

Day 74, Mark 9

by David Servant

Jesus is gloriously transfigured, and we should have faith in Him, cutting off anything that causes us to stumble and hindering our relationship with God.

Scripture: 2 Peter 1:16

Topics: "Faith And Trust", "Overcoming Doubt"

Description

David Servant emphasizes the importance of faith and trust in Jesus, drawing from the experiences of Peter, James, and John witnessing the transfiguration and Jesus' disappointment in the lack of faith among the apostles. He highlights Peter's unwavering faith, even unto martyrdom, and contrasts it with the apostles' struggle with faith when faced with challenges. Servant underscores Jesus' response to doubt and the necessity of wholehearted belief, urging listeners to trust in Him despite difficulties and uncertainties.

Transcript

Peter, James and John, Jesus' inner-most circle, were quite privileged to see Him gloriously transfigured as He will appear in His kingdom. If they had any doubts about who He was before then, all doubts were erased, especially as they heard God say, "This is My beloved Son, listen to Him!" (9:7). They would never forget it, and decades later, a short time before his martyrdom, Peter would write:

For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased"--and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain (2 Pet. 1:16-18).

Peter sealed the truthfulness of his testimony with his own blood, as he was crucified for his faith. According to church father Origen, Peter requested to be crucified upside down, considering himself unworthy to die in the same manner as his Master. Peter's faith strengthens ours, as we know that he would not have been willing to suffer martyrdom to promote a lie.

It would be difficult to imagine how Jesus could have said these words, "O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you?"(9:19) without a tone of exasperation or anger in His voice! He was upset with the lack of faith of the nine apostles who were not with Him on the Mount

of Transfiguration, and who had failed to cast a demon out of a young boy. They had apparently made an attempt, commanding the demon to come out as they had done many times before (Mark 6:13), but this time were unsuccessful. According to Jesus, their faith was too little (Matt. 17:20), and prayer (perhaps accompanied with fasting) was the remedy (Matt. 17:21; Mark 9:29).

Jesus had no lack of faith, however, and even though the demon put on quite a show in His presence, He was not intimidated. When the boy's father requested His help by saying, "If you can do anything, take pity on us and help us," Jesus replied as if insulted (and I paraphrase): "If you can?' Of course I can! All things are possible to him who believes" (9:23). Jesus believed and delivered the boy.

We might as well face up to it---Jesus is understandably insulted when we don't trust Him. So instead of becoming angry with preachers who simply state what is obvious to anyone who reads the Bible honestly, why don't we become angry at ourselves for our lack of faith? And instead of blaming God for our failures, why don't we humble ourselves and admit our part? Faith pleases God (Heb. 11:6). Doubt displeases Him. So let's trust Him! Knowing that Jesus is justifiably angered by doubt, we know it must be possible for doubters to believe.

I sat in a large church last weekend and heard the pastor tell his congregation that they can never forfeit their salvation, because their holiness has nothing to do with whether or not they would gain entrance into heaven. But today I read Jesus' words to His closest disciples:

If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life crippled, than, having your two hands, to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched" (9:43-44).

Jesus repeated this same statement twice more, warning about feet and eyes that might cause one to stumble. So whom shall I believe, that mega-church pastor, or Jesus? I think I'll stick with Jesus!

At least 15 different interpretations for Jesus' metaphorical words in 9:49-50 about salt (and fire) have been suggested. None really satisfy me. But I'm not going to let that bother me. As Mark Twain quipped, "It ain't the parts of the Bible that I can't understand that bother me, it is the parts that I do understand."

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