

Pastor Dustin Daniels | River Bible Church

Mark 9:14-29 | Help My Unbelief!

March 7, 2021

REVIEW:

Last Sunday, the Holy Spirit of Almighty God taught us about the suffering and the glory of God.

cf. **Hebrews 2:10 CSB**—... it was entirely appropriate that God—~~for whom~~ and through whom all things exist—should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

cf. **Hebrews 5:8 CSB**—Although he was the Son, he learned obedience from what he suffered.

In other words, Jesus as the second person of the Trinity, became a perfect human through suffering. Perfectly obedient to God the Father

We also witnessed how dangerous it is to focus on one or two verses and not the other passages that discuss the same subject.

^{because} The Disciples were so focused on Jesus being a conquering Messiah that they couldn't see that He was ordained to first be a suffering Messiah.

We learned a lot about Elijah and John the Baptizer.

How these two men, one from the OT, the other from the New, are messengers that proclaim that Jesus Christ is God in the flesh—The Messiah, which means the Anointed One from God the Father.

One of our key points from last week was this:

KEYPOINT:

John the Baptist introduces the suffering Messiah while Elijah introduces the conquering Messiah.

We learned how how these introductions of Jesus are two separate events.

We took a surprising look at how the Transfiguration of Jesus and the Cross of Christ are one.

We wrapped up last week by applying these truths to our lives by stating that...

If we don't see how the glory of Jesus and the suffering of Jesus are two sides of the same coin, we'll have a tough time understanding:

- The suffering of the world
- The reality of sin.
- The cost of sin.
- The grace in which Jesus offers through His blood.
- And our our own suffering.

INTRODUCTION:

Today's Scripture passage is a classic example of how quickly a mountaintop experience turns into a deep painful valley in the matter of seconds.

How many of you have had an amazing devotional/quiet times with the Lord, and as soon as you close your Bible, BAM! The phone rings, text message pops up, or your check your email...and there's a problem. Really Lord?!

Peter, James, and John experienced the glory of God in Jesus with the Transfiguration the night before.

This is as good as it gets to undergo ~~and encounter~~ a "spiritual high."

Today, Jesus, Peter, James and John are walking down the mountain are going to meet up with the other nine disciples and before they can even greet one another, there is a problem.

And it's not just a little problem, this is as low as it gets for The Twelve.

We're going to see one of the biggest fiascos in their ministry today.

What is the fiasco? And how do they respond to it?

Please stand for the reading/honoring of God's Word.

SCRIPTURE: Mark 9:14-29 CSB

- + **Mark 9:14**— When they came to the disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and scribes disputing with them.
- + **Mark 9:15**— When the whole crowd saw him, they were amazed and ran to greet him.
- + **Mark 9:16**— He asked them, "What are you arguing with them about?"
- + **Mark 9:17**— Someone from the crowd answered him, "Teacher, I brought my son to you. He has a spirit that makes him unable to speak.
- + **Mark 9:18**— Whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams at the mouth, grinds his teeth, and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive it out, but they couldn't."
- + **Mark 9:19**— He replied to them, "You unbelieving generation, how long will I be with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring him to me."

- † **Mark 9:20**— So they brought the boy to him. When the spirit saw him, it immediately threw the boy into convulsions. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth.
- † **Mark 9:21**— "How long has this been happening to him?" Jesus asked his father. "From childhood," he said.
- † **Mark 9:22**— "And many times it has thrown him into fire or water to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us."
- † **Mark 9:23**— Jesus said to him, "'If you can'? Everything is possible for the one who believes."
- † **Mark 9:24**— Immediately the father of the boy cried out, "I do believe; help my unbelief!"
- † **Mark 9:25**— When Jesus saw that a crowd was quickly gathering, 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."
- † **Mark 9:26**— Then it came out, shrieking and throwing him into terrible convulsions. The boy became like a corpse, so that many said, "He's dead."
- † **Mark 9:27**— But Jesus, taking him by the hand, raised him, and he stood up.
- † **Mark 9:28**— After he had gone into the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why couldn't we drive it out?"

+ **Mark 9:29**— And he told them, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer."

These are the very words of God

+ **PRAY:**

EXEGESIS:

We have lots of pronouns in this Scripture passage, so let's figure out who these people are.

+ **Mark 9:14**— When they (Jesus, Peter, James and John) came to the (other nine) disciples, they (Jesus, Peter, James and John) saw a large crowd around them and scribes disputing with them (other nine) disciples.

