

## Bring Him To Me - radio

The scripture for our sermon today is found in Mark 9:14-29...

*“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. 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.** 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. 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. 23 Jesus said unto him, **If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.** 24 And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. 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.** 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.** 27 But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose. 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” (Mark. 9:14-29).*

I've entitled this message, “**Bring him to me.”**

## Introduction

In this scripture, a man is driven to the Lord Jesus Christ because an evil spirit controls his son. From early childhood, the devil often threw the boy into the fire and water, intending to destroy him. In great compassion towards the father, and with great power, the Lord Jesus Christ delivers the man's son, from the evil spirit. Notice, while Christ cast the devil out of the pleading father's only son, the scribes remained in their madness. This is always the way it is. This scene is a snapshot of humanity throughout time. King Solomon, the wisest man to ever live, king in Jerusalem, called "the preacher," said this in Ecclesiastes 9: "*The heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and **madness is in their heart while they live**, and after that they go to the dead*" (Eccl. 9:3). The Lord puts this scene before you and me today. Will we flee to Christ for salvation and faith to believe Him? Will we come to Christ to be delivered from the evil of our sin and its consequences, as this father did with his son, or will we remain in the blindness of our pride and unbelief, as these hypocritical mockers, these religious experts and this nameless, confused crowd? May God have mercy on you and me, by drawing us to see and call upon Christ, the great God and the only Savior of sinners (Acts 4:12)!

## Actors

In the scene presented to us in this scripture, there are six different characters or groups of people:

1. The **first** is **the evil spirit**. Evil spirits can and do control unbelievers. Until the Lord saves us, we are taken captive by the devil at his will. Paul told Timothy, "*24 the servant of the Lord must...in meekness instruct those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; 26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will*" (1 Tim. 2:24-26). We are unable to know God as He has revealed Himself in scripture until God shines His light. The devil is called "*the god of this world*" because he holds unbelievers in deception "*if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the*

*minds of them which believe not*" (2 Cor. 4:3-4). By nature, what we are aliens to God's saving grace. We live our lives according to the principles of the "*prince of the power of the air.*" (Eph. 2:3). Nothing short of a miracle of God's grace can deliver us (Acts 26:18). Men have no power against the deception of the devil. Scripture calls him a roaring lion who goes about seeking whom he will devour (1 Pet. 5:8). He has one intent, one aim: to destroy men. The way he destroys men is by deception. He lies about who Christ is. He lies about His salvation. He feeds man's natural sinful desire for his own glory. He convinces the world of ungodly and unbelieving men that salvation is a work in which we contribute something, that God can save only if we let Him, that Jesus is not the sovereign God of glory and the man Christ Jesus, but that He is either not God or did not come into the world, was born of a woman, was not a sinless man, and did not fulfill all of the will of God. The devil loves man's religion, because it mixes error with truth. But man's religion is the devil's lie. It is fatal. One of the biggest lies that the devil uses today is that God loves everybody, that Christ died for everybody, that the Spirit of God calls all men, but that only some are saved because they accept Jesus. This is the false doctrine of antichrist religion.

According to scripture, God loves and chose His people (Ps. 78:68; Eph. 1:4; 2 Thess. 2:13). According to scripture, Christ loved and died for the Church, all whom the Father gave Him to save (John 6:37-39; 10:15,17-18,26-29; 17:2; Rom. 8:32; Eph. 5:25). According to scripture, men believe, not because they choose to believe, but because they were ordained to eternal life and because God the Father draws them to Christ (Acts 13:48; John 6:44-45). Men believe because Christ died to remove their sin, and now reigns to give eternal life to as many as God the Father gave Him (John 17:2; Ps. 110:3). Men believe because the Spirit of God raises dead sinners to life out of the riches of God's mercy and great love for them (Eph. 2:4-6). In the scripture here in Mark 9, the devil took control of this man's son.

Wonderfully, the Lord Jesus Christ has total power over evil spirits, whose aim it is to destroy us. An evil spirit possessed this boy. He was unable to hear or speak. The devil tortured him from childhood. It frequently tried to destroy him by casting him into fire or into water. The boy and his father

were helpless against this evil. You and I are helpless against the devil. Unless the Lord Jesus Christ commands the devil to leave us and enter us no more; unless He gives life to us by His Spirit, shining the light of the Gospel in our hearts, giving us repentance to the acknowledging of the truth concerning Christ and His salvation, we will perish for our own sins. Our salvation is in the hands of a sovereign Savior, whose power alone is able to deliver from the greatest enemies of our soul! This is the first lesson in this scripture. The scribes and unbelieving crowd remained in the darkness of unbelief, and therefore remained under the condemnation of their sins. But this boy was saved by almighty sovereign grace, because Christ, by Himself, took his sins against God's law, obtained his eternal redemption, and now sets him free from all bondage to the devil and the consequences of sin! Now, our conquering, triumphant Lord of Glory, by His sovereign authority, in compassionate mercy and by His almighty power, commands the devil to depart and never return to enter this boy!

