think so?"

He was so responsive and respectful of everything I said that it seemed unbelievable to me. The Lord even helped me give him loving correction for how badly he had treated his children. I thought maybe I had said too much, but he just nodded.

I struggled to have the courage and

enough faith to pray with him, but the Lord helped me. I took his hand, and both my uncle and his son (who overheard all this) prayed to receive Jesus. We then asked the Lord for my uncle's healing, also. My uncle prayed from his heart, in desperation, and kept his eyes closed after we had finished. For the next three minutes or so, I felt embarrassed and didn't know what to do or say. But when my uncle looked up, he thanked me through tears.

As soon as he received Jesus as his Savior, my uncle's condition started to improve. He felt better, and began to read the Bible and other inspirational materials I gave him. He now says that Jesus healed him in answer to our prayers, with no help from the doctors. He is still weak, but making good progress—and he behaves much better with his children. We all thank the Lord for what He has done for him!

I also learned a lesson from this: Even when I feel I don't have enough faith to do something the Lord wants me to do, I shouldn't let my own feelings overwhelm me, but trust the Lord and let Him do it through me. The Word says that with faith as a mustard seed you can move mountains (Matthew 17:20). I felt my faith was even smaller than a mustard seed, but with that the Lord changed a whole universe—my uncle's universe.

Our greatest need is love, and love is God's great answer.

People's hearts are the same the world over: Everybody needs love. Most people are searching for real love, but can't find it. They know it must exist, they hunger for it, they need it, but so many of them can't find it because they don't find God. It's so sad!

But whenever people have problems, God also has answers, and in this case it's such a simple answer—love! Love is the key, love is the answer, and Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14:6). He's the only way they'll ever find love, joy, peace, and heavenly happiness, both here and now and in the life to come.

(Prayer:) Help us, Jesus, to be faithful to show Your love to others, to encourage and help them, to heal them and lift them by giving them the message of Your love that has the power to solve all their problems and heal their bodies, minds, and spirits. Thank You for giving us the opportunity to help others by giving them Your answer, and it's such a simple answer, Jesus—just You and Your love!

—David Brandt Berg

If you'd like more inspirational material, subscribe to Activated! Contact the address on this sheet, or visit www.activated.org.