

Sin has caused a breach in our lives. This is where we begin today. This is where we begin in this season. This is where we begin in our Christian faith. Sin has caused a breach in our lives. It is a breach that has separated us from the desired covenant relationship with God, an interconnected- dependent-righteous relationship.

And our response to this breach? They are often outsized and performative actions. Author and podcaster Kendra Adachi coins a term useful to us in the Lenten season: “big black trash bag energy.” Determined to reform our lives (albeit overzealously), so many of us barge into Lent with a sort of bullish energy. We are ready to make big shifts and lasting changes! Aiming to construct new habits or de-activate old ones, our spiritual senses are on high-alert as we seek to strip our lives of that which might get in the way of holy living. Rather than appreciating the slow and steady work of lasting change, it seems easier at times to chuck all our worn-out ways of being and start again from the ground up. “Blow it up and start up.” Get as many big black trash bags as you can find and start stuffing.

This sort of radical cleansing many of us seek is not only self-abasing, but counterproductive in the grand scheme of personal transformation.

What if, instead, we focused on tiny things, the next right step, and embrace micro-movements of faith? What is the smallest step that I can take, today, to move closer to God’s love? What is the micro-movement of the Spirit that might be stirring in me that can nudge the needle away from self-centeredness and toward a more complete compassion?

Bigger is better, the accumulation of wealth is to be prized and prioritized over and above the needs of communities and people. Far too often, even our altruistic pursuits mimic this sort of “growth at all costs” mentality, and we fail, repeatedly, to explore what the smallest next step toward interconnectedness might be.

“Growth for the sake of growth is the ideology of the cancer cell” declared ecological philosopher Edward Abbey. We are prone to miss the forest for the trees if our goals for spiritual and relational transformation don’t begin with the minimum viable first action toward repentance and reconciliation. The God of our belief, revealed in the still small voice, the faith of a mustard seed, and the person of Jesus who invites the little ones to

come unto him, is a God who seeks our repentance. Repentance, I would argue, can be a tiny thing, a micro-movement towards wholeness.

Can our churches and communities be holdouts of minimum viability in a cultural milieu that suggests more is always better? Can our quests for transformation begin not with self-berating but with a sort of humble openness to one another and to the possibility of tiny actions being transformative over time? Can our belonging within the Body of Christ equip us to reject the politics of disposability, and can it inspire us toward the impulse to see one another as co-laborers in the field rather than competition for scarce resources? If we live in this season as though tiny things matter and small is beautiful, what kind of spiritual transformation might take place?

Our lives of discipleship come to life when we stop seeing big change and seismic shifts as the goal and begin to see that what is done in a small way with great love is perhaps the most noble action of all. “A million tiny raindrops make the river high.” Micro-movements of wholeness overtime, accumulate and compound to produce a life of sturdy discipleship.

“I never knew how much I liked tiny things, til I say a ladybug sittin on a jellybean. Yesterday a little baby winked at me, she had this tiny spoon, she was eatin tiny peas. A million tiny raindrops make the river high, so tiny things are mighty things. I guess that’s why, I like tiny things.”

-“Tiny Things” by the band Cody

In this season, you have my permission to rid yourself of the pressure to do and be all things, and instead to embrace the micro-moments that pave the way for true and lasting reconciliation, in Jesus’ name.