You're familiar with the saying, "what comes around goes around?"

And the verse, "There's nothing new under the sun?" (Ecc. 1:9)

Verse fourteen gives some OT imagery here.

Just as Moses came down from God's presence on Mount Sinai to the faithless, proud, and argumentative people of Israel,

Jesus comes down from Mount Hermon from His Transfiguration to find more faithless, more proud, and more argumentative people waiting for Him.

Don't miss the irony.

Jesus, Peter, James, and John are moving from light into the darkness, from the mountain top to the valley, from Heaven to earth.

We have, once again, Scribes—these are guys who have Ph.D.'s in religious studies arguing with the other nine Disciples.

Imagine a loud, chaotic mob with proud VIPs of Israel dressed in their religious garb and they are in the faces of insecure blue-collar working disciples.


And people from both sides are arguing, shouting, and losing their cool...and the crowd is watching this unfold.

It's embarrassing scene.

The crowd is appalled at both the disciples and the scribes.

Mark 9:15— *When the whole crowd saw him (Jesus), they (the crowd) were amazed and ran to greet him (Jesus).*

Amazed— “excessively overcome with emotion.”

 Picture a group of young teenagers running toward a famous boy band.

What does that tell you?

It tells us who the crowd believes who has the real authority.

It's not the Reverend Doctors...and it's not the Disciples, but Jesus.

Why was the crowd so excited to see Jesus?

Jesus surprised them. They weren't expecting to see Him.

They were excited because Jesus is the topic of conversation.

~~And the scribes are mocking Jesus through the disciples.~~

+ **Mark 9:16**— He (Jesus) asked them (Scribes), "What are you arguing with them (the Disciples) about?"

Jesus is not happy that these scribes are taking advantage of His disciples.

So we see Jesus as the Pappa Bear going directly at the scribes with no hesitation.

In other words, Jesus says, "You got a question, ask me, not them."

Evidently, Jesus' statement silenced the scribes...because nobody answers.

And the disciples are embarrassed so they're keeping their mouths closed.

+ **Mark 9:17**— Someone from the crowd answered him, "Teacher, I brought my son to you. He has a spirit that makes him unable to speak.

Matthew's Gospel says that the father got on *his knees* before Jesus (17:14).

Luke records the father saying, "I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child" (9:38).

This father knows exactly who Jesus is and gives Him the respect and honor He deserves.

→ Preachers & religious NOT talking? Miracle 6

So this man takes advantage of the silence and throws himself at the feet of Jesus.

+ **Mark 9:18**— Whenever it (demon) seizes him, it throws him down, and he (the son) foams at the mouth, grinds his teeth, and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive it out, but they couldn't."

AH, so now we know what all the arguing is about.

The other nine Disciples failed to cast out a demon.

And because of their failure, the scribes were mocking and challenging Jesus' authority while he wasn't there.

Now notice this....

We have a young man who is possessed by a demon.

This demon is tossing this kid around like a rag doll.

Picture the demon/body slamming this kid to the ground head first.

This poor kid has experience concussion after concussion... and the scribes are laughing at the disciples because they are failed to cast it out.

Picture the scribes pointing and laughing at the disciples while the boy is being terrorized right in front of them.

Instead of being focused on the care and well-being of the child and the father, ^{the} ~~they~~ focus on being theologically right.

If you were the parents of this child, how would you feel?

The father brought his son for help.

This is a life and death situation, and the religious people are laughing at your boy.

How would you react?

Visualize how the crowd is responding to all this.

They gotta be disgusted.

And what about the boy?

He could see and feel the shame of the crowd while the demon was inflicting all this physical pain...and yet the boy can't hear or cry out for help.

This boy is locked up in his own body. He has no control over it.

+ **Mark 9:19**— Jesus replied to them (the disciples), “You unbelieving generation, how long will I be with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring him to me.”

Those are interesting questions.

Jesus knows He will not be with His disciples much longer.

He's about six months away from Calvary.

And yet, it seems like six months is still too long.

“**You unbelieving generation,**” was aimed primarily at the disciples.

Your translation may say, “*O faithless generation.*”

Jesus says, “OH!”

This is a cry from his heart.

The word (“O”) was rarely used in speaking to others directly. But Jesus did here.

Jesus is annoyed and exasperated with these Twelve men that He's poured His life into for the past 2.5 years.

Why is Jesus so irritated?