2. The **second** group pictured in this account is the scribes and the unbelieving crowd. Jesus called them **a perverse and faithless generation**. This crowd surrounded Jesus' nine disciples. The scribes questioned them while Jesus was away on the mount of transfiguration with Peter, James and John. The nine were unable to cast the devil out from the father's son. No doubt, the scribes denied Jesus and sought to discredit His mission to save His people. They discounted His doctrine and mocked His disciples. Psalm 35:16 calls them "*hypocritical mockers*" of Christ who "*gnash upon Him with their teeth.*" Stirred up by the chief priests, the people would soon cry against Christ, the Lord of Glory, "*Crucify Him! Crucify Him!*" The spiritual children of these unbelievers are with us today. They speak against the Gospel of Christ revealed in scripture under the guise of religious experts. They denounce God's sovereign will in salvation. They deny that Christ's obtained eternal redemption for His elect. They hate the doctrine of God's irresistible grace: that life-giving call of the Spirit of God to chosen, redeemed sinners by which He gives them repentance and faith in Christ. The Gospel is about the mighty acts of a sovereign God to save His chosen people by the redeeming work of His Son with absolutely no consideration

of a contribution of any kind from the sinner! It is about God's almighty power that raises dead sinners to life and gives to them repentance and faith and love. Repentance and faith are the results of salvation, not the cause of it. The crowd and the religious experts were confused. They reasoned among themselves and argued with the disciples. Until God in His sovereign mercy shines the light of the Gospel of Christ into our hearts, we will remain in confusion and opposition to Christ (2 Tim. 2:25-26). This is the sad backdrop to this miracle. The father calls his son a "lunatic." But what greater lunacy can there be than to deny the truth of God concerning His own Son and trample His blood under foot to our own eternal ruin?! May God, for His Christ's sake, grant this mercy to you and me today, to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life!

3. The **third** group we see here are **the nine disciples**. Jesus gave power to His disciples over devils, to cast them out. But in this instance, the nine are unable to cast out the devil from this father's tormented son. Why?

According to the Lord, it was because of their unbelief. Faith is a persuasion that God is able to do all He has said. Faith is not believing God can do anything. It is believing what He said concerning Christ in scripture. This must become to me the whole truth about the way things are between me and God! And it is believing that all virtue and power is in Him; there is nothing in me that gives me reason to believe God. Not my goodness; I have none. Not my knowledge; I am ignorant. Not my strength; I am the epitome of weakness. Faith is the persuasion that God raises dead sinners to life, forgives all their sins for what He received from His Son, and brings them to glory by His power and faithfulness, and not for anything He finds in me, in fact, in spite of all that He finds in me! Faith trusts God as a little child, because as a child, faith believes God is able to do all that He said. Abraham believed God. "He was fully persuaded that God was able to do what He had promised" (Rom. 4:21). Sarah believed God. "She judged Him faithful who had promised" (Heb. 11:11). Faith stands on the promises of God concerning Christ and His saving work, knowing that God will do all He has said. Listen to this promise of God. "*Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who*

*also maketh intercession for us*" (Rom. 8:34). Is all your confidence before God resting only on this revelation from God's word, that it is Christ who died for His people, that He is risen again and rules heaven and earth to save sinners, His people, to the uttermost? That He now intercedes with His own blood and righteousness before God for all who come to God by Him? Is Christ your only hope? He is to everyone that believes! Now, the disciples believed Jesus was the Christ. But they did not believe Him in this case. They probably went through the motions they had gone through before to cast out devils and it did not work! They probably said the same words, but nothing happened. When failure comes because of our unbelief, then that trial causes us to more clearly understand that salvation must be in Christ and by Christ alone! But not only because of their unbelief, Jesus said that this kind only comes out by prayer and fasting. What is prayer? It is asking God to do what He has said (2 Sam. 7:25). It is the inner man coming to the throne of God's grace, in all the nakedness and emptiness of my need, and in my conscience, trusting Christ as my all before God. Christ is the only ground on which God can hear and accept any sinner, because He offered Himself to God in body and soul, and was accepted for His people. And prayer is waiting on God to give and do what He must give and what only He can do. Only God can give faith. Only He can make me know Christ. Only He can convince me that Christ has saved His people by Himself, by the offering of Himself to God in perfect obedience. I am either heard and received for what God finds in His Son alone, or I will never be heard and must be forever damned for my sin! And what is fasting? It is not depriving yourself of food, though God used this in scripture to teach us what true fasting is. Fasting is denying myself that I might lay hold on Christ in the Gospel as my only sustenance, wisdom, righteousness, confidence and hope before God. Job said, "*I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food*" (Job 23:12). "*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God*" (Matt. 4:4; Deut 8:3). And **true fasting is denying myself that I might give the food of Christ crucified to hungry sinners, that sinners might be set free from the darkness and blindness of satan's deception and their own unbelief.** God

