

Sing:

I'm Popeye the sailor man

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I fighths to the finnich

Cause I eats me spinach

I'm Popeye the sailor man

Spinach the original food of champions! Eat it right from the can and voila! Instant muscles, stamina, & strength “Look out Brutus. I’ll saves ya Olive!”

Then, came *Wheaties* -the breakfast of champions. With athletes on the box covers, promising us that with a bowl of cereal, we too could realize our dreams of Olympic Gold

And soon we find ourselves ever in pursuit of that food or that drink that is going to give us the strength just to make it through the day. Never mind fighting bullies or winning metals. We just want the energy to be all that we can be and do all that we can do-**today**. Never mind tomorrow!

So now, coffee “bars” have sprung up on every corner of America. Dunkin Donuts tells us that “America runs on Dunkin” and we’re glad to oblige. More than \$70 billion worth of coffee is sold every year, according to the International Coffee Organization. In the U.S. alone—which is the world’s largest coffee consumer — retail sales are \$19.2 billion. With more flavors than ice cream, lattes and espressos have become the blood of America.

Until now. Enter the energy drink. The real adrenal buzz now comes in a can. And a small can at that.

Need to fly through that midterm? Crack open a “*Red Bull*” It gives you wings!
Drained after a long night? Get back on track and be a “*Rockstar*”. Got a big project to tackle? “*Monster Energy*” is the drink of champions. Look out Coca-Cola.

Bigger and faster is better, right? And now energy drinks have become the fastest growing segment of the soft-drink market with sales going from a mere \$12 million in 1997 to \$1 billion this year.

Fighting exhaustion?
Fighting hopelessness and despair?
Fighting to keep up with your life?

There’s a real appeal to the thought that gulping down a can of “*Red Bull*” or a double espresso can turn you from a tired wimp to a superhero. It can improve your performance. Increase your concentration and reaction speed. Improve vigilance. Improve emotional status. And stimulate metabolism. That’s right – you can lose weight too!

Whatever the situation, whether trying to get through the stresses of our job, keeping track of our kids lives, facing a project or job presentation, or battling a “Brutus”, there is a deep sadness and

bone tiredness in most working American and the cry goes out from the tired and the fragile among us, “Just gimme the juice!” A sound very similar to the cry of the disciples to Jesus, “increase our faith!”

The persistence and energy it takes to love our neighbor, to care for the hungry and homeless, to do the right thing, and to forgive even the repeat offender is daunting. It’s no wonder the disciples, hearing Jesus’ commands, feel less than equipped. How can they ever be who he needs them to be? “Please”, they cry “increase our faith!”

I don’t think there’s a person in this sanctuary who has not had one of those moments. A moment when life seemed so daunting, when the weight upon our shoulders could not help but bring us to our knees and with fear and trembling we wondered how we’d ever make it through. Do any of us actually believe we have the faith we need?

I’d be surprised to learn if we did. Faith is like the elusive butterfly. We have it and then we don’t. We feel strong and then we feel weak. We have a full tank of God’s fuel and soon we’re running on empty. Easily depleted by life’s demands and crisis’s, faith needs to be refilled regularly.

The question is how much is enough? How much do we have to muster up? How hard do we have to work? How much do we actually have to have so that God will hear us and come? How much juice do we need to be worthy of God’s mercy and action in our lives?

“O ye of little faith,” we hear Jesus say when Peter cannot walk on the water.

“O ye of little faith,” we hear him say when the storm tosses the boat to and fro and the disciples get really scared.

“O ye of little faith,” he says when the disciples worry about the little things.

“Consider the lilies of the field,” he says

But then again – “Your faith has made you well,” he proclaims to the crippled woman. Your faith has made you well,” he says to the blind and the lame. Faith is the answer without a doubt, but the question remains, is it the regular or the super size? How much faith we need for God to help us, we wonder.

“A Mustard Seed Size,” he says. That’s it. That’s more than enough.

The tiniest of all seeds is the *only size* we need?

But, but there is just not enough time to do it all.

Not enough money

Not enough help

Not enough love

We just don’t seem to be or have enough and we are running on empty, pumping a dry well, reaching for the next cup of coffee or energized drink, trying to muster up the physical and emotional energy to make it through the day, and keep our exhaustion at bay. “We can’t do it all,” we cry “We can’t do it all,” the disciples cried.

“It’s okay,” Jesus says. Even a little faith is enough. Even a little faith can cause a mulberry tree, a shrub known for its deep and entangled roots, to be uprooted and planted in the sea. A mustard seed, a mulberry tree? Impossible? Absurd? That’s the point. The tiniest of seeds can grow with steady nurture, the right conditions, rich soil, water and light, and patience, into true faith.

What are the daunting tasks of our lives? What puts us over the edge and into a downward spiral? Here’s the good news. The more daunting the task, the more weak we feel., the more God can work in us and through us if we’ll just have that little itchy bitsy drop of faith. Faith is not about our ability to get the job done, but God’s ability to do the job through us. We don’t have to beat ourselves up and drag ourselves around. We don’t have to worry that we are worthless or not strong enough. We don’t have to fret that we don’t have enough faith to make God hear us, or love us, or save us. We don’t need a super sized faith, just our regular size is faith enough. Because with God even a tiny seed of faith makes all things possible.

Faith is about God’s ability, not our own. Isn’t that a relief? I am so grateful knowing that. It’s not all up to me. It’s not all up to you. God is not looking for adrenaline fueled superstars of faith. God is looking for servants who will do the simple stuff with humility and love. All it takes is a little, just a little bit of faith.

Thank God!