

# Hope for the Hopeless Case

Mark 9:14-29

Introduction:

1. Let's notice the scene – vs 14-15
  - a. Peter, James and John had been on the mountaintop with Jesus but now they return to the real world
  - b. When they came down they found the other nine disciples in an argument with some scribes
  - c. It was a noisy scene as the nine were being heckled and mocked by a group of smug and sneering scribes
  - d. A desperate father had brought his demon-possessed child to Jesus for healing but Jesus was on the mountain
  - e. Since Jesus was not there, the disciples would have to cast out the demons from the boy
  - f. No doubt the scribes were delighting in the failure of the disciples and they were probably using the opportunity to argue that Jesus lacked power also
  - g. Whenever God opens the windows of heaven to bless you, Satan will open the doors of hell to blast you
2. Let's notice the set-back – vs 16-18
  - a. Before the scribes could start in attacking Christ, He asked them what the questioning was all about.
  - b. The father of the boy answered Jesus' question
  - c. The man had brought his son to Jesus; only the disciples were present and they could not help the man.
  - d. The scribes questioned the disciples, in hopes of discrediting them for their failure and discrediting Christ

## I. The Affliction – vs 17-26

- The problem of demon possession was no small problem.
- See the adversities which this affliction brought on the boy

### A. The Demon - "*Spirit*."

1. The word "*spirit*" is used 5x to speak of the demon.
2. Demon possession was a burdensome plague when Christ was on earth.

### **B. The Dumbness and Deafness – vs 17 and vs 25**

1. The demon in the child had affected the child's speech so he could not speak well.
2. Evil always affects the speech of a person and causes a person to speak badly.
3. Deafness and dumbness (muteness of speech) usually go hand in hand.
4. The devil makes us deaf to the voice of God and dumb to speak the truth of God.

### **C. The Distress – vs 18 – “teareth,” “foameth,” “gnasheth,” “pineth away”**

1. The word translated “teareth” means “to convulse” (Trench) and “spasmodic contractions” (Strong).
2. Devil is in the business of making people dysfunctional
3. Evil speaking can be described the same way.
4. When people are gnashing or grinding their teeth, they are not happy but in distress.
5. This is the work of sin and Satan.
6. The work of sin and the devil is to wear out the person.
7. Our bodies are not made to last, and that is a result of sin.

### **D. The Destruction – vs 22**

1. The demon-possessed boy when having a convulsion would be in danger of drowning or being burnt up.
2. The devil is not in the business to bless but destroy.
3. Sin destroys a person.

### **E. The Duration – vs 21**

1. Early in life this boy was afflicted by a demon.
2. The duration of the affliction reminds us that we are born sinners.
3. The devil wants your children / grand-children
4. Man is born with a sin nature.
5. Evil begins to manifest itself in a person at a very young age. Christ is the only solution to this problem.
6. When one deals with something for a long time, whether it is an illness or addiction, it is easy to lose hope that anything or anyone could help

7. Imagine what it would have been like to have been in is this father's place
  - a) *While other fathers are teaching their son a trade, this father is just trying to keep his son alive*
  - b) *Problems like this effect the entire family and the family becomes defined by the problem*
  - c) *"There is that family with the demonic child."*
  - d) *"No honey, you can't play with that child - he is a demon possessed child."*
  - e) *People would keep their distance from that family*
8. This boy's condition demanded constant attention
  - a) *The father could not leave the son unattended because who knew when the next attack would come*
  - b) *That father was alert and on call 24 /7*
  - c) *He was desperate, tired and his appeal in vs 22 reflects both*

## **II. The Appeal – vs 18, 20, 22-24**

- The father made a great appeal to Christ for help.
- The disciples failed so now he comes to Jesus.

