

The Gospel of Mark- Chapter 9 Part 2

If you would be turning with me in your Bibles over to the 9th chapter of the Gospel of Mark. As most of you are familiar, we have been attempting to exposit our way through this book chapter by chapter and verse by verse. We are now I believe somewhere around our 38th week in this study and this marks our second week of course in this chapter as you can easily see on the screens behind me. The people at home never see that, so they never have the spoiler alert like you do.

Now a couple of really big things have happened recently in this gospel. Things certainly worth reminding ourselves of at this point. First in chapter 8, we saw that the disciples were fully convinced that Jesus was indeed the Messiah.

Now a lot of people thought he was a prophet. Some even thought that he was Elijah preparing the way for the Messiah, but they didn't think him to be the Messiah because he didn't come in power. His glory during his ministry has been veiled by human flesh. He was not the kind of guy they were looking for.

Nonetheless, the Apostles now having seen Jesus fulfill those things also spoken of by the prophets of old like: the healing of the deaf, and the blind, and the lame were now able, by the revelation of the Father, able to recognize him as the Messiah. The Christ of God.

I've mentioned on more than a few occasions, one of the great purposes of this book was to reveal to those who would read this Gospel that Jesus is the Christ. John states that in the first verse of this book. That said, this is the first time in this gospel that we have this related by the Apostles. The first time we see their full belief. We also saw, immediately following that revelation the Lord spoke about his death, which, by the way, is going to be a subject that comes up more and more frequently in the

months to come and then we saw Jesus make a strange comment seemingly about how some would see him in glory before they would die.

Well it was only about a week later that we saw those words come true as Jesus ascended a mountain with Peter, James, and John and they saw a glimpse of the glory of Christ in the transfiguration and were overshadowed by the very presence of the Father speaking out to them telling them to listen to his son.

One of the other great purposes of this gospel was to show Jesus not only was the Messiah, but also was the Son of God. That truth was revealed to us last time by proclamation of the Father himself in a spectacular moment there on the mount of transfiguration.

Now with those two great revelations fresh in the back of our minds, let's read the passage that is before us today as we look at the healing of young man with an unclean spirit.

Mar 9:14 And when he came to his disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them.

Mar 9:15 And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to him saluted him.

Mar 9:16 And he asked the scribes, What question ye with them?

Mar 9:17 And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit;

Mar 9:18 And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not.

Mar 9:19 He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me.

Mar 9:20 And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed

foaming.

Mar 9:21 And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child.

Mar 9:22 And ofttimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.

Mar 9:23 Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

Mar 9:24 And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

Mar 9:25 When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.

Mar 9:26 And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead.

Mar 9:27 But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose.

Mar 9:28 And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out?

Mar 9:29 And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.

I know this is a special passage to many people. I think of my dear friend in the faith and pastor Mark Campbell. This was a very special passage to him when his son was an infant and having some significant medical issues that seemed pretty bleak. I think one of the first times he ever preached here he spoke about this text and his own situation many years ago. Glad to report since then his son has finished nursing school and gotten married. So, doing very well. I have no doubt it is a special passage to others as well. There really is a lot to draw from in this text.

Now let's journey back to verse 14 for a minute.

Mar 9:14 And when he came to his disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them.

Our verse here speaks of him, that is Jesus, coming to his disciples. Luke tells us this was the next day after the transfiguration and Jesus was returning with Peter, James, and John to the other nine Apostles.

When he got to the Apostles, Jesus saw this crowd around them, and we are told that the nine were being questioned by the scribes. They weren't being questioned in a good way either right? Every time we see the scribes or the Pharisees around, we see them trying to cast doubt on Jesus. Cast down on his authority. They weren't here to build up and edify the nine. They were here to cast doubt on the one they followed.

Now, it's been awhile since we last saw Jesus with the Pharisees debating them himself. It would almost seem as if they have left Jesus alone for the time being since he had put a stop to them several times. Nonetheless, they seized the opportunity to hammer the nine with questions and sow doubt into their minds.

I don't think Jesus was too pleased with this as we read the tone conveyed in a couple of verses from now. But for now, let's keep reading.

Mar 9:15 And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to him saluted him.

Though we cannot know what was being said exactly between the Scribes and the Apostles. It seems to have at least in part been centered around the young man of this passage to some degree. Remember the apostles had been given authority to cast out unclean spirits already. It appears they were attempting to do this and when they couldn't the scribes started in with their own accusations of doubt over the situation and ridiculing the authority of Jesus.

So, this crowd is around them listening to what is transpiring between the apostles, the pharisees, and this young man with an unrelentless, unclean spirit when Jesus now enters the scene. When the crowd sees Jesus, they know what great things that he has done and immediately they forget the words of the scribes and the failure that has taken place on the part of the apostles and now all eyes are on Jesus.

I'm sure as well the apostles were also coming to Jesus as fast as they could as well. Anything to take the heat off them and put it on Jesus because they knew that no situation was too big for him. I can just see them pointing the crowd to Jesus as they see him approach.

