



## Prayer Series

### Part 2

January 9, 2022

### The Frustrations of Prayer

Mark 9:14-29, “<sup>14</sup> And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and scribes arguing with them. <sup>15</sup> And immediately all the crowd, when they saw him, were greatly amazed and ran up to him and greeted him. <sup>16</sup> And he asked them, “What are you arguing about with them?” <sup>17</sup> And someone from the crowd answered him, “Teacher, I

brought my son to you, for he has a spirit that makes him mute.<sup>18</sup> 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.”<sup>19</sup> 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.”<sup>20</sup> 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.<sup>21</sup> And Jesus asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?” And he said, “From childhood.”<sup>22</sup> 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.”<sup>23</sup> And Jesus said to him, “‘If you can’! All things are possible for one who believes.”<sup>24</sup> Immediately the father of the child cried out<sup>ld</sup> and said, “I believe; help my unbelief!”<sup>25</sup> 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.”<sup>26</sup> 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.”<sup>27</sup> But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.<sup>28</sup> And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?”<sup>29</sup> And he said to them, “This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.”

May the Lord add His blessing to the reading and the hearing of His Word; Amen.

In Mark 9, we have the transfiguration of Jesus on the mountain with Peter, James and John present and then the trio accompanies Jesus back to a gathering of people with the rest of the disciple's present having to deal with a demonized little boy from whom they cannot seem to cast the demon out of the boy. Through this passage of text, one thing is prevalent. Frustration. It seems that every one is frustrated.

- The Crowd is frustrated in their disbelief
- The Disciples are frustrated because they can't cast the demon out
- The father is frustrated because his son is demonized and cannot get free from this evil spirit
- And Jesus is frustrated due to the faithlessness found amongst the throng people; his disciples included.

I want to draw our attention the irony of this text in light of the text that we read last Sunday. In the Gospel of Saint Luke Chapter 11, the Scripture records, "Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, *that* one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."

It would seem, as I highlighted last Sunday, that the desire of this unnamed disciple could perhaps be due to the frustration of a desire by this simple request of asking the Lord to teach them to pray.

Just as in Luke chapter 11, so we see in Mark chapter 9 that there was something about Jesus' prayer life that caused these men to desire to understand why their prayers had not work. I believe one of the mistakes of our prayer life is we seek to know what we must do to get our prayers answered without seeing the value in having the knowledge of understanding why they do not. Understanding the "why" and the "why not" provides a well rounded view of Scripture and understanding of Faith when it comes to prayer.

To lend to this context of Scripture and to the explaining of my point, imagine the frustration of having a track record, as the disciples did, of being able to cast out devils with ease and without restraint but then all of a sudden, the disciples encounter a situation when it seems that prayer doesn't work.

The Gospel of Saint Luke 10:17-20, "The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!"

<sup>18</sup> And he said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.

<sup>19</sup> Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you.

<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.” Here there is rejoicing over prayer manifesting in power but in our primary passage today, it seems that prayer doesn’t work. So which is it? Does prayer work or not?

Verses 28-29 give us understanding and insight concerning why it did not work. <sup>28</sup> “And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?” <sup>29</sup> And he said to them, “This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.” But this was only one part of the revelation of prayer.

Notice how the frustration of the Disciples drove them to ask for a deeper context of what prayer is. Prayer is more than a means of authority to work miracles or cast out devils. Prayer should be an ever-present moniker in our lives that we are in fellowship with the Father.

Regarding this insight that Christ offers, how often do we find ourselves like the Disciples? And with that said, how often do we find ourselves like the Father noted in this passage of Scripture.

1. Sometimes we are the disciples – Why didn’t it work?

a. We must remember that just because we pray, it does not mean that He will do as we ask and within the framework that we outline.

- i. Could it be that just because He hears, this does not mean that He has to respond.
  - ii. God uses us because we are emotional beings but He is not moved by our feelings. We have to understand that.
  - iii. His decisions are made based upon His Will and Purpose; not our feelings or emotional responses. (Parenting 101)
- b. We must remember that just because we pray, it does not mean that He will answer.
- i. There will be times when your prayers will go unanswered but this does not mean that God does not care.
  - ii. Sometimes his response is a “no” and at other times, it’s a “not yet”.
  - iii. Somethings we prayer for, we are not ready for yet.  
(Expound)
- c. We must remember that just because we pray, it does not mean that things will change.
- i. Could it be that some of the things are not meant to change; we are the ones that it is destined to change in spite of the situation itself not changing.

- ii. Pressure has a way of exposing weaknesses, but more times than not, exposing our strengths. What we are made of.  
(Military Basic Training)
- iii. A seafaring vessel, a ship, is built to not just withstand good weather travel but they are built to withstand the worst sea conditions possible. This is due to one simple truth; storms come.
- iv. Ships are designed to withstand the storm and weather it so long as the storm doesn't find a way into the ship. When the storm finds a way into the ship, the ship wasn't designed for that, and the ship will sink. Why? Was not the ship well built? Yes, it was well built but it was not built to allow the storm on board.
- v. Our faith, our walk with Christ, is likened unto this ship analogy; our faith is designed to weather the difficulties of life so long as we do not allow the difficulties of life to find their way on board our ship.

- vi. I am reminded of a song that I loved since I was as child, that my father used to play on the radio; it was a song sung by a country music artist by the name of Gordon Lightfoot and the name of the song is, “The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald.”
- vii. The song is about an iron ore freighter that was caught in a storm on Lake Superior in the 1970s and ultimately sunk because some of its seals on the hatch covers were not sealing properly and the ship was taking on water during the storm which ultimately lead to its demise. 29 crewmen died that late November night in the cold because the ship was built to weather the storm so long as the storm was not allowed on board; the storm found a way on board and all was lost.
- viii. Church family, no matter what comes. You hear me by the Holy Ghost. No matter how hard things are in our collective futures. No matter what happens; we must not allow the Storms of Life on board our vessels.



ix. Protect your ships; your relationships, your partnership, your friendships, your companionships. We were built to weather the storms; so do not make the mistake of letting the storms on board.

2. Sometimes we are the Father – Lord I believe but...

a. Lord I believe but help my unbelief

b. Have you ever believed but struggled to believe? Have any of us ever had a Faith that was torn?

c. I believe but I am struggling to believe

d. I trust you but I am struggling to trust you

e. I have faith but I am struggling to have faith

f. We find ourselves in this position, as the father was in, when we have come to the end of our rope. Lord I believe but...

Altar Time Instructions