### **A. The Cause – “and they could not” – vs 18**

1. The deficiency of the disciples - *"They could not."*
  - a) *They did not have the spiritual power to terminate the demon problem.*
  - b) *"They could not" could be written over the doors of many churches today, for they are unable to do much of anything to stop the tide of evil.*
2. The dishonor from the disciples - *"Thy disciples."*
  - a) *The fact the failure was in Christ's disciples brought dishonor to Christ.*
  - b) *The enemies of Christ would rejoice in this failure of the disciples, for it reflected negatively upon Christ.*
  - c) *How we act as believers can either honor or dishonor our Savior.*
  - d) *Too often believers bring much shame and dishonor to Christ by their unsavory conduct and conversation.*
3. A powerless church portrays Jesus in a bad light
  - a) *Because the disciples lacked power, the father assumed that Jesus lacked power too*

- b) *When the lost walk into a church building and they see deadness, coldness, apathy, then the lost assume that Jesus is just as lifeless, just as powerless and just as dead*
- c) *Lets not be guilty of false advertising - claiming to have something to offer the world but having nothing but cold, dead, religion that helps no one*
- 4. Weak faith is better than no faith at all
  - a) *The father was filled with doubts, but still there was a kernel of faith*
  - b) *It isn't large faith that receives big answers from God - it is genuine faith*
- 5. The disciples had been successful earlier when they cast out demons
  - a) *But after only a week without the Savior nearby the disciples were powerless*
  - b) *When people come to our church to worship with us*
- 6. Corrie Ten Boom said, "God is more grieved by powerless Christians than by powerful atheists!"

### **B. The Compassion – vs 22**

- 1. The man did not demand help, he did not seek it through merit but sought it through "*compassion.*"
- 2. Divine compassion for the sinner is great
  - a) *Joh 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*
  - b) *If you need help from God, appeal to His compassion, not your character, and you will get much help.*

### **C. The Capability - "If thou canst..." – vs 22**

- 1. This was not a statement of faith – it showed doubt
- 2. It was a sharp contrast to what a leper had said before he was healed.
- 3. He said, "*If thou wilt, thou canst*" ([Mark 1:40](#)).
- 4. The leper did not question the power of Christ, rather he left the healing up to the will of Christ.
- 5. Christ's capability has been proven again and again. To say "*If thou canst*" speaks of unbelief.

#### **D. The Correction – vs 23**

1. Christ corrects the capability statement.
2. It wasn't whether Christ could cast out the demon but whether or not the man could believe.
3. It is not Christ's weakness but man's weakness that is the problem.

#### **E. The Condition – vs 23 – “If thou canst believe”**

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

1. The condition for help from Christ was faith.
2. This is always the condition for blessing.
3. Unbelief does not gain blessings from God, only faith gains Divine blessings.
4. Unbelief will be cast into hell but faith gains heaven.

#### **F. The Confession – vs 24**

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

- The father made quite a noble confession here.
  1. The faith in the confession. *"I believe."*
  2. The fervency in the confession. *"Cried out... with tears."*
    - a) *This man was earnest in appealing for help and in making his confession.*
    - b) *If you want God to be earnest in answering your request, you need to be earnest in making them.*
  3. The failure in the confession. *"Help thou mine unbelief."*
    - a) *The man acknowledged his unbelief and asked God to help him overcome his lack of faith.*
    - b) *What Christian does not "cry out, and say with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief?"*
  4. We can criticize this father, at least he was being honest
    - a) *"Lord, I believe in what you can do... I think"*
    - b) *"Lord, I believe in your power.... or at least I want to believe in your power."*
    - c) *Confessing faltering faith is better than faking faith*
  5. Even believers can be nagged by doubts / hopelessness
    - a) *John the Baptist – Matt 11:1-6*
    - b) *Jesus didn't condemn him, he reassured him*

6. There is probably no feeling of desperation so intense as a parent who cannot help his child
7. Jesus didn't say....
  - a) *"Sorry, you don't have enough faith"*
  - b) *"Muster up some more faith and come back later"*
  - c) *"Sorry, a miracle can only happen if you have a certain quota of faith"*
8. The African Impala is capable of jumping nearly 9 feet in the air even though it is a small creature only 3.5 feet tall. Yet, did you know, that any zoo can keep the small creature confined with a stone wall only 4 feet high? Why? Because the impala will never jump anywhere unless it can see the place where its feet will land. Many of us don't operate by faith, but only by sight.

