

Help My Unbelief!

Mark 9:14-29 New American Standard Bible (NASB) (See also Matthew 17:14-21, Luke 9:37-43)

*14 When they came back to the disciples, they saw a large crowd around them, and some scribes arguing with them. 15 Immediately, when the entire crowd saw Him, they were amazed and began running up to greet Him. 16 And He asked them, "What are you discussing with them?" 17 And one of the crowd answered Him, "**Teacher, I brought You my son**, possessed with a spirit which makes him mute; 18 and whenever it seizes him, it slams him to the ground and he foams at the mouth, and grinds his teeth and stiffens out. I told Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not do it." 19 And He *answered them and *said, "O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him to Me!" 20 They brought the boy to Him. When he saw Him, immediately the spirit threw him into a convulsion, and falling to the ground, he began rolling around and foaming at the mouth. 21 And He asked his father, "**How long has this been happening to him?**" And he said, "From childhood. 22 It has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!" 23 And Jesus said to him, "**If You can?**" All things are possible to him who believes." 24 Immediately the boy's father cried out and said, "I do believe; **help my unbelief.**" 25 When Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You deaf and mute spirit, I command you, come out of him and do not enter him again." 26 After crying out and throwing him into terrible convulsions, it came out; and the boy became so much like a corpse that most of them said, "He is dead!" 27 But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him; and he got up. 28 When He came into the house, His disciples began questioning Him privately, "Why could we not drive it out?" 29 And He said to them, "This kind cannot come out by anything but prayer."*

Introduction

Today our journey with Jesus continues. Remember, last Sunday, we were with Him at a high mountain where we witnessed His glorious transfiguration. His face did shine like the Sun in its strength. His garments were radiant and white like light. We learned also that Jesus trumps the Law and the Prophets. He is greater than Abraham, Moses, and Elijah. He is the Messiah, the Son of God, and Lord of all. We must listen to Him!

When the trip to the mountain was over, Jesus and three disciples (Peter, James, and John) returned to the rest of the disciples who were waiting at the foot of the mountain.

Content

They saw a large crowd surrounding the nine disciples. People were watching two groups engaged in an argument between the disciples and some scribes. Scribes were

those whose responsibility was to transcribe the Scripture and to teach people of God the Torah. The argument was about why the disciples couldn't cast out an evil spirit from a boy.

I am sure the nine disciples have tried several times taking turns. When nothing happened, the scribes tried to stop the effort. *Don't give the boy a hard time*, they might have said to the disciples. *Let him go. A poor thing. Don't try to cast the spirit out of him. His problem is not spiritual. He doesn't need you. He needs the doctor instead.*

The disciples would argue back: *please, let us try one more time. We have done it many times before.* Turning to the boy, they kept commanding the spirit to come out to no avail. That's when Jesus showed up.

And, He said to the father of the boy,

Bring your son to Me (v. 19): How comforting to hear His voice! *Bring your son to Me. Bring your concern to Me!* The same voice still invites us today. *Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest* (Matthew 11:28). He can fix your problem. He wants to help you. He wants to deliver you from your trouble. I hope everyone of us would hear Jesus calling this morning. *Bring your concerns, anxieties, and wounds to Me. I will help you.*

When he (the boy--kc) **saw Him, immediately the spirit threw him into a convulsion, and falling to the ground, he began rolling around and foaming at the mouth** (v. 20): if it had happened before our eyes, we would've been scared. Don't be alarmed, though. It is not unusual to see such a violent reaction of the evil spirit before it leaves the inflicted.

Reason with me. Why do you think the spirit threw the boy into a convulsion? Actually, twice in a row in front of Jesus and the crowd (v. 20, 26). To scare them maybe, but the real reason was Jesus. His presence and power. The evil spirit could not stand the holy and mighty presence of Jesus. In fact, it was tortured by His holiness and glory. It is like the darkness has no chance against the light. No evil spirit is a match to Jesus the Messiah.

Jesus asked the father, **"How long has this been happening to him?"**

The father said, *"From childhood."* ²² **It has often** thrown him both into the fire and into the water **to destroy him** (v. 22): Listen to the father's testimony. Over the years and many times, the evil spirit tried to destroy him by the fire and the water. Please note what's really going on here. The evil spirit had one intention: to destroy the boy.

Same goes with the devil and his minions. They have one and the only purpose to live for: to harass people and make their lives miserable. They are specialized in *stealing* your happiness, *destroying* your body and soul, and even *killing* you for eternal condemnation. Jesus calls them thieves. (John 10:10).

This particular evil spirit in the boy indeed stole happiness and joy from this family for years; wouldn't you say? Thank God, though, that it never succeeded in killing the boy. Thank God that the boy had come to Christ and got healing and restoration. Thank God that Jesus indeed restored happiness in this family. Get this: demons oppress us and make our lives difficult, whether in physical health or emotional wellbeing. Even finances and relationships. They are out there to get you. Resist them (James 4:7).

Great news for us: Christ came to destroy the works of the devil. *“The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil”* (1 John 3:8). We have the greatest ally in the world. Jesus Christ. Amen.

The father continued saying to Jesus,

But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!” ²³ And Jesus said to him, **“If You can?”** *All things are possible to him who believes.”* ²⁴ *Immediately the boy's father cried out and said, “I do believe; help my unbelief.”*

In today's text, it is the father who cried out for Jesus' help on his unbelief. However, in the gospel of Matthew, it is the little faith of the disciples, not the father's, that made the disciples unable to cast out the demon from the boy (Matthew 17:20). Either way, one thing is for sure. The faith plays a crucial role in the miracle. Without it, no healing. No miracles. Without faith, it is impossible to please God or experience His power (Hebrews 11:6). Your faith matters.

To the evil spirit in the boy, Jesus commanded,

Come out and enter no more into him (v. 25): Jesus' will is clear: to drive the spirit out from the boy and allow it never to come back. God's will is clear: He wants no one to suffer the harassment from demons. Even after the deliverance from the devil's torture, God doesn't want us to go back to the old condition. Come out and **never** enter into him again!

Do you believe the spirit obeyed Jesus? Yes, it did. From that day, the boy was forever free of that mute and deaf spirit. And it never came back to the boy. Remember. Every spirit must obey Jesus the Lord of all.

Later, the disciples asked Jesus in private why they couldn't cast out the evil spirit. He answered,

This kind cannot come out by anything but prayer (v. 29). Without prayer, such kind cannot come out. The Matthew account adds 'fasting' to prayer: *This kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting* (Matthew 17:21). The necessity of prayer and fasting in casting out demons is obvious.

Conclusion

Two reasons why we lack such miracles among us as in today's text: our unbelief/little faith, or the lack of prayer and fasting. Both rely on us.

When was the last time you have fasted and prayed intensely? Yes, of course, we pray every day for ordinary stuff. However, if we really need supernatural deliverance from the evil spirits that torture our mind, soul, and body, we must resort to intense prayers and fasting.

We cry out to Jesus: Help our unbelief. Increase our faith. Help us to pray and fast. Deliver us from the evil spirits.

Amen.