Now Habukuk would not accept the silence and so he said, "I will stand at my watch and station myself on the ramparts; I will look to see what he will say to me, and what answer I am to give to this complaint."

Then the Lord answered, "Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it. For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it will certainly come and will not delay. See, he is puffed up and his desires are not upright— but **he** the righteous will live by his faith.

**Jesus** answered: the righteous will live by his faith, yet God's answer.

Jesus said, If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea' and it will obey you.

Imagine it, trees popping up out of the ground like popcorn in hot oil and dancing over into Lake Erie and standing up straight in rows. **If we had** even the smallest amount of faith, Jesus says, we could do it. Oaks and Maples whose roots have grasped the earth for a century or more, suddenly letting go and by faith transported to grow where they have never grown before.

**With just that much faith would wars cease?** With faith as small as a grain of mustard seed would the hungry be fed, the homeless housed, the unemployed employed? **IF THERE WERE JUST THAT MUCH FAITH IN THE** church, could the people of God actually live together in peace and harmony?

But I have never seen a tree take flight, have you? Not even a little twig of a tree have I seen uprooted by faith. Still, we give money to feed hungry people, always there are more who are hungry. And though we use our votes and our time and talents to see the homeless are housed and the unemployed employed, before we can turn around the problems have become worse once again. And in the church, from the very beginning until now there have been troubles and conflict, people hurting people.
If your brother sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, "I repent" forgive him.

These were the words that led the disciples to ask for more faith. Forgive for every sin, forgiveness. Jesus said, "Forgive and they said, because of faith!"

There is no clearer command of God. Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us, we were taught by Jesus to pray. He also said, If you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive you your trespasses.

Yet again and again and again I have heard Christians say, I can't forgive I will never forgive. If she was really a Christian she could not have done that. No Pastor, I cannot forgive.

It is no wonder the disciples asked for more faith, they needed more and so do we. We need faith enough to forgive.

With even the smallest faith, Jesus said, trees will take their flight. But what about forgiveness.

Well, it is the mark of the Christian faith, to be forgiven, to forgive. Truly the Christian faith is not about being Good. Christ did not need to love others well so that people could know right from wrong. Pagans and atheists know as much about being good as do Christians. And often are able to do it just as well. As St. Paul makes so clear in the letter to the Galations. Christ did not need to die so that people could be saved by the law, he died so that we might be forgiven.

Forgiveness in Jesus Christ is the power of God. What he could never do through a flood that wiped out a whole world, God is doing through forgiveness. What he could not accomplish through plagues and marching aries and the law, God is doing through the forgiveness in Jesus Christ. For forgiveness means a new beginning, a fresh start.

God forgives you and there is no past to bind and chain you. God forgives you and the tree that is your life is torn free from every failing
and given flight. Each new day is truly a new day, through the forgiveness that comes in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Yet still we confess, I do not have it in me to forgive.

Now let me assure you, that is true. We do not have it in us to forgive. We do not have it in us to believe. Only God can make believer and forgivers out of us.

Luther says it in the catechism, "I believe that I cannot by my own understanding or effort beleive in Jesus Christ my Lord or Come to him. But the Holy Spirit has call me with through the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts and sanctified and kept me in the true Christian faith.

We miss the point over and over again, we think that God has only brought the finished products together to be his church. The truth is that we are the rough boards, the unshaped pieces that he has brought together to shape and mold. We are baptized not because God has made something out of us, but because God intends to make something out of us.

So when you do not find it in your power to believe, to have faith, this, God will provide faith sufficient. When the mountain is too tall, the path too steep for your power and strength, know that God will provide sufficient power and strength. When you are not able to find in you to forgive, then know that what is impossible for you, is yet possible for God.

Who will he do it? Through the means of grace, His holy word, his sacraments. As you hear his word, as you share in his supper the faith and forgiveness that are beyond us, are given to us. Christ is given to us, and we are made new.

It is a small thing to make trees fly, compared to what God has promised to do here, in our midst. He promises to make believers out of us, to grant us grace to forgive what we never thought could be forgiven, to make us new. Know that he will do it. Amen.