Let's look on.

Mar 9:16 And he asked the scribes, What question ye with them?

Now Jesus didn't have to ask this question. He already omnisciently knew what was going on here. Knew the situation that was waiting for him. I think he asks this question for the purpose of the crowd and the three apostles who were with him and didn't know what was going on.

The question almost seems a little pointed in the fact that Jesus is saying, if you are going to question them about me, you need to be questioning me and not them. That's the feeling I get when I read this.

So, Jesus asks the question and our next verse gives us the response he heard in return and again it seems in part what the Apostles and Scribes were debating about.

The answer to the question that Jesus poses neither comes from one of the scribes or the apostles, but rather quickly comes from this unknown man to us in the crowd.

Look again.

Mar 9:17 And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit;

This man brings his son to meet Jesus. Luke tells us in his gospel it is his only child. This man join's the list of people coming to plead for their only child before Christ. You will do just about anything for your kids. When it is your only kid you will do whatever it takes.

He tells Jesus that his son has a dumb spirit. That is this young man or child (we don't know his age), has been robbed from his ability to speak by this demonic possession. We don't know if it was all the time or just during one of his episodes.

Before we continue though, I want to remind everyone here that not all health conditions are the result of demonic possession. We know that some in scripture were born with infirmities of the flesh just so that God could be glorified. Saved people also cannot be demon filled and yet saved people have all kinds of infirmities of the flesh as well. Not all disease is because of demonic possession.

I know sometimes when we go through the gospels when there was a surge of demonic activity on the earth and we see seemingly demon after demon possession- we almost get the feeling that demons are the cause of all disease, but that is certainly not the case.

However, here that is exactly the case. The young man is in a world of hurt because of this demon. Not only was he not able to talk, look here. This is just horrible.

Mar 9:18 And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy

disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not.

Scripture here says taketh him and teareth him. Most modern versions say something like- seizes him and throws him to the ground. And then we have the description of foaming at the mouth and the gnashing teeth and that he pineth away which means he becomes rigid or stiff.

What we have here is the description of one who seemingly has epilepsy and he has these uncontrolled grand mal type of seizures. Remember there were no medications for this kind of stuff back then. It is hard enough to control today.

Now when it comes to this man, we have no idea where he was from or how far he had come to find Jesus. Maybe he was from this town. Maybe he had come from a distance. One thing is for sure though, he knew that Jesus was able to make his son whole. He heard what Jesus had done so many times before and he came knowing that Jesus could heal his only son.

So, he came seeking Jesus out, but Jesus was gone when he got there- remember Jesus and the three had been on the mount of transfiguration. Jesus' absence did not deter the man though from seeking help anyway he could. He went to the apostles, after all, they too by the name of Jesus had done many marvelous works so he brings his son to them first. They began to try to cast this spirit out with no success. This gave the scribes the opportunity to cast doubt on Jesus before the crowd.

You might think this man would be ready to give up, pack up, and go home, but that is when Jesus showed up on the scene and he would plead directly to our Savior.

Look at Jesus' response.

Mar 9:19 He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with

you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me.

The rebuke of Christ is reminiscent of rebukes in scripture from God towards the Israelites in the wilderness. People that had seen the mercies of God daily in providing food and water and deliverance, but yet always murmuring and complaining. Never fully trusting in God when situations looked like there was little hope.

Now the question is to whom is Jesus speaking to here when he speaks of the faithless generation? Some say he is speaking to the nine and others say that he is speaking to the scribes.

You know who I think he is speaking too? All that were there in unbelief. The apostles with little faith that had tried and failed though they had seen the power of what they could do in the name of Jesus and the scribes that were always quick to doubt Jesus asking for signs when signs were all around them.

Who is it that Jesus is speaking to here? All those there that day that were doubting, that is who he is speaking too.

Then Jesus asks this question and really, I think this brings it home to the apostles. He asks how long shall I be with you? That little phrase is nestled in this verse is what the apostles have already been told that the scribes didn't know. Jesus alludes here to his death. He is going to die. He is going to be killed. That isn't that far away and the apostles know it. The question Jesus is asking the apostles is how much longer do I have to be here before you understand what you can do in my name?

At this point the child now is brought to Jesus. We again have no idea how old he is but seems to be fairly young. Now look again what happens when they bring him.

Mar 9:20 And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare

him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming.

Now I want you to rewind with me in your minds as we have come through Mark what have we seen when Jesus was in the presence of one with a demon? Remember the first instance in Mark the man in the synagogue in chapter 1?

When Jesus was there in the midst of this man we read that he cried out:

Mar 1:24 Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.

How about the man that was possessed with the legion of demons, that is thousands of demons—the maniac of Gadara?

Mar 5:6 But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him,

Mar 5:7 And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.

When in the very presence of Jesus those demons cried out for mercy. This unclean spirit did not act that way. This is a cantankerous demon if there ever was one. This demon in the presence of Jesus didn't cry out for mercy. This demon in the presence of Christ seized the child again. Sent him right into a violent seizure in front of Jesus.

