

## Oh, the Places Christians Will Go

This is the last of the Dr. Seuss books that he wrote.

Many teachers read this book to their graduates each year to wish them well.

As you look at this story, you will look at the similarities drawn from his story and a New Testament figure known as Paul.

- Paul means “small, a child of faith, the very least of the saints.”
- At the beginning of the book, our person is told by the narrator to get moving, to get on his way, and he heads out.
- Paul – when he converts to Christianity, is immediately informed that is to also move along and minister to the Gentiles (Ephesians 3:8-10).

But let’s go back to the beginning of the book. The narrator starts off by congratulating the man in the book. For what we have no idea. All we know is that something very new and promising has happened in a person’s life, and now that person is really going to go places.

Where is he going? It is not clearly defined but he is going to travel though a wide variety of colorful places and finds himself in different situations – some exhilarating, some depressing, and some downright frightening.

The man in the book and Paul are both on a mission. The mission for the man in the book is a bit unclear but he is to go to all kinds of places, safe or unsafe, fun or scary, and some places that no one would want to go to.

- What is the mission of the man in the book?
- What is the mission of Paul in the Bible?
- What is your mission in life?
  - To have a mission, to have a purpose and not just an average purpose but a great mission is hard to understand at times.
  - And our mission in life may be different in “worldly terms” and spiritual terms.

Paul makes it clear that the mission he is on is also the mission of the entire church: “Bring the Good News of Christ to everyone and for all people to hear about God’s plan for them.” (Eph. 3:10)

- That is the mission of the saints and the mission of all Christians.
- The mission is the message of Christ!
- And here is the expectation for us now: Go now! Do what you can now! Even if it takes us to places out of the way.
  - Now out of the way places doesn’t mean we have to go to far away places but places in our own community and part of the world.
  - Out of the way places could be places that just are not very comfortable for us to share the Good News (with friends, people we don’t know, school, other activities that are not church related).

- So, Paul and his lookalike become travelers. They start going places. And as soon as they do, they have some sufferings.
  - The little man goes to some really tough places. Places that aren't really fun compared to some other places.
  - Paul spends countless times in jail, is constantly being persecuted for his new-found faith, questioned about his faith, and often faced serious physical issues.
- Dr. Seuss expresses this "good news" by saying that things can happen even "to people as brainy and footsy as you."
  - But we shouldn't worry, he continues, because eventually, "*you'll* start happening too."
  - Or as God said to Paul, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." (2 Corinthians 12:9)

We know what the mission of Paul was but what is the mission of the little man in our story?

- To move mountains
  - Your mountain is waiting. So...*get on your way!*
- Where does moving mountains come from?
  - It comes from Jesus when he presented this startling image in Matthew 17:20:
    - "If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, "Move from here to there," and it will move.
- What does Jesus mean by "moving mountains?"
  - Not a literal image
  - Jesus uses it as a metaphor.
- The best way to interpret this passage is by using other passages in the New Testament.
  - Jesus talked often about the heavy burdens people carry around with them if they don't follow Jesus.
    - "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28
  - Take our burdens that bother us and toss them off and give them to Jesus
  - Jesus could take our mountains (burdens) move.
  - Jesus also encourages us to not be like the pharisees and scribes and tie up our burdens and place them on others and not lift a finger to move them (Matthew 23:2,4)

When Jesus said that faith could move mountains, he was no more talking about a merely physical reality than we are when we say, "He has the weight of the world on his shoulders."

- Jesus was/is primarily concerned about spiritual things not physical things.
- Likewise, the job of the little man in the book is to move mountains
  - But it won't be easy
    - Bang-ups and hang ups can happen to you.
    - Games you can't win 'cause you'll play against you.

All Christians are on a mission that is the only mission that finally can never fail – the mission of moving mountains for Christ:

- “And to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages by God who created all things.” (Ephesians 3:9)

What is the hidden mystery? What is this “secret” that we are suppose to reveal?

- Paul tells us what the secret is:
  - God has made known to us his secret purpose in accordance with the plan which he determined beforehand in Christ, to be put into effect when the time was ripe; namely, that the universe, everything in heaven and on earth, might be brought into a unity in Christ.” Ephesians 1:9-10
- How do you reveal this mystery?
- What are things you can do to reveal the mystery?

You’re off to great places!

Today is your day!

Your mountain is waiting.

So...*get on your way!*

And oh the places you’ll go! Allow God to lead you during the journey.