

I Can't Do This...Without Jesus

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Mark / Mark 9:14-29

11.11.2018

Mark 9:14-29

Mark 9:14-29 NIV

When they came to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and the teachers of the law arguing with them. As soon as all the people saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with wonder and ran to greet him.

“What are you arguing with them about?” he asked.

A man in the crowd answered, “Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not.”

“You unbelieving generation,” Jesus replied, “how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me.”

So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately

threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth.

Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has he been like this?"

"From childhood," he answered. "It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us."

"If you can?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for one who believes."

Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"

When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the impure spirit. "You deaf and mute spirit," he said, "I command you, come out of him and never enter him again."

The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, "He's dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up.

After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, "Why couldn't we drive it out?"

He replied, "This kind can come out only by prayer."

1. Coming off the Mountain can be a hard thing.

A. Most of us here know what it is like to have an amazing Sunday followed by a terrible week.

1. Or worse yet, you start attending church, getting plugged into ministry, or start tithing and all of sudden you are attacked from every direction.

2. This is how the enemy works.

3. There are no easy victories in our journey with Jesus.

B. Peter, James, John, and Jesus are coming off the mountain with God.

1. Jesus has transfigured or morphed in front of them.

2. Moses and Elijah were there, talking with Jesus.

3. They heard the voice of God.

4. This was a life changing moment for all involved.

C. Coming off that mountain, Jesus and his disciples encounter an argument.

1. This seems to be a normal part of human experience:

a. We have a great moment with God.

b. The next moment we experience struggle.

c. And it isn't just our experience.

2. When Moses came off Mt. Sinai having been in the presence of God and receiving the 10 Commandments, he came down to all of Israel worshipping at the golden calf.

3. When Elijah called upon heaven to consume the sacrifice on top of Mt. Horeb and then killed all of the false prophets,

he came off the mountain and was run off by King Ahab and Jezebel.

4. Now Jesus comes off the mountain to see his disciples arguing with the religious along with the desperate cries of a father pleading for his son.

2. The Argument arose from a failed exorcism.

A. While Jesus was away, a desperate father brought his sick and possessed son to the 9 Apostles.

- i. They attempted to do what Jesus had done many time before.
- ii. In fact, they had themselves cast out demons and healed the sick before.
- iii. But this time, something was different.
- iv. As they attempted to do what they had seen and done before, the result was failure.

B. The result of this failure was mockery by the religious leaders.

- i. These religious leaders had been waiting for Jesus and his followers to fail.
- ii. Seeing the struggle the disciples were facing in Jesus absence, they jumped on the opportunity to mock and ridicule.
- iii. That's when the fight broke out.

C. The enemy likes to attack us when we are away from Jesus.

- i. When we feel like we are alone, that is when we experience the attack of the enemy.
- ii. The Pharisees were constantly trying to argue with Jesus and attack him, but they could never win while Jesus was present.
- iii. But the moment the disciples were separated from Jesus, the Pharisees attacked.
- iv. **Isolation from Jesus leads to defeat.**

3. While the religious and the disciples argued, a boy and his father struggled.

A. This was not the time to be holding a religious argument.

- i. This was a time for healing, not division.
- ii. This was a time for power, not weakness.
- iii. Yet, while those who were entrusted with the knowledge and power to do and go argued, the demon continued causing destruction.
 - 1. **I'm afraid that Christians today are spending too much time arguing about things that are not necessary to the Gospel.**
 - 2. **The world doesn't have time for our pettiness and childishness.**
 - 3. **The world is lost, hurting, and in need of the real Church of Jesus to rise up.**

B. The failure of the disciples reflected upon Jesus.

Mark 9:17-19

Mark 9:17–19 NIV

A man in the crowd answered, "Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not." "You unbelieving generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me."

- i. "I brought my son to you....but they couldn't."
- ii. **The failure of the disciples was reflected upon Jesus.**
- iii. When we try and fail, there is more at stake than our reputation.
 1. The reputation of Jesus is at stake also.
 2. Jesus didn't empower us to fail but to win.
 3. Yet **we have created a Christian culture comfortable with failure where Jesus expects us to win.**

C. This explains why Jesus calls them an unbelieving generation.

- i. Jesus had empowered his disciples to cast out demons, just like this, and when He was away they failed.
- ii. That's why He asks how long he must be with them.
 1. They couldn't be trusted while Jesus was not with them.
 2. The disciples were like that employee at work who does well as long as the boss is around.

3. But the moment the boss steps away, they become clueless to what to do.
4. Instead of seeking help, they argued.
5. All the while, the son is still demon oppressed and the father is crying out for help.

4. The Cry for help distinguishes the father from the rest.

A. While the Apostles and scribes argued, the father pleads for help.

- i. This plea for help turns Jesus' attention to the matter at hand.
- ii. **I believe the heart of God turns to those who cry for help, not to those who argue their position.**
- iii. It is here that Jesus and the father have a conversation.

