

# Do You Believe?

## “What is Faith?”

Mark 9:14-29

And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and scribes arguing with them. And immediately all the crowd, when they saw him, were greatly amazed and ran up to him and greeted him. And he asked them, “What are you arguing about with them?”

And someone from the crowd answered him, “Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a spirit that makes him mute. 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.”

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.” 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. And Jesus asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?”

And he said, “From childhood.

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.” And Jesus said to him, “If you can! All things are possible for one who believes.” Immediately the father of the child cried out and said,

“I believe; help my unbelief!”

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.” 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.”

But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?” And he said to them, “This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.”

What “faith is NOT”-

- . Not merely having positive vibes/emotions.
- . Not just “trying harder”
- . Not total or absolute certainty.
- . Not blind.

“Faith is trying to believe  
what you know ain’t so.”  
Mark Twain

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the “conviction” of things not seen.  
Heb. 11:1

Though unseen –  
“assurance” with Biblical faith  
“conviction with Biblical faith

Four forms of unbelief  
. The Skeptic-  
- stands on the sidelines of faith

Great crowd – scribes arguing with them (Mk. 9:14)

To choose “doubt” as a philosophy of life is akin to choosing immobility as a means of transportation.”  
John Ortberg

. The Cynic –  
- stands above with a critical spirit of faith.

Cynicism kills in the manner of frostbite; the only symptom is a deadening numbness. And even Christians are often tinged with this frostbite. Callousness and doubt numb us to life and joy. We find ourselves leaving the triumphant lyrics of the old hymns on the church doorstep, because they appear hopelessly out of step with the world waiting outside.  
Scott Sernau –  
Please Don’t Squeeze the Christian

Father to Jesus – “If you can do anything...” Mk. 9:23

Jesus – “All things are possible to him who believes.” Mk. 9:23

. The Rebel  
– stands against faith.  
... the obedience of faith.  
Rom. 1:5

C. S Lewis – Lost mom to cancer before he came to Christ. “I don’t believe in God and I’m angry with Him for not existing.”

“I want atheism to be true. It isn't just that I don't believe in God. I don't want the universe to be like that.”

Thomas Nagel - philosopher

. The Hypocrite –

- stands for faith, but fails to live by that faith.

O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? Mk. 9:19

The disciples had been given power over demons.

... gave them authority over unclean spirits. Mark 6:7

The disciples had seen

the power over demons.

And they cast out many demons....

Mark 6:13

But when their faith was opposed or tested - empty.

“The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting . It has been found difficult and left untried.” G.K Chesterton

Obstacles of faith

. Unanswered questions

(Intellectual Crisis)

Why do demons hurt people? Children?

Why my son and not another?

Why does God allow evil? Suffering?

“terrible convulsions”

From childhood – demon would throw his son into the fire or water to destroy him.

“foaming at the mouth”

. Unanswered prayers

(Spiritual crisis)

I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able.

Mark 9:18

Why could we not cast it out?

Mk. 9:28b

Unanswered Prayer?

. Wrong motive? (James 4:3)

. Wrong relationships?(1 Pet. 3:7)

- . Wrong attitude? (Ps. 66:18)
- . Wrong timing? (Lk. 2:25)
- . Wrong focus? (Col. 3:12)

. Unanswered desires  
(heart crisis)

Why are you cast down, O my soul?  
Why are you in turmoil within me?  
Ps. 42:11

These all died in faith, not having received the things promised...  
Heb. 11:13

Stages of faith  
. Doubt without faith  
“faithless generation”  
Mk. 9:19

“Double-minded”  
James 1:9

Faith comes from hearing and hearing through the word of Christ.  
Rom. 10:17

Looking to Jesus – the founder and perfecter of our faith.  
Heb. 12:2

. Doubt with faith

The father of the child cried out and said, “I believe, help my unbelief.”  
Mk. 9:24

The Lord is not limited by imperfect faith; even the strongest faith is always mixed with a measure of doubt.  
John MacArthur, Jr.

. Faith with substance  
What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith, but does not have works  
Can that faith save him? James 2:14

I will show you my faith by my works.  
James 2:18b

Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built this house on the rock. Matt. 7:24

Requirements for faith

. Faith requires our minds - intellect

And you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.

Jn. 8:32

“There is simply no one more worth trusting than –JESUS”

John Ortberg

“Faith is a free surrender and a joyous wager on the unseen, unknown, untested goodness of God.” Martin Luther

. Faith requires our hearts

Emotion - Passion

Seek the Lord with all your heart.

Jer. 29:13

Love the Lord with all your heart.

Matt. 22:37.

. Faith requires our will –

Commitment

If anyone’s will is to do God’s will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on My own authority. Jn. 7:17

If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead – you will be saved. Rom. 10:9