

WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

The Boy with the Evil Spirit, Mark 9:14-29

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Mark 9:14-19 And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and scribes arguing with them. ¹⁵ And immediately all the crowd, when they saw him, were greatly amazed and ran up to him and greeted him. ¹⁶ And he asked them, "What are you arguing about with them?" ¹⁷ And someone from the crowd answered him, "Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a spirit that makes him mute. ¹⁸ 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." ¹⁹ 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."

When they came to the disciples...they were not able...O faithless generation (vv. 14-19): Jesus descends from his glory only to find chaos and disorder because of the weak faith of his disciples. This must have been discouraging.

Implied in Jesus' response is that he expected his disciples to be able to operate in enough faith to handle this situation.

How long am I to bear with you? (v. 19): The Jesus of the Bible was not the totally accepting-of-anything Jesus of American culture.

He has a spirit that makes him mute...seizes him, throws him...foams and grinds his teeth...becomes rigid (vv. 17-18): This statement by the father is intended to show the reader the piling-up of the negative effects from the evil one. Romans 1 is another example of this.

Romans 1:21, 24 and 26-28 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²⁴ Therefore **God gave them** over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. ²⁶ Because of this, **God gave them** over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. ²⁷ In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. ²⁸ Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so **God gave them over** to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. ²⁹ They have become filled with every kind of wickedness,...

Mark 9:20-29 So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth. ²¹ Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has he been like this?" "From childhood," he answered. ²² "It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us." ²³ "If you can?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for one who believes." ²⁴ Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!" ²⁵ When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the impure spirit. "You deaf and mute spirit," he said, "I command you, come out of him and never enter him again." ²⁶ The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, "He's dead." ²⁷ But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up. ²⁸ After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, "Why couldn't we drive it out?" ²⁹ He replied, "This kind can come out only by prayer."

Mark 9:29 (NKJV) So He said to them, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting."

Matthew 17:20-21 So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move;

and nothing will be impossible for you. ²¹ However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.”

Say to this mountain, Move... (Matthew 17:20): A mountain in 1st century Jewish culture was a metaphor for huge problems.

If you can? Said Jesus. Everything is possible for one who believes (v. 23): Of course, all things were possible for Jesus (except for logical impossibilities). The challenge here is for the disciple.

This must be understood in light of the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27).

James 4:2-3 Yet you do not have because you do not ask. ³ You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.

“I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!” (v. 24): This is the classic statement of the believer who desires to hold fast to the truth and promises of God and, yet, is subject to difficult circumstances, doubt from the enemy, and emotional ups and downs. We need God’s help even to believe.

Why couldn’t we drive it out?...only by prayer and fasting (vv. 28-29): First, this miracle teaches us that we need the power of God through faith to overcome the devastating effects of the enemy.

The disciples had been careless in their personal lives by neglecting prayer and fasting.

The authority given to the Church is effective only if exercised by faith that is immersed in spiritual discipline and devotion.

Romans 4:19-21 And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah’s womb. ²⁰ He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but **was strengthened in faith**, giving glory to God, ²¹ and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.