



## “A Little Jesus Goes a Long Way”

1 John 4:1-9

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Dear friends in Christ,

Do you have a little faith? Do you know very little about Jesus? Do you have very little to say about Jesus? Take heart, you have overcome the world because greater is Jesus in you than the he that is in the world. He that is in the world means all of the people and groups of people that are against Jesus. He that is in the world are those who are false prophets. Those false prophets are easy to spot because they don't believe in Jesus. And the one who stands directly against us and against Jesus is called the antichrist.

The antichrist is not just one person, he is simply anyone who stands opposed to the truth about Jesus. Right here in 1 John we have all the tools we need to identify the enemy, and then destroy him.

As little Christians we can compare ourselves to David verses Goliath. The Goliaths of this world are trying to get in the way of us being with Jesus. These big bullies are trying to stop us from hearing about Jesus. These big bullies are trying to squash our



faith. Like that little stone in David’s sling, our little faith can do a lot of damage against the things that challenge our faith.

Jesus said faith like a mustard seed can move mountains Matthew 17:20, and you could command bushes to get up and plant themselves in a ocean Luke 17:6. We are like little Jesus’s to others. We are little stories of redemption. Jesus saved each one of us in a way that reveals a little bit of Jesus to others.

The title of this sermon, “A little Jesus goes a long way” does hold true in the sense that a little leaven works in the dough. But the statement “A little Jesus goes a long way” has a much larger meaning in the context of today’s reading from 1 John 4.

Luther puts it well in the context of the mighty fortress hymn. “One little Word will fell him.” That means one little Word spoken by us defeats the devil himself.

If we think about Jesus, he did very small things that made a large impact. Overall he didn’t do that many healings when you consider all the sick people all over the world. Overall he only spoke directly to a handful of men, and even if we include all his preaching it was to a relatively small amount of people over the course of history.



Yet his work of redemption went a long way, one death, one crucifixion paid for the sins of the world in the present, past, and future. This one story of redemption cured the world of sin. This one act opened the way to eternal life.

Little antichrists challenge this redemption story. They would tell you, like false prophets, Jesus isn't real. They would tell you that Jesus was never born. They would tell you that Jesus doesn't exist.

When we hear this, we should quickly be able to identify the lie. Even most historians agree Jesus existed and walked this earth. And if he was here, he died, and if he died, he rose from the dead, and if he rose to life, then he can live in you and me. And if he lives in you and me, then we have the power to stand up against Satan and all his minions.

Remember when I said we are little redemption stories. People in today's world generally don't care about church. They generally don't care for organized religion. They generally don't trust the church and wonder whether the church is just and ancient hokey religion. The movie character Indiana Jones makes similar kinds of statements as he is presented with spiritual questions.



The story of Indiana Jones is a parallel of the times we live in. His father is a strong believer in Jesus, but Indiana remains skeptical until the climax of every movie. First, he is saved from the wrath of God blazing forth from the ark of the covenant. Then he conquers demons in the Temple of Doom. Then he witnesses first hand faith and healing found in Jesus.

Each movie is another redemption story. In fact many movies hold the plot together through redemption themes. Indiana Jones and the Crystal skull on the other hand, no strong redemptive story equals bad movie, which also equals a story far from reality. People today, even you and me, start listening and watching when we hear and see redemption stories. It means something more than words.

You and I know that our lives are not made up stories. Our lives are real and Jesus redemption is real. We were all lost and then found. We all like sheep have gone astray, and each sought to go our own way. But Jesus reached in and entered our hearts and won us back. He bought us back with his blood and life. Now, with sins forgiven, we are redeemed and given eternal life. No amount of lies from antichrists can go up against our changed lives.



Jim Elliot, along with four of his missionary colleagues was killed on January 8, 1956 while trying to establish contact with the Auca Indians in Ecuador (now known as the Waodani people). Jim Elliot, Nate Saint, Ed McCully, Pete Flemming and Roger Youderian had been working to make friendly contact with the Auca tribe which they had seen from the air. Though they had only met one tribesman face to face, they had participated in trades with the Auca from a plane to ground system. When Elliot and his friends landed on a river beach on that fateful January day they were slaughtered by the waiting men. Their deaths were not in vain though. The widows continued to try and make peaceful contact and eventually won the hearts of the tribe. These widows were willing to risk their lives because they knew the redemption stories of their very own husbands. The little testimony of these women took very few words as soon as the tribe understood that someone died so they would be saved.

Real redemption stories like these retold in the movie “The End of the Spear” are the kind of stories that dwarf any kind of lies told to us by antichrists. And when these true stories are told and our own stories are lived out, we will not only defeat the antichrists, we could even win them over to Jesus. Amen