Because He commissioned the Twelve to preach and to have the authority to cast out demons" (Mark 3:14)

Yet, they failed.

Moving on to Verse 20— is extremely graphic.

As we read this verse, picture a horror movie.

Mark 9:20— So they (the Disciples) brought the boy to him (Jesus). When the spirit saw (Jesus) him, it (the demon) immediately threw the boy into convulsions. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth.

Mark 9:21— "How long has this been happening to him?" Jesus asked his father. "From childhood," he said.

Why would Jesus ask this question?

Does it really matter *how long?*

It doesn't have any bearing on the boy's pain or the father's helplessness.

Jesus asked this question because he wanted the father to tell his story.

There's no doubt that this man has gone to doctors and Pharisaic exorcists.

He's possibly gone to witch doctors...after all, this man is desperate!

And no one has listened to Him.

So, Jesus, as the Wonderful Counselor allows the father to bear his pain for all these years.

+ **Mark 9:22**— "And many times it has thrown him into fire or water to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us."

Open fires were all over Israel, it's how they cooked and kept warm.

Water was readily available as well, in case the fire got out of control and used for cleaning.

Now the world says that this is not demon possession.

"No man, this is just a simple case of epilepsy."

Wait, since when does epilepsy purposely try to kill its victims by throwing him into a fire or drowning him in the water?

His son is not simply having a seizure.

The boy is physically, emotionally, and spiritually assaulted by a demon.

Seizures don't intentionally try to kill; demons sure do.

+ **Mark 9:23**— Jesus said to him, "If you can? Everything is possible for the one who believes."

In other words, Jesus is asking this man, "Do you believe that I'm the Messiah?"

²³ This verse is one of the most abused verses in all of Scripture. (Again)

So let's spend a little time here in the world we live. — Lot of this Abuse here in U.V.

SERMON in A SERMON.

This verse has been ripped from this context and used for self-proclaimed healers and prosperity preachers to line their own pockets.

These guys will tell you that your child is sick or that you're broke because you don't have enough faith.

That's what heretics do - they take one verse out of context & beat you down -

They go around from city to city, country to county telling blind people to believe they can see—

And these poor blind people try their best to "believe" that they can see, but they open their eyes and cannot see a thing.

The crippled are told to believe they can walk, yet they fall out of their wheelchairs.

And many times, we hear these thugs trying to get people all jazzed up, saying things like, "I BELIEVE in Jesus name that you will be made well."

"I command the sickness to be gone."

"I command in Jesus name that you will be made well."

"I believe that Christ can heal him. I will pray in faith, and I know that I will be answered."

Really? All that comes from this one verse?

No dear friend, that prayer goes well beyond God's Word.

Notice how self centered that prayer is— "I command, I believe, I'll pray, I know and I will be answered."

Me, myself & I = catholy tripty of man kind

Regardless of how many times someone says Jesus' name or speak in Christianese, the prayer is all about them.

KEYPOINT #1

All things can be done for the one who has faith, but your faith must submit to the will of God.

→ Don't hear what I'm not saying.

Now God can undoubtedly heal anyone, but here's the question...

What else does God's Word say about healing and faith?

Scripture interprets Scripture - JAS 5:13

Is this person a true prophet? Did the Holy Spirit say it was God's will for this person to be healed?

Because if that's the case, God will use that man to heal. No doubt.

But verse 23 is not a blanket statement that applies to everyone who is sick.

Did the prophets in the OT heal everyone they came across?

Did they hold these huge healing rally's and ask people to come forward?

Did they accept ^{Flask} ~~cost~~ for their healings? Quite the opposite! 2 Kings 5:14

No. Maybe, it's God's will for this person to suffer this way.

Wait, Dustin, how can you even say such a thing?

How is it possible that God the Father would send God the Son to be murdered and hung on a cross?

Did Jesus not have enough faith? Is that why He suffered and died?

What's my point?

When someone names and claims a healing and it doesn't work...

Nobody puts it back on the fake healer and the prosperity preacher.

If faith is all that is needed, why doesn't the healer/preacher himself have enough faith to produce the healing?

Brings us to

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KEYPOINT #2

Nobody is able to create faith in and among themselves!

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cf. **Ephesians 2:8-9 CSB**—For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast.

-no one can brag about their faith

Faith is not generated by a mental decision to believe in something.

That's why this "sinners prayer" and "asking Jesus into your heart business" have wrecked the faith of millions of people in the last one hundred years.

