

## IF ONLY

Pastor Don talked about If only and Next time in his sermon last Sunday. I thought about all the times I had said, "If only." When I was a teenager "If only" was in my thoughts daily, if only I could afford college, if only I were not so skinny, if only I did not have to juggle babysitting, working late nights at the theater, homework, and if only I had more time for fun. Then I made decisions that I could fit into my juggling act. Then I did get into Nurse's Training, and I found out what juggling was really about with a 40-hour class week, more homework, and no money. But I had a secret weapon. I had a mustard seed and a bulletin with a picture of Jesus on the front with hands outstretched and the words, "Come unto me all ye who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28). I looked at the pictures of the previous graduates lining the hallway in the Education Building and realized how many had made it and knew that God would get me through. Many did not make it through, and they had more than I. I baby sat for the Doctors, the interns and Residents who had children and earned a few dollars, enough to go to an occasional movie or out for a hamburger. I did this until later in my second year when we were allowed to work in the hospital one day a week for pay in addition to our normal 5 days. In our third year we received 2 weeks' vacation and when I wanted to work all 14 days, I was told I had to take at least 2 days off. With that money and the money, I earned at other times, I bought some clothes and my first ever new coat and still saved most of it. Nurses Training introduced me to so many things. We were taken to the Art Museum the first week and then the Director of Nursing was on the Board of the Masonic Temple, and we could sign up for tickets to Ballets and Classical Concerts. The Director treated us to a private concert by a Violinist who played "Flight of the Bumblebee" and I developed a love of classical music. I look back at those times now and there is no longer any If only from that time but only gratefulness for a God who answered prayers and made me stronger.

Matthew 17:20-21 I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed you can say to this mountain, move from here to there, and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.

Dear Lord, be with us this day, help us to be kinder, more reassuring, more giving. Be with those who are ill, those going through difficult times, may they feel and know you are always there, just a prayer away. Be with those who grieve, whose losses seem overwhelming, comfort them and may they know others love and care for them. Be with our church, may we truly be the hands and feet of Christ, be with our Pastor and bless him and all he does. Bless his ministry and be with his family. Be with our staff and leaders give them strength for the day and vision for tomorrow. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen

Grace Epperson