

## Help my Unbelief

Mark 9: 14-29

Today our text takes a captivating twist. Peter, James, and John had experienced the glory of Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. Their experience was so wonderful that Peter desired to remain on the mountain. Jesus knew they could not stay there; He had much yet to accomplish. He had taken them there to reveal His glory, which would serve to strengthen their faith as they endured the difficulties of ministry following His death, resurrection, and ascension.

As the men made their way down the mountain, they were immediately met with difficulty. There would be no time to rest in the beauty of the moment. They were back among the world, and would need to be ready to endure the difficulties it brings.

We all enjoy those mountain top experiences, but we are not afforded the opportunity to dwell on the mountain. Most of the time, we will soon encounter the realities of life, following a mountain top experience. We must learn to use the lessons learned on the mountain as we navigate the difficulties of the valley. As we examine the [aspects](#) of this encounter, I want consider the thought: [Help my Unbelief](#).

**I. The Difficulty Encountered** – After experiencing the transfiguration, the disciples were immediately met with a difficult situation regarding a man and his son. Consider:

**A. The Condition of the Son** ([17-18](#); [21-22a](#)) – Here we discover the dire condition of this young man. We find:

**1. He was Dominated** ([18a](#)) – [And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him](#). He was taken and torn by a spirit. The word [taketh](#) has the idea of “*laying hold of, to carry away, seize, or apprehend*.” The word [teareth](#) speaks of “*causing convulsions*.” He was possessed of the devil; his life was filled and dominated by an evil spirit.

**2. He was Delusional** ([18b](#)) – [and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away](#). When the evil spirit would attack this young man he would cry out, screaming in misery and pain. He would foam at the mouth and gnash his teeth. His life was not lived in a normal or peaceful way. This young man dealt with Satan’s influence and domination on a daily basis and it affected his mind and his emotions.

**3. He was Defeated** (18c; 21-22a) – and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not. <sup>[21]</sup> And he asked his father, **How long is it ago since this came unto him?** And he said, **Of a child.** <sup>[22]</sup> And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him. Here we discover the severity of the situation. This young man was literally living in torment on a daily basis, suffering such difficulty since he was a child. The spirit would overcome the young man, causing him to fall into the fire or bodies of water, in an attempt to take his life. He was at the mercy of this evil spirit. His life was dominated by Satan and he lived in utter defeat.

**B. The Compassion of the Father** – We also discover the unwavering compassion of the young man's father. Notice:

**1. His Desire** (17) – And one of the multitude answered and said, **Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit.** The father came to Jesus, desiring Him to heal his son. He had tried everything imaginable, and yet his son continued to deal with this dreadful condition. The father recognized Jesus and desired Him to do what others could not.

**2. His Dilemma** (18c; 22b-24) – and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not. <sup>[22b]</sup> **but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.** <sup>[23]</sup> **Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.** <sup>[24]</sup> **And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.** The father had done all he could. He had taken his son to others, but they were unable to help. Apparently he had heard of Jesus and the miracles He had performed. He begged Jesus to do something for his son. Jesus declared healing was possibly, but it required faith. The father honestly replied that he wanted to believe, but he needed help with his unbelief. (We often respond much the same. We know Jesus is more than able to meet our needs, and yet we tend to doubt whether He will respond to our prayers.)

**II. The Desperation Exposed** (18c-19) – Mark revealed this was a desperate situation. Others had compassion for the situation, but they were unable to help. Their desperation is revealed in:

**A. Their Lack of Faith** (18c-19a) – and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not. <sup>[19]</sup> **He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you?** These lacked the faith necessary to overcome Satan and gain the victory. Even the disciples, those who walked with Jesus, were unable to cast the demon out. Jesus was not referring to faith in themselves, but faith in Him to provide the strength and power to overcome. They lacked faith in the Lord to provide in their time of need.

