

Daily Bible Study

“If You Can?!” Part - 2

Mark 9:14-29

January 9 – January 15, 2011

THE LORD’S DAY & MONDAY – After several weeks away we now return to our study in Mark and look at part 2 of our study from **Mark 9:14-29**. In this text we saw a major shift of scenery from the transcendent, magnificent glory of Jesus on the mount of transfiguration to a scene which is anything but glorious; it is confusion, disorder, and pain. By way of review, we saw a man with a demon possessed boy had come to get deliverance for his son and the disciples were unable to cast out the evil spirit. This caused a *dispute* among the scribes and disciples and the curious onlookers were also involved. Jesus arrives on the scene and speaks some amazing lines concerning this *faithless generation*. He also gives an emotional lament as He says *How long shall I bear with you?* The boy is brought to Jesus, He asks the father some questions, the father explains to Jesus the torment of his son and then says to Jesus, *If You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us*. Jesus deals with this statement of “*If You can*” and then calls the man to *believe*. The man responds to Jesus and Christ casts out the evil spirit. Afterward, in private the disciples ask Jesus why they could not cast out this spirit and Jesus answers them with words that teach them and us a great lesson. Read our text: **Mark 9:14-29** “*And when He came to the disciples, He saw a great multitude around them, and scribes disputing with them. Immediately, when they saw Him, all the people were greatly amazed, and running to Him, greeted Him. And He asked the scribes, “What are you discussing with them?” Then one of the crowd answered and said, “Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit. And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. So I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not.” He answered him and said, “O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me.” Then they brought him to Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth. So He asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?” And he said, “From childhood. And often he has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.” Jesus said to him, “If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.” Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!” When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!” Then the spirit cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead, so that many said, “He is dead.” But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?” So He said to them, “This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting.”*”

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

Suggestion for Prayer: *Father God, Please teach and feed me from Your Word this week.*

TUESDAY – We left off our verse by verse look last time in **Mark 9:19** *He answered him and said, “O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me.”* Jesus broadly spreads His complaint toward not merely those in this specific situation, but all those in general who have a lack of faith in Him and His power. The faltering disciples, the father with weak faith, the mocking scribes, and the *faithless generation* in general is in view here in Christ’s words. It is interesting to note that Jesus will point out later in the text the disciples problem of deficient faith was brought on and magnified by their lack of persevering prayer (**Mark 9:29**). Jesus next statement contrasts His total trust in The Father with the people’s lack of faith and trust in Him when Christ literally says in today’s vernacular, *How long shall I put up with you?* Think about that Beloved, Jesus was grieved that the people even His own, were so weak in their trust and faith in Him (God). He obviously has the end of His ministry in view here as He knows the cross is the final destination of this The Faithful One for the sins of a faithless and weak-faith people. Instead of “losing it” and “lashing out” in a difficult and frustrating circumstance as we often do, Jesus sets the example of patience and proper behavior under a stressful situation as He points men to Himself, the God of love, patience, and unlimited power as He says, *Bring him to Me*. This is an epic and heartwarming statement to all of us in Christ as we know that in coming to Him, and believing in Him we find all we need to deal with any circumstance of life. *Bring him to Me*; these four words say more than I could possibly attempt to express or explain in and with my human reasoning. Jesus is the answer to ALL of life’s problems. Is it possible that it is so simple? Yes. It is all about the person and work of Jesus our Savior. It was Christ who said, *Come unto Me all you that labor...and I will give you rest...* (**Matthew 11:28**).

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

Suggestion for Prayer: *Jesus, thank You for being the all-sufficient Savior. Help me to come to You by faith in all of life’s situations and find in You the answers, peace, strength, and example I need.*

WEDNESDAY – **Mark 9:20-22a** *“Then they brought him to Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth. So He asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?” And he said, “From childhood. And often he has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him.”* We see that this is more than a case of Epilepsy in the fact that the boy’s symptoms and pain are brought on by *the spirit* that was in him. It is possible that the demon within this boy sees Jesus, knows that his time was short and in rage and indignation puts the boy to further pain and misery which by

