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Text: Matthew 17:9-21
Title: Jesus Heals A Boy Possessed With a Demon!

Intro: After Jesus was transfigured and the three disciples were transformed, they left the mountain top. While they were coming down the mountain Jesus charged Peter, James, and John to say nothing concerning what they saw until His resurrection.

The disciples being confused about if Elijah would come before that great and dreadful day. The disciples were familiar with the teachings of Old Testament prophecy concerning the coming of Elijah to turn the hearts of men. Malachi 4:5-6, ***“Behold, I will send Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.”*** Peter, James, and John saw Elijah with Jesus on the mountain. But they didn’t see any hearts turned.

Jesus gives the disciples clarity concerning the prophecy of Elijah. Verse 12-13 Jesus said, ***“Elijah will indeed come first and restore all things. But I say to you, that Elijah has already come, and they knew him not, but have done to him whatever they listed. Likewise, shall also the Son of man suffer of them.”*** Jesus refers to John the Baptist as the Elijah to come. John the Baptist was not a reincarnate Elijah. John the Baptist came in the spirit of Elijah. John the Baptist was the partial fulfillment of Malachi’s prophecy. Jesus said in Matthew 11:13-14, ***“All the prophet and the law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come.”***

He had already come, and they had missed him. They had rejected the message of the Elijah to come and did to him whatever they wanted. Here they had "the Elijah" right in front of them—the fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy—and they killed him!

Jesus said to Peter, James, and John don’t tell anyone what you saw.

At the bottom of the mountain a chaotic crowd awaited Jesus. A man brought his son to the nine disciples, and they could not cast the demon out of him. The boy is said to be an epileptic. In the original language he is a lunatic.

To get somewhat an understanding of the boy’s condition we will need to examine the gospel of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Luke 9:38 says that the boy was this man's only son. Mark 9:22, says that these things were happening to the boy "from childhood." Matthew 17:15 says that the boy would suffer greatly; and that he "often falls into the fire or into the water." Mark, in his Gospel said that the boy was afflicted with deafness and has an inability to speak (Mark 9:25). Mark also said that this evil spirit would seize the boy and throw him to the ground. It would cause him to foam at the mouth, gnash his teeth, and become stiff (Mark 9:17). Luke said that the spirit would only depart from the boy with great difficulty; and even then, would cause him great physical harm in the process (Luke 9:39).

The demon caused the boy and his father to suffer. The man brought his son to the nine disciples, and the nine disciples could not deliver him from demonic possession.

The nine disciples by their own power were no match for the demon. Earlier, Christ gave them authority and power to cast out demons (Matthew 10:8). However, they couldn't use the power and authority at their own discretion. They could only do what He had given them the power and authority to do; and they could never do anything apart from Him having first giving them the power and authority to do it.

An important aspect to consider is pointed out in Mark 9:14. Mark says, "**When He came to the disciples, He saw a great multitude around them, and scribes disputing with them.**" Up to this point, the religious leaders were in constant disagreement with Jesus and His ministry. And now, when He comes, He finds them "disputing" with the nine disciples.

It is obvious that the scribes wanted to discredit Jesus' ministry through the failure of His disciples. Their helplessness, and inability to do anything to advance the ministry of Jesus in their own power. The religious leaders were mocking the nine for their failure to cast out the demon. They were saying, "We thought your Master was all-powerful. We thought He had authority over demons. Where is the power and authority of your Master now?"

Jesus expresses frustration at their faith. In Verse 17, Jesus said, "**You unbelieving and perverse generation, how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy here to me.**"

They were a perverse generation because of their unbelief. The word "perverse" means "twisted" and "turned out of the way." In other words, their faith was twisted, they were turned out of the way of Christ. They had a perverted faith. Unbelief is perverted faith. AW Tozer said, 'Unbelief is actually perverted faith, for it puts its faith not in the living God, but in dying men.'

- I. The Exorcism by Christ: Jesus quickly drives the demon from the boy. Verse 18 says, "**Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of the boy, and he was healed at that moment.**"
 - A. Jesus shows His Sovereignty over demons. Christ rules over all things. Christ rules over all creation. Christ rules over all forces of evil. Demons know they must obey Christ. Verse 18 simply says, Jesus rebuked the demon, and the demon came out of the boy. The word "rebuke" is a combination of force of reproof and command. Jesus reproved the demon for afflicting the child and commanded him to come out. The demon could not resist Christ. The demon's obedience to Christ shows the sovereignty of Christ. Matthew 8:28-32 also reveals the sovereignty of Christ over demons. When Jesus and His disciple went ashore in the country of the Gergesenes two demon possessed men met them. Jesus' encounter with the demons reveals His sovereign rule over them. Three things to note from Jesus' encounter with demons. The demons know who Jesus is. They referred to Jesus as the Son of God (Matthew 8:29).

The demons recognize Jesus' power to control their destiny. Matthew 8:29, *they asked Jesus if He was there to torment them before the time.*

The demons recognize Jesus' power to deliver the men from their control. Verse 31 says, *"So the devils besought Him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine."*

Christ was able to exorcise the demon from the boy by His sovereign power. The sovereign power of Christ is seen throughout the Bible. In Genesis He could curse Satan by virtue of His authority. In the book of Job Satan is only free to do as much as the Lord allows.

II. The Frustration of the Disciples: Verses 19-21

A. Why couldn't we cast out that demon: (Verse 19) *Then the disciples came to Jesus in private and asked, "Why couldn't we drive it out?" Then the disciples came to Jesus in private and asked, "Why couldn't we drive it out?"*

B. You didn't have enough faith (Verse 20) *He replied, "Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."*

Jesus recognizes unbelief, faithlessness, uncertainty, distrust, want of confidence in His power as the reason for the nine's failure to cast out the demon. The nine didn't have faith the size of a mustard seed. Jesus said in Matthew 13:32, "A mustard seed is less than all seeds." A mustard seed is about the size of a pen head. If you have faith the size of a pen head that's placed in Christ nothing is impossible

Small faith moves huge obstacles. Small faith that is real and trustful moves colossal barriers.

The reason the nine could not cast out the demon was misplaced faith.

Close: Jesus said in Verse 21, *"This kind goes out but by prayer and fasting."*

Prayer is turning to God the Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, in utter dependency on Him. Fasting is a turning away from reliance on oneself.

The smallest faith if it trusts in Christ can do the impossible.