### **III. The Action – vs 25-27**

- With miraculous power Christ exorcised the demon from the boy with the demon.

#### **A. The Request - "Bring him unto me" – vs 19**

1. If Jesus is going to help, he must be brought to Him
2. Our world does not think highly of this request, for they do not think highly of Jesus Christ.

#### **B. The Rebuke – vs 25**

1. Sin must be rebuked if it is going to be defeated.
2. Our day is not that earnest in advancing holiness.
3. Folk want to tolerate sin, be nice to sin, and embrace sin before they want to rebuke it.
4. That is why we are not defeating sin in our world.

#### **C. The Requirement – vs 25**

- The requirement or charge for the demon was twofold.
  1. Leave promptly - *"Come out of him."*
    - a) *The demon must come out of the boy - no choice.*
    - b) *Christ was more powerful than the demon and had more authority.*
  2. Leave permanently - *"Enter no more into him."*
    - a) *Christ would deliver the boy permanently.*
    - b) *This is like salvation – it is permanent*

#### **D. The Resistance – vs 26**

**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.

1. Evil does not give up easily.
2. Like a bad tenant who has been evicted, he will do as much damage as possible before leaving.
3. The demon did so much evil that people thought the boy was dead after the demon left.
4. I can just hear the scribes saying, "You cured him all right - look at him, he's dead."

#### **E. The Raising – vs 27**

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

1. The demon tried to kill the child when he left him, but Jesus will have the final word.
2. He raised the child up to normality.
3. Christ is in the business of raising up people.
4. The devil casts them down, but Jesus raises them up.
5. Yet our legislatures and government make laws to favor evil and oppose the Lord.

### **IV. The Asking – vs 28-29**

**28** And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out? **29** And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.

- The exorcism caused the disciples concern about their failure, so they inquired after the miracle about their failure.

## Conclusion –

1. Power is available when we empty ourselves
  - a. Moody said, "I believe firmly that the moment our hearts are emptied of pride and selfishness and ambition and everything that is contrary to God's law, the Holy Spirit will fill every corner of our hearts. But if we are full of pride and conceit and ambition and the world, there is no room for the Spirit of God. We must be emptied before we can be filled."
  - b. Heb 21:1 and Isaiah 40:28-31**
2. Power is available when we yield ourselves
  - a. Eph 5:18 and Rom 6:13
  - b. To be filled with the Spirit is to be yielded to the Spirit
  - c. To be yielded means to relinquish or abandon our wills to God's
3. Power is available when we commit ourselves
  - a. Col 3:1** If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.
  - b. Commitment transforms a promise into reality
  - c. Commitment is the stuff from which character is made
  - d. Christianity today is more a matter of convenience than commitment
  - e. To be committed to God 99% is one percent to little  
God hasn't called us to be partially committed to Him, but to be totally committed to him
4. There is hope for your hopeless case
  - a. Do what you can
  - b. Then turn it over to the Lord, trusting and believing.

**14** And when he came to [*his*] disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them. **15** And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to [*him*] saluted him.

**16** And he asked the scribes, What question ye with them?

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

**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.

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**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.

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

**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.

**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.**

**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.

**Heb 12:1** Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

**Isa 40:28** Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, *that* the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? *there is* no searching of his understanding. **29** He giveth power to the faint; and to *them that have* no might he increaseth strength. **30** Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: **31** But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew *their* strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; *and* they shall walk, and not faint.

**Eph 5:18** And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

**Ro 6:13** Neither yield ye your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness unto God.

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