Scripture clearly tells us that, we as humans cannot make a decision for faith.

But wait, "I've said the sinners prayer!"

"I've asked Jesus into my heart!"

I've got my free "out get-out-of-hell card."

Sorry friend, it does not work like that. You've been led astray and believed a lie.

But it doesn't have to stay that way

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cf. **John 6:44 CSB**—No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him...

Then... Faith comes by hearing the Word of God.

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cf. **Romans 10:17 CSB**— So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ.

Anything else is garbage.

↳ True Message
↳ True Gospel — Includes:
- You're a sinner
- Child of the Devil
- You're destined for a real place called hell
2021-3-7
↳ But Jesus!

And these healers and preachers prey on people who are enslaved to comfort and pleasure because they've been sold a false gospel.

They preach that health and prosperity are a sign from God...

If you don't have good health and if you're not wealthy, then you don't have God's favor.

"You haven't believed it into existence."

So these people who are weak in their faith— don't read the Bible.

They are not part of a local Christ-centered, Holy Spirit-filled Bible-believing church,

and they are not being disciplined...they are disconnected.

They are sheep without a shepherd, who are hurt, away from the herd and vulnerable.

You've seen the discovery channel where the roaring lion devours ^{documentary} ~~the~~ ^{this} animal.

And that's why these folks trust in these scam artists posed as preachers— rather than the person and the work of Jesus Christ.

the false gospel is why people

And ~~they~~ start throwing what little money they have at these spiritual bullies to get well, and yet they don't get well, and the scammers turn around and blame them because they don't have enough faith.

the bullies taking their \$

And ~~they~~ walk away, leaving them more hopeless than before.

get well?

How much faith is enough? How do they know?

Back to our narrative

Let's see how much faith this father really has and how Jesus responds to his faith.

Let's listen to the Word of God.

Let's listen to the Word Who became flesh.

Back to...

Mark 9:23—Jesus said to him, "If you can? Everything is possible for the one who believes."

Jesus wastes no time to zero in on this man's doubt.

Can you blame the father for having his doubts?

The father has done everything he humanly can to help his son.

The father and the son are both beyond human help.

The father hears about Jesus, brings his boy to meet Him, and yet Jesus is on Mount Hermon with Peter, James, and John at the time.

The other nine disciples step in and say, "no problem sir, we got this."

They go to perform the exorcism just like their others, andcrickets.

nothing happens!

On top of that, the father watches the scribes and the disciples get into a theological fight instead of helping his son.

Can you relate to the father's doubt?

And yet, this doubt had to be removed before Jesus performed the miracle.

KEYPOINT 3

The father's struggle is not with his son's demon, but with his faith.

Mark 9:24—Immediately the father of the boy cried out, "I do believe; help my unbelief!"

Aren't you glad verse 24 is here?

This man is one of the most transparent people in the Bible.

His faith at that moment is trembling, imperfect, and it's so real!

Please don't walk out of here today thinking that you're a hypocrite or something is wrong with you because your faith is not perfect.

In Greek, it's pronounced—*Ba-lone-i-e*...Baloney!

Baloney—that's how perfect faith is spelled.

Nowhere in Scripture does the Lord Jesus expect you to be a Super Christian—there's no such thing.

Can you relate to this man?

~~This man has a small amount of faith.~~

He has mustard seed-sized faith.

Jesus exposes his faith as a problem.

Because the problem is not on Jesus' end, is it?

The problem is not that Jesus is unwilling to cast out the demon—Jesus is more than willing.

And the problem's not that Jesus can't cast the demon out.

Jesus has the Ability

The problem is human unbelief!

Jesus says the same thing to this father as he did the woman with the hemorrhage (5:34) and Jairus regarding his little girl (5:36).

This father knew Jesus could heal his son, but his own faith was dangerously shaken because the Disciples couldn't cast it out the first time.

I mean, after all, if these guys can't do it—Jesus' right-hand men—nobody can.



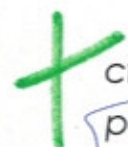
KEYPOINT 4

People who have true faith are very aware of how deficient it is.

Help my unbelief!"

This father is asking Jesus to give him a stronger faith.

He cries out in prayer...HELP!



cf. **Hebrews 12:2 CSB**— keeping our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.

This father is looking directly into the eyes of the Perfecter of his faith!

By asking for help, the father is asking Jesus to remove his unbelief and to perfect his faith!