B. The question of the father is, "if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us."

- i. This question from the father makes sense.
 1. The Apostles could not heal his son in Jesus name.
 2. They failed as Jesus' representatives.
 3. **And the father assumes that if the disciples and followers don't have power and authority to heal then neither does the master.**
 4. That is why the father leads with "if".
 - a. **When we fail, in Jesus' name, we lower the hopes and expectations of those watching.**

- b. When we what we proclaim does not come to pass, people reject the one who sent us.
 - c. The father had faith to begin with, that is why he brought the boy to the Apostles and to Jesus to begin with.
 - d. But their failure to heal him, and then their arguing about it, caused unbelief to enter the man.
- ii. The father is the only one admitting his weakness.
1. He admits to Jesus that his faith is struggling.
 2. He admits that his unbelief is running wild with his imagination.
 3. He admits he needs Jesus' help to help him with his unbelief.
 4. While the Apostles and Scribes are arguing about what went wrong, the father was asking Jesus to make it right.
 - a. If you are like me, you invest too much time complaining and worrying and not enough time praying and making things right.
 - b. I spend too much time trying to figure out why things went wrong when that time should be invested in asking Jesus to make things right.
 - c. **Our arguing and debating is not going to save anybody, but our prayers will.**
- iii. Even though Jesus had to remind the father that "everything is possible for the one who believes" the father was still way ahead of the Apostles and Scribes.

1. Why?
 - a. **What was theory for the Religious was life and death for the father.**
 - b. When it is your kid, your spouse, your job, your home, your future, you don't care about theory you want results.
2. Even though the father struggled in the moment, the struggle led him to ask Jesus for help.
 - a. You don't have to be perfect to ask Jesus for help.
 - b. You don't have to have it all together to pray and see your prayers answered.
 - c. You don't have to be perfectly righteous.
 - d. **Tim Keller** writes:
Jesus the King: Understanding the Life and Death of the Son of God A Glimpse of Glory

Perfect righteousness is impossible for us, and if you wait for that, you will never come into the presence of God. You must admit that you are not righteous, and that you need help. When you can say that, you are approaching God to worship.
3. A "mustard-seed" of faith may not be much in our hands, but when it is given to Jesus amazing things happen.

6. Separated from Jesus, we are powerless.

A. After the boy is healed and the crowd is gone, the disciples ask why they failed.

- i. I have had moments like this.
 - 1. When I was sure I was doing what was right.
 - 2. I was sure I had a good plan.
 - 3. I was sure this would work, and it didn't.
 - 4. Then I go the Lord asking, "Why didn't this work out?"
- ii. Often the answer is the same to us as to the Disciples.
 - 1. "This only work with prayer and fasting."
 - 2. **There is no power without prayer.**

B. The power of prayer is in the connection to Jesus.

- i. **Every** religion in the world prays.
 - 1. Muslims pray multiple times a day.
 - 2. Buddhists pray or meditate.
 - 3. Wiccans have different forms and directions for their prayers.
- ii. What separates our prayers from the religions of the world is that Jesus hears and answers our prayers.
 - 1. It isn't the length, intensity, or number of our prayers that determines whether we are effective or not.
 - 2. **The effectiveness of our praying is found in Jesus.**
 - a. **Should** we all spend more time in prayer, Yes.
 - b. Should we pray with more intensity, Yes.
 - 3. **But the power of prayer is in Jesus not in us.**
- iii. The disciples were trying to do what Jesus did without Jesus.

1. And the result was failure.
2. **Without the connection to God that comes only through prayer, we are powerless to do what God has called us to do.**

C. Prayer and Fasting can only be done before the situation requires it.

- i. The disciples were not ready for this encounter, and there was no time to get ready.
 1. The prayer and fasting Jesus refers to is preparatory.
 2. When it is needed, there is no time to go and pray or to go and fast.
- ii. This kind of prayer is offensive in nature, not defensive.
 1. It is taking the battle to the enemy before the enemy attacks.
 2. It is being ready for the opportunity to pray before you know the opportunity exists.
 3. You don't know what or where, but you know there will come a time when someone will need to be prayed for and you will be ready.
- iii. The disciples did not expect to do ministry without Jesus, so they weren't ready for ministry when Jesus was away.

D. The Great news is we don't have to do ministry alone.

- i. You don't have to face your situation on your own power.
- ii. You don't have to be disconnected from Jesus and His presence and power.
- iii. You don't have to live a life isolated from God.

- iv. Because Jesus has made himself available to us through the ministry of the Holy Spirit and through the ministry of prayer.

If Today you feel like you are coming off a mountain into a desperate situation, there is hope.

A. Maybe everything in your life feels like it is falling apart.

- i. If, that is you, know that we love you and sympathize with you.
- ii. But better than that, is that today we are here to worship a compassionate Jesus.
- iii. He won't reject your cries, or despise your tears.
- iv. You also don't have to have it all together in order for Jesus to hear your prayers.
- v. His love for us goes out to search for us so that we might respond to Him.

B. Today, we once again go to God with our cares, concerns, dreams, and anxiety.

- i. And in our weakness, Jesus can show himself to be strong.
- ii. Here in just a moment, I want as many who will come to come to the front to pray and to encounter with Jesus.

C. I also want to encourage all of us here to stay connected with Jesus through prayer and other spiritual disciplines.

- i. What we face will require all us to be connected to Jesus.

- ii. We all need to pray more.
- iii. We all need to read the Bible more.
- iv. We all need to worship more.
- v. There will be people in our families and community that will come to us in need of a miracle and we must be ready to pray in faith and belief.

D. Let us take a moment this morning and pray.