

Jesus Casts Out a Demon His Disciples Couldn't Mark 9:14-29

by David Servant

Jesus teaches that faith is necessary for God's authority to work in our lives, and that prayer can increase our faith.

Scripture: Matthew 17:17, Matthew 17:20, Mark 9:23-29, Ephesians 6:10, Philippians 4:6, James 4:7, 1 John 4:4

Topics: "Faith And Prayer", "Spiritual Authority"

Description

David Servant preaches on the importance of faith and prayer in overcoming challenges, using the story of Jesus' disciples failing to cast out a demon as a lesson. Jesus highlighted the disciples' lack of faith as the primary reason for their failure, emphasizing the necessity of believing in God's promises. The demon's dramatic manifestations required stronger faith to expel, showing that greater challenges demand greater faith. Jesus' unwavering faith and authority over demons serve as an example for believers to trust in God's power and promises, even in the face of adversity.

Transcript

Jesus, Peter, James and John were just coming down from the mountain where Jesus had been transfigured when they found the other disciples engaged in an argument with some religious teachers. A man had brought them his son who was possessed by an evil spirit, but they had failed to cast it out.

We know that, prior to this, Jesus had given His disciples authority to cast out demons (see Matthew 10:1; Mark 3:14-15; Luke 9:1). And, prior to this, they had successfully cast out demons (see Mark 6:13). So why, this time, did they fail? When they later asked Jesus that very question, according to Mark's Gospel, He told them it was because that particular kind of demon could only be cast out through prayer. However, Matthew recorded Jesus' response as being: "You didn't have enough faith" (Matthew 17:20). Both Matthew and Mark were inspired by the Holy Spirit to write their books, and so we must conclude that Jesus gave both reasons as to why the disciples failed.

Lack of faith seems to have been the primary reason for their failure, because as soon as Jesus heard they'd failed, He lamented, "You stubborn, faithless [or, unbelieving] people! How long must I be with you until you believe?" (Matthew 17:17). Also, when the boy's father asked Jesus to help him if He could, Jesus responded, "If I can?...Anything is possible if a person believes" (Mark 9:23).

Even though the disciples had God-given authority to cast out demons, their authority didn't work unless they exercised faith. Again, this is proof that God's will doesn't always automatically come to pass in our lives. We must believe what God has said, or else we may not experience what God has promised. As Jesus said, "Anything is possible if a person believes" (Mark 9:23, emphasis added). Notice that what is possible depends upon each individual's faith.

In previous times when the disciples had successfully cast out demons, they must have had sufficient faith. Had their faith grown weaker? Probably not. I would be more inclined to think that this particular demon required stronger faith to expel than any demon they had previously dealt with. The reason is because this demon manifested itself in some very dramatic ways. It would take more faith to cast out a demon when it was making someone fall to the ground in violent convulsions, foam at the mouth and grind his teeth than it would to cast out a demon from a calm-looking person! Faith requires disregarding the contrary circumstances, and when the contrary circumstances are greater, greater faith is needed. It takes more faith to move a mountain than a molehill!

Perhaps that was why Jesus also said that this demon could only come out through prayer. Spending time in prayer can't increase anyone's authority over demons, but it can increase his faith in the authority he already possesses as he meditates on God's promises.

Possibly this demon put on the same show for the disciples as it did for Jesus, robbing them of their faith. But Jesus' faith didn't waver during His encounter. He was not afraid, and immediately upon hearing of His disciples' failure, commanded that the boy be brought to Him. As soon as the evil spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy to the ground in a violent convulsion, making him writhe and foam at the mouth. It was probably hoping to scare Jesus, stealing His faith, and thus continue to torture the boy. Jesus, however, was not moved by what He saw, and confidently commanded the demon to come out of the child and never enter him again. It reluctantly obeyed, screaming and throwing the boy into another convulsion as it came out. Finally, the boy was motionless, and the unbelieving crowd thought he had died. Jesus, of course, wasn't thinking such thoughts, and, taking the boy by the hand, helped him to his feet. That was one happy boy, one happy father, and one amazed crowd!

Q. Jesus asked the boy's father how long his son had been afflicted. What does this reveal to us about Jesus?

A. First, it reveals His compassion. As Jesus saw the boy's agony, He began wondering how long the boy had been suffering to such a degree. It also reveals to us, once again, that Jesus was not all-knowing, even though He was divine. He stripped Himself of omniscience when He became a man.

Q. The demon-possessed boy's father told Jesus that his son had suffered since childhood with his affliction, and the demon had often thrown his son into fire and water, trying to kill him. What does that tell you about demons?

A. It tells us how evil and wicked they are. This particular demon took a perverted pleasure in making a little boy suffer for years, torturing and trying to kill him.

Application: Thank God that Christians don't have to be afraid of demons or the devil, because Jesus has delivered us from their power. Because we have Jesus inside us, now they're afraid of us! We can learn from today's reading that when the devil puts on his best show to discourage us or fill us with fear, that means he is scared!

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/david-servant/jesus-casts-out-a-demon-his-disciples-couldnt-mark-914-29/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net