

Valley Bible Church
Sermon Notes for June 11, 2017

Faith Among the Faithless
Mark 9:14-29

I. The crowd's disturbance (9:14-15)

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.

A. The argumentative scene (9:14)

- Jesus, Peter, James, and John had finally descended the mountain and rendezvoused with the rest of the disciples
- They arrived to a scene of turmoil
- They arrived to more than the other 9 disciples
 - Crowd surrounding the disciples
 - Scribes arguing with the disciples
- Things seem somewhat out of hand with these people groups

B. The amazing shock (9:15)

- Crowd recognized Jesus and swarmed to Him
 - Crowd was greatly amazed
 - Crowd ran up to Him and greeted Him
 - Jesus continued to have the crowd won over due to His ministry thus far
- Perhaps the scribes and disciples kept arguing when Jesus showed up

II. The father's dilemma (9:16-18)

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."

A. The question asked (9:16)

- Jesus asked the reason for the argument between crowd and disciples

B. The question answered (9:17-18)

- A man from the crowd emerged and told his story
 - He brought his son seeking Jesus
 - Luke 9:38 "... Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child."
 - His son had a spirit that makes him mute
 - The spirit was also violent in that it randomly seized the son, threw him down, caused him to foam and grind his teeth, and become rigid
- This is not merely epilepsy, but demon possession
 - All Matthew, Mark, and Luke identify this as demon possession
- Naturally, the man asked the disciples to cast out the spirit since Jesus was gone
 - The disciples had authority to cast out demons earlier
 - But, in this instance they were unable to do so

III. The demonic display (9:19-22)

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." 20 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. 21 And Jesus asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. 22 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."

A. The disappointment (9:19)

- Jesus responded with disappointment regarding the faithless generation standing before Him
 - "How long am I to be with you?"
 - "How long am I to bear with you?"
- Who was He calling "faithless"?
 - Scribes, crowd, father in the crowd, disciples
 - It appears that the best answer is, all of the above
- He was comparing this generation to the unfaithful generation of Israel in the past
 - Deuteronomy 32:20 "And he said, 'I will hide my face from them; I will see what their end will be, for they are a perverse generation, children in whom is no faithfulness.'"

-Psalm 95:7-10 “Today, if you hear his voice, 8 do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as on the day at Massah in the wilderness, 9 when your fathers put me to the test and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work. 10 For forty years I loathed that generation and said, ‘They are a people who go astray in their heart, and they have not known my ways.’”

-After Jesus’ words of disappointment, He calls for the boy to be brought to Himself

B. The demonic display (9:20)

-When the boy was brought to Jesus the spirit saw Jesus and convulsed the boy in front of everyone present

-The boy fell on the ground, rolled about, and was foaming at the mouth

C. The destructive background (9:21-22a)

-Jesus kindly asked the father how long this had been happening to the boy

-This was a great display of Jesus’ compassion with the father

-Also this showed how hopeless the situation was since the boy had suffered for an extended period of time

-The father indicated that this had been since childhood

-Not sure how many years it had been

-Father elaborated by stating the danger it has been to the boy

-The spirit has thrown the boy into fire and water to destroy him

-Imagine the burden that this had been for the father!

-Imagine taking care of a mute son who randomly might attempt suicide at any moment

D. The desire of the father (9:22b)

-The father made a plea for compassion and help

-Perhaps since the father had been unsuccessful with the disciples, he was uncertain about Jesus’ abilities to cast out the spirit

- “But if you can do anything”

IV. The principle defined (9:23-24)

23 And Jesus said to him, “ ‘If you can’! All things are possible for one who believes.” 24 Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, “I believe; help my unbelief!”

A. Faith defined (9:23)

- Jesus quoted the father's words of potentiality "If you can!" as if He was insulted
 - Clearly Jesus could help this desperate father
- Jesus declared the most certain and comforting truth that must be known by all
 - "All things are possible for one who believes."
 - What does this mean exactly?
 - All your dreams will come true if you believe?
 - There will always be miracles when you believe?
 - God is not your own personal genie or vending machine!
 - Faith is not some magical formula to get you whatever you want!
 - Rather, faith is the entry point by which we have access to the help and power of God Almighty
 - Through faith, the father would have confidence in the power of God over all difficulties and trials, including his demon-possessed son

B. Faith depicted (9:24)

- The father has a beautiful response to the Words of Jesus
- "I believe; help my unbelief!"
 - Clearly the father did not take Jesus' words as a genie wish-granting formula
 - The father asserted his belief in Jesus yet he acknowledged his shortcomings
 - He expressed that he knew there was no problem with Jesus' ability at this point
 - He knew that any problem or hold up in Jesus helping His son was because of his own faith or lack thereof

V. The Messiah's demand (9:25-27)

25 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." 26 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." 27 But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.

A. The recognition (9:25a)

- Jesus noticed the great crowd gathering at the moment to watch this dialogue
- Somehow and for some reason, this great crowd caused Jesus to act
 - Perhaps Jesus acted before the crowd would get even bigger?

B. The rebuke (9:25b)

- Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit
 - “You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.”

C. The removal (9:26)

- The demon did not leave the boy without a final demonstration
- There were more violent and “terrible” convulsions of the boy
- The spirit also cried out in the process

D. The “resurrection” (9:27)

- The spirit left the boy and the boy was like a corpse
 - People actually said and thought, “He is dead”
- However Jesus took him by the hand and helped him up
 - Interestingly enough, this was the same wording Mark used to describe Jesus’ raising of Jairus’ daughter from the dead (Mark 5:41)

VI. The disciples’ discovery (9:28-29)

28 And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?” 29 And he said to them, “This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.”

A. Private discussion (9:28)

- Notice, Mark did not record the response from anyone in the moment that Jesus cast out the demon (Father, crowd, scribes, etc.)
 - Mark’s emphasis is on the lesson for the disciples and us to learn
- Later, the disciples were dying to know why this situation was so difficult
- Thus, when they had entered a house, they privately asked Jesus about the matter

B. Prayerful dependence (9:29)

- Jesus gave a simple answer

- “This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.”
 - How did Jesus exercise this prayer?
 - The prayer did not seem obvious or evident in the story
 - However, Jesus was a man of prayer
 - The solution of prayer is a further indication of faith
 - Prayer requires acknowledging our dependence on God for every possible need we might have