This demon wasn't going to leave this young man without putting up his best fight so to say. He was going to do as much harm for as long as he could. No wonder the apostles had trouble with him.

Let's look at the next couple of verses together.

Mar 9:21 And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child.

Mar 9:22 And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.

Again, Jesus asks these questions for the benefit of everyone else. Here we get a better history of what has been going on with this young man. He's suffered for years with this and at times it would appear the devil within is doing his utmost to kill him. Causing these violent seizures when he is next to a fire or water. Who knows how many burns were on his body as his dad would rescue him time and time again or from drowning. What a miserable life this young man has lived and what a great hardship it has been on his parents to constantly care for him.

This is a dad who loves his child and he would do anything for him. Right now, he understands that Jesus is his only hope.

Let's read on,

Mar 9:23 Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

This is a pretty quoted verse. Bet you've heard it on many occasions. Probably didn't hear it attached to the context of these verses, but you've heard it. Maybe you might have it up on one of those plaques or wall hangings in your office.

Can I just say that this verse is not telling us if we have enough faith we can fly or stop the earth from rotating or hit the mega millions jackpot. Let's do our best keep things in context as much as possible.

Jesus is speaking to this man about the healing of his son. Tells him if he believes it is possible. Now do you think the man believed Jesus could? He brought his son there. He even tried to let the apostles expel the demon. When they couldn't and he saw Jesus he went straight to

him. Does this man have faith? Yeah, I think he does. As much faith as we have seen anyone else come to Jesus with.

But look here,

Mar 9:24 And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

Instead of focusing on the faith that caused him to seek out Jesus, this man is honest and says-yes, I believe, but I have doubts. It might be small. But Jesus I know you can help my unbelief.

This man is in a desperate need crying out to Jesus. He wants this miracle more than anything. He wants nothing to stand in the way. He doesn't want his own doubts to stand in the way.

Let's read on,

Mar 9:25 When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.

At the beginning of this verse we see this phrase "the people came running together". This means that Jesus saw the crowd was getting bigger. Other people were now running over to see what was going on. They wanted to see what Jesus was going to do.

At this time, before the crowd grew larger, he charged this foulest of foul unclean spirits to come out of the man and to never return. This would keep him from coming back and reentering the man after Jesus left. Torturing him again.

Now usually when Jesus said that we don't read anything else about the unclean spirit's effect on the body of the one they possessed. Here though we see this one goes out kicking and screaming

so to say. He's going to leave doing as much hurt as he can.

Mar 9:26 And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead.

The young man was in such poor physical shape when the unclean spirit left they thought he was dead. Nonetheless, in that limp state that young man was better off than he had been in a long time. For the first time in a long time he was free and whole.

And here is one of the best parts.

Mar 9:27 But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose.

Just like Jesus did with so many that we have read about. He touched them. Jesus touched the people that he healed. Often those who were considered outcasts. He touched them.

Here was a young man that because of his affliction would have been an outcast of society. Most people would have avoided him. Such a sad thing. Yet Jesus as he did for the blind, the deaf, the lepers he reached out and touched this young boy who was no made whole.

I love that.

Now the crowd fades away. The young man and father walk away and Jesus and his apostles go there way too.

But we are left with these two verses at the end.

Mar 9:28 And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out?

Mar 9:29 And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.

These men had cast out demons before. This time they were unable. When they were unable doubt, no doubt, sat in. In privacy, they asked Jesus why they couldn't.

His response was they weren't prepared spiritually. Perhaps things had seemed so easy in the past, they got used to it being easy. Maybe they begin to focus on the abilities given to them by Christ rather than the one from whom these gifts flowed.

When Jesus says this one comes out only by prayer and fasting this shows they were not relying on God as they should have. They were quick to act thinking they understood the will of God.

As we come to the end of our text today let us reflect upon our own selves and our own lives for just a moment.

First of all, how many times do we act like this faithless generation that is mentioned here? God has made so many promises. God is in such great control. We have seen his hand work over and over in our lives, but when times get rough how often do we look to the mountain instead of the one that can move mountains?

Secondly, how many times do we like these apostles seek to go into spiritual battle and not even prepare or seek to know for sure God's will. The greatest preparation for spiritual battle starts on our knees in prayer. Want to take it further in preparation- fast as well, taking that time to look to God for his guidance.

Thirdly, some of life's fights are just going to be harder than others. These apostles were expecting something easy because they were using the name of Jesus. Everything done in the name of Jesus doesn't come easy folks. This was the meanest of mean devils that was in this man and sometimes we are going to face the meanest of the mean. But rest assured Jesus is still in control and Jesus is able to stand victorious even over Satan himself.

Fourthly, let us draw from the example of the Father in this situation. He recognized the doubts that he had and asked Christ to help his unbelief. You know I have no doubt that there are things in life that are possible for us to do. Perhaps great things we could accomplish for the Lord and we don't because we walk in unbelief. We have faith he is able, but doubt he will for us. Let's learn to cry out even as this man did and ask the Lord to help our unbelief.