God's grace is about to end. The text tells us that when *he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth*. As the boy lays there on the ground, Jesus inquires of the father as to how long this has been going on. The father responds with, *From childhood*. In the Greek the word used is Paidiothen which comes from the word for infant. This is the word used of Jesus as a baby in the New Testament. So we see that this boy was suffering from birth under the curse of original sin. This was not happening to him for a specific sin he had committed, as some people back then thought was the cause of these possessions and illnesses; but rather we are given a clear picture of the horror of all men who are born sinners. As Scripture says, *"The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies"* (**Psalms 58:3**). In light of this fact, both this boys and our need of Jesus is magnified. We are born sinners, enemies of God, separate from Him and need His Divine intervention to save us. The remainder of the fathers response, *"And often he has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him"* indicates to us that Satan (**1 Peter 5:8**) and sin (**Genesis 4:7**) seek to destroy while Jesus has come to seek and save (**Luke 19:10**).

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

Suggestion for Prayer: *Father, thank You for sending Jesus to come rescue me a lost sinner. Thank You Jesus, that You indeed have power over Satan, and sin and are capable and willing to save.*

THURSDAY – **Mark 9:22b-23** *"But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us."* Jesus said to him, *"If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes."* We find this situation at a point which is not only serious but one that appears very hopeless to a person without faith. This father we will see is a man that is discouraged but not entirely without faith in Jesus. His conversation with Christ does not start off real well. We have spoke often by way of illustration of the question that is asked the teacher, "Can I use the bathroom?" We pointed out that most teachers will correct the student to ask "May I..." rather than "Can I..." The reason is that "Can" is a question of ability while "May" is a question of permission or desire. Jesus here in this verse is asked a question of ability by this father. The answer is obvious; He "Can" do all things. It would appear that the father is convinced of Jesus desire to help them but is concerned with His ability to do so. It is as he is asking himself, "Can he really deliver my son?" The father implies that Jesus might be able to help but he is not sure; the reason being he lacks sufficient faith. I want to draw your attention way back to chapter 1 of Mark we saw something interesting in verse 40; *"Now a leper came to Him, imploring Him, kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, "If You are willing, You can make me clean."* The leper in this verse has the complete opposite approach and mindset of the father in our current verse. He says to Jesus, "You can do this for me but are you willing?" while in our current text we find the father asking, "I believe Your willing to do this, but can You?" Both of these verses use the same word in the Greek for "can"; that is the word dunamai, which comes from a family of words including dunamis, (which is often translated "power" see—**Acts 1:8, Romans 1:16**). This Greek word is where our English word dynamite is derived. Jesus puts the issue back on the man pointing out the problem is not with His power but with this man's faith.

This is our lesson as well. Jesus clearly says, “*If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.*” It’s not whether Jesus is able but rather if you believe. Beloved, He is *compassionate* and pities us as His children (**Psalms 103:13**), but also calls us to faith (**Hebrews 11:6**).

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

Suggestion for Prayer: *Father, I praise You for being all powerful and for loving me abundantly. Help me come to You trusting Your power & ability and understanding Your compassion for me.*

FRIDAY & SATURDAY – **Mark 9:22b-23** “*Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!” When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!” Then the spirit cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead, so that many said, “He is dead.” But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?” So He said to them, “This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting.”* We find that the father got the point Jesus was making to him as *Immediately he cried out and said with tears, “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!”* This statement by the man, five words in the original Greek, describes a sincere profession of faith in Jesus by any true believer (kurios-Lord, pisteuo-to think to be true, to be persuaded of, boetheo-to help, mou-my, apistia-unfaithfulness, faithless). The father tells Jesus that he did indeed possess the God given faith that Jesus demanded but in his sinful fallen condition it was not a perfect faith but was attacked by doubts and fears. Jesus seeming to not provoke or encourage vain curiosity *saw the people running together* and He brings this incident to a quick conclusion. He deals with the evil spirit and commands it to come out of the boy and never return. The spirit does indeed follow Christ’s order but with an illustration and reminder of evil sinfulness; the spirit cries out and is violent. If God allows, there is much more that we will discuss and point out this upcoming Lord’s Day from this story. One thing we learn is not only did the father lack sufficient faith in Jesus but the disciples as well. The lessons here in the text were lessons for both the father of the boy and us as well.

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

Suggestion for Prayer: *Father, help me always come to You believing. Strengthen my weak faith.*