**B. Their Lack of Fortitude** (19b) – *how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me.* The word suffer means to “*hold up, sustain, or endure.*” Jesus was disappointed that they lacked the desire to do the things they were able to do. He was weary of their lack of faith and complacency. It appeared they were all too eager to let the Lord do things for them that they were well able to do for themselves. (There are things that are beyond our ability, but there is much that we can do, and God expects us to accomplish those things. We need the desire and fortitude to labor for the Lord.)

**III. The Devastation Experienced** (20) – *And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming.* Here we discover the devastation this young man experienced as he was attacked by the evil spirits. Consider:

**A. The Timing of the Attack** (20) – As they brought the young man to Jesus, the enemy attacked. He did not want him to get to Jesus. As he was making his way to the one who was well able to meet his need, Satan attacked. This was no accident; in fact, it was a carefully orchestrated attack. He attacked when the young man was vulnerable. He had made the decision to come to Jesus and was about to have the opportunity for healing. Satan wanted to keep him away from the Lord.

- He has not changed his ways. As long as you are living among the world, seeking to please the flesh, Satan likely won't bother you much. But if you decide to turn toward the Lord and seek Him, you might as well count on a fight. He doesn't bother idle Christians much either, but when we decide to draw nigh to the Lord and seek to serve Him, we can expect an attack!

**B. The Tenacity in the Attack** (20) – Here Satan pulled out all the stops. He realized the young man was about to get to Jesus. He knew the Lord had the power to deliver him and set him free. Just prior to the young man getting to Jesus, he endured a tenacious attack.

- You can rest assured that Satan wants to prevent you from getting to Jesus. He has no problem with you attending services. He has no problem with you being a part of the activities, but he does not want you to get to Jesus and have a life changing encounter. I am convinced that his attacks are the most tenacious and prominent just prior to us getting to Jesus.

- There is a profound truth for the church as well. Satan doesn't mind us gathering on Sunday mornings. He doesn't mind us singing songs, praying prayers, or even preaching a message. He doesn't care in the least if we go through the religious motions of a worship service. But, if we get serious about serving the Lord, drawing closer to Him, experiencing His power in our

services, resulting in transformed lives, we are in for a battle. Satan is in the business of hindering and defeating the church. We must be aware and we must be prepared!

**IV. The Deliverance Extended** (25-29) – In the closing verses we find the miraculous deliverance Jesus provided. Notice:

**A. The Rebuke** (25) – *When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, **Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.*** That is an action of authority. It speaks of “*declaring guilt, to censure severely, to admonish.*” Jesus had the ability to call out the spirit, pronounce judgment, and restrain it from further hindrance of this young man. Jesus revealed His absolute authority!

**B. The Restoration** (26-27) – *And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead. <sup>[27]</sup> But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose.* At the command of Jesus, the spirit had to depart. The young man was delivered from the evil spirit. He was set free from the dominance and torment of Satan.

- That is a beautiful picture of our salvation. We are healed from the disease of sin. We are set free from Satan’s bondage. We are delivered from the guilt and shame of our past. We are restored to God through the Son. Jesus alone has the ability to restore a sin sick soul.

**C. The Revelation** (28-29) – *And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out? <sup>[29]</sup> And he said unto them, **This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.*** After the incident, in the privacy of a house, the disciples questioned the Lord regarding their inability to cast out the spirit. Jesus revealed these could only be defeated through prayer and fasting. There had to be great faith and great preparation through the Lord to overcome. A casual approach would never be sufficient.

- Too often we are much like the disciples. We may have noble ambitions, but we fail to put in the work necessary to experience victory and overcome. A casual Christianity will not provide strength against the enemy. We must be willing to labor in prayer and fasting if we are to overcome!

**Conclusion:** We all face difficulties in life. Often these difficulties are beyond our ability to handle. Faith in the Lord is essential to overcome and experience victory. Are you struggling in a valley of

life? Does it seem as if your faith is weak? The Lord has the ability to meet our needs and increase our faith. We must trust Him to provide, even when it appears hopeless. Maybe you are like this young man, in need of spiritual deliverance. Jesus provided the means of salvation. We must come to Him in repentance and faith. If you are yet unsaved, come to Christ for salvation!