This man declares he has faith and yet at the same time admits his doubt.

I like this man

Today's fake faith healers would say those two things are incompatible.

But not Jesus...

KEYPOINT: 5

Jesus is not limited by imperfect faith because even the most robust faith is mixed with a measure of doubt.

seasonal
Christian

In other words, all you need is the faith of a mustard seed.

Jesus did not expect this father to overcome his doubt before his child was healed.

All

But Jesus did need to move the needle forward.

Mark 9:25— When Jesus saw that a crowd was quickly gathering, 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."

This father and son have been through enough, so the Lord Jesus prevents the demon from reentering the boy.

Mark 9:26— Then it (the demon) came out, shrieking and throwing him (the boy) into terrible convulsions. The boy became like a corpse, so that many said, "He's dead."

Dead?

Oh no, was the father's faith, not enough?

Did he not conjure up enough faith for his son to be healed by Jesus? *Is this his fault?*

~~Is, because of the father's fledgling faith, his son now dead? Is this his fault?~~

What's going through the father's mind? "Wait, Jesus, this wasn't supposed to happen."

The 21st-century faith healers will say, "I told you, that you didn't have enough faith."

But see, the faith healers and the prosperity preachers of today don't know God's

work or misinterpret it.

Because there are themes throughout

Regarding how things must get worse before they get better

word because many times, Scripture says that things must get worse before they get better.

Cross of Christ

Mark 9:27— But Jesus, taking him by the hand, raised him, and he stood up.

The gospel of Luke says that *Jesus gave the boy back to his father.* (Luke 9:42)



How precious is that?

A child of the devil has been freed from the power of darkness.

KEYPOINT 6

What you do with your imperfect faith is crucial.

The father had imperfect faith.

He placed his weak and feeble faith into the hands of Jesus.

He gave everything he had to Jesus.

KEYPOINT 7

He believed with what faith he had.

In other words, this father's faith was sufficient.

Unbelievable!

What's the significance of the boy lying like a corpse?

It looks like a resurrection, doesn't it? It's not, it's a symbol for the disciples.

Transition

+ **Mark 9:28**— After he had gone into the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why couldn't we drive it out?"

+ **Mark 9:29**— And he told them, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer."

While Jesus, Peter, James, and John were on Mount Hermon, the disciples had gone about their work.

It was business as usual— preaching and casting out evil spirits.

But, when they came to this particular demon, they failed.

Picture it...Nathaniel tried and failed.

Matthew tried and failed.

At this point, they're all pushing each other to get in line to try.

→ Do what they've always done - Doing what they've always done has brought them success in the past!

Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, James, Thaddaeus, Simon, and Judas all try...but nothing worked. Why?

zealot

They all have a bad case of the normals.

They wrongly believed that this spiritual gift that was given to them by Jesus was under their own control.

They believed they could exercise this gift at their will, by their choosing, and by their command.

They failed to realize that without complete dependence on God, they had no power at all.

In other words, nobody thought to pray.

See these religious people standing around? No one thought to pray - Boy that sounds like a sermon - for another day!

And nobody thought to pray because they were too busy arguing among themselves and with the scribes.

Jesus said, "this kind"—

This demon ^{cast the boy to be} was deaf and mute.

So, there is no way a human can communicate to the person.

The only ^{way} a mute and deaf spirit can be cast out is by the power of God.

It's known as a Messianic miracle.

Notice in verse 28, the emphasis is on themselves—Why couldn't we cast it out?

Jesus says, "You didn't pray!"

At this moment, picture Peter saying, "but wait, Jesus, you didn't pray to cast it out."

Jesus says, "Nope, didn't have to...the boy's father did."

Verse 22: "Have compassion on us, help us."

Verse 24: "I do believe, help my unbelief!"

The man had done all that was required of him by praying.

^{Praying} This is something that the disciples did not ~~do~~. ^{take the time to do}

PREACH:

It's An Amazing lesson ^{faith} ^{reality of unbelief} and your faith seems frail, go to the source of faith, the Word of God. ^{Encourage}

Reading the Word of God by the Spirit of God

Because

KEYPOINT 8:

Prayer is the action side of faith.

Somebody had to pray for this boy who was healed

Jesus calls disciples to do things that are well beyond their abilities.

He does this to show them, that apart from Him, they got nothing.

And it's the same with us.

So, if you want to build spiritual muscle

PRAYER ROOM:

PRAY:

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