

**Title:** Lord, Overcome My Unbelief

**Passage:** Mark 9:14-29

**Context of Passage:**

Transfiguration of Jesus occurred

Second stage of Jesus' ministry towards Jerusalem

**Passage:** Mark 9:14-29

And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and scribes arguing with them. And immediately all the crowd, when they saw him, were greatly amazed and ran up to him and greeted him. And he asked them, "What are you arguing about with them?" And someone from the crowd answered him, "Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a spirit that makes him mute. And whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able." And he answered them, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me." And they brought the boy to him. And when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. And Jesus asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." And Jesus said to him, "'If you can! All things are possible for one who believes.'" Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!" And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again." And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" And he said to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer."

**Introduction**

"Have Faith"

- What does this mean?
- Answer: this means everything as what/who you place your faith determines/reflects your destiny.

What is faith?

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Hebrews 11:6

And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

- Christian faith is anchored in the Bible and all of history

- It is the most reasonable faith of all (not blind or wishful thinking)

### **Context of Passage:**

Before: Disciples had been seeing a lot of miracles by sight.

- Here, a turning point as Jesus pivots towards Jerusalem that will culminate with His crucifixion and resurrection and ascension
- Jesus began teaching about what it means to have faith and do things by prayer

Preceding incident: Transfiguration of Jesus

- disciples see Jesus in a new light that they haven't seen previously

Mark 9:2-3

And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them.

- OT connection: Moses was on the mountaintop and later comes down with Israel worshipping idols/step in debauchery
- Mountaintop followed with a valley
  - Jesus Transfiguration followed into world broken with sin

Connect:

- When in the valley, have faith in God who is always in control and loves you.

Romans 8:28

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

2 Chronicles 16:9

For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him. You have done foolishly in this, for from now on you will have wars."

## **Exposition**

### **Overview: Scenes in Passage**

- I. Demon possession (v.14-18)
- II. Desperate plea by father (v. 19-24)
- III. Divine power of Jesus (v. 25-27)
- IV. Importance of dependent prayer (v. 28-29)

### **I. Demon Possession (v.14-18)**

Mark 9:14-18

And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and scribes arguing with them. And immediately all the crowd, when they saw him, were greatly amazed and ran up to him and greeted him. And he asked them, "What are you arguing about with them?" And someone from the crowd answered him, "Teacher, I

brought my son to you, for he has a spirit that makes him mute. And whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able."

Condition: demon possession

- young man may have been suffering by epilepsy but frailty was being taken advantage by a demon to torment him.

## II. Desperate Plea of a Father

Mark 9:19-24

And he answered them, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me." And they brought the boy to him. And when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. And Jesus asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." And Jesus said to him, "'If you can! All things are possible for one who believes.'" Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!"

*Jesus response to disciples*

And he answered them, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you?"

- Jesus directed at His disciples in frustration

*Demon's response*

to me." And they brought the boy to him. And when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth.

- demon responded by turning boy into a rage of terror

*Jesus connecting with father*

And Jesus asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?"

- Why ask? Jesus knows all things
- Answer: Jesus is showing compassion and kindness. Building rapport and relationship with the father
- Jesus is interested in the man's life.
- Application: When you pray and come to Jesus, you are coming to the most caring Person of the universe. He cares for you!

*Father's response:*

"From childhood. And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us."

- father had insecurity in situation and with Jesus

### *Jesus' point to faith*

And Jesus said to him, "If you can! All things are possible for one who believes."

- Jesus pointing to importance of faith in Him.
- Note: verse is also falsely manipulated and misunderstood
  - Misperception: "if have enough faith, healing or deliverance will occur. Just have faith."
  - Misperception: whatever you believe can or will happen
- Truth: Trials and suffering are part of God's plan. Does not mean faith is an issue.

2 Corinthians 12:7-9

So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

### *Father's honesty*

Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!"

- God is never limited by imperfect faith.
- The difference is not the quantity of faith but where we place our faith
  - Stay close to God, listening to the promises of God, and leaning towards/in to God.

### **III. Divine power of Jesus (25-27)**

Mark 9:25-27

And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again." And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.

### *Jesus power*

But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.

- arose = resurrection

### **IV. Importance of dependent prayer (28-29)**

Mark 9:28-29

And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" And he said to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer."

### Disciples question

"Why could we not cast it out?"

- focus: we (reliance on own ability, presume God's grace)

Focus of conversation: Necessity of prayer to God

- (not "and fasting" - was improperly added. See Mark 2 as disciples were not to fast while Jesus was here. Misperceives element of human effort and self-control)

Note: What is not referenced

- no specific technique or method.
- Truth: it is about a relationship with God

John 17:3

And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

Key: Prayerful dependence on God

- prayer: aligning our will with the will of God
- We cannot do anything without God's help.

John 15:5

I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

- the only reason we are able to do anything meaningful is because of God's grace.

Colossians 1:17

And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

- presuming God's grace is really unbelief. You rely on yourself rather than on God.

Romans 2:4

Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?

- everything good is by God's mercy

Titus 3:5

he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,

## **Application**

***If not a Christian, re-evaluate where your faith is.***

- We all have faith.
  - Faith in what has happened in the past.
  - Faith in trustworthiness of things (a chair sustaining you, a car working)
- But is faith in the right place? In truth?
  - Christianity is based on facts

***If a parent helplessly watching your child in trial or lost, turn to God***

- God feels for you, cares for you, and wants you to bring your worries to Him.

1 Peter 5:6-7

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

- Faith, however weak (like the father in the passage), if in God - is enough.

***If a Christian and serving in the body of Christ, regularly spend time in prayer.***

James 5:16

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

Ephesians 6:18

praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,

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Psalms 103

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

The Lord works righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed. He made known his ways to Moses, his acts to the people of Israel.

The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him. For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust. As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field; for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more.

But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children, to those who keep his covenant and remember to do his commandments.

The Lord has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all.

Bless the Lord, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his word, obeying the voice of his word!

Bless the Lord, all his hosts, his ministers, who do his will!

Bless the Lord, all his works, in all places of his dominion.

Bless the Lord, O my soul!