said to Israel in Isaiah 58, “*Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul?...Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh* (Isa. 58:5-8)” (Isa. 58:5-7)?

4. The **fourth** individual in this account is **the boy’s father**. He is desperate. He witnessed and patiently cared for his only son through the years of his demon-possession. And this father is wise. He saw that the root cause of his son’s symptom was spiritual. This father loves his son, because he makes diligent use of God’s means to rid him of the evil spirit. He takes his boy to Jesus’ disciples. If we would be wise and love our children, we must do as this father did. We must take our children to hear the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ! Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. If you love your children, you will make diligent use of the means God has ordained for their salvation. Whatever it takes, take your children to hear the preaching of God’s word concerning the Lord Jesus Christ and His mighty acts to save chosen sinners! Only He can save us and our children from our sins! Only He can deliver us and our children from the devil, from death, from the wrath of God, and give us life and faith in Christ! Only Christ can put us in our right mind! Jesus told the father, “*Bring him to me.*” He tells every father the same today! Bring your sons to Christ! Don’t bring them to the water of baptism; bring them to Christ! Don’t bring them to an emotional meeting to hear music and singing under the claim that that is worship. Bring them to Christ! It is the Gospel that is the power of God unto salvation. It is not water. It is not music. It is Christ revealed in His saving work for great sinners! Paul gave this instruction to fathers: “*bring up [your children] in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*” (Eph. 6:4). David spoke these words in prophecy from the Lord Jesus Christ: “*Come, ye children, hearken unto me, and I will teach you the fear of the LORD*” (Ps. 34:11). Christ must teach sinners, as His dear blood-bought children, to reverence and worship God our Father by believing and coming to Him!

And this father gives us an example of faith and prayer. When Jesus came, he stepped out of the crowd and told the Lord about his son in detail. He told Him how the devil had treated him. He asked Jesus to have compassion on them both. He said, "*If thou canst do anything, have compassion on us and help us!*" This father's life was bound up in his son's life! He loved his son as he loved himself. And he spoke plainly and honestly. When we pray, we should try to tell the Lord our needs and the burdens our heart. Tell Him what you have done and what you have failed to do. Tell Him what the enemy of your soul has done to destroy you and your children. Tell Him what you tried to do and what failed to save. When you tell the Lord your sad case and your helplessness, then, when He saves you, you will know what He has saved you from, and you will glorify God for His mercy! And be sure to tell Him the truth about yourself! When the Lord told this father, "*If you can believe, all things are possible to him that believeth,*" the father "*cried out and said with tears, Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief!*" Tell him your confusion. Tell Him about your unbelief. True faith, God-given faith, comes honestly to Christ alone, but never trusts its coming! God-given faith comes for deliverance from evil within and without. It comes to Christ for salvation from the powerful enemies of our souls against which we have no strength: our sin and the condemnation we deserve from the hand of God's justice. True faith confesses that I have no obedience to recommend me to God. God-given faith comes empty-handed with all of its need. In so doing, we are not only telling the truth about ourselves, but we are describing the evil from which Christ alone must save us. When the Lord saves us, He will make it known what He saved us from. He will get all of the glory from our own confession of our sin, the deadness of our souls, the deception of the devil and our unbelief. He will show that it is His compassion, His grace and His power alone that saves sinners to the uttermost who come to God by Him (Heb. 7:25)!

5. The **fifth** person in this miracle is **the son who was possessed and delivered from the devil**. Here is a sad case of torment and helplessness. His father could not communicate with him. He was unable to hear or speak. Think of the grief this caused his father! But to add more, the devil often

sent him into fits of convulsion, foaming and gnashing with his teeth in uncontrolled, self-destructive behavior. Not once, but often, this boy had been cast by the devil to the ground and into fire and water to destroy him! Doesn't this describe all those whom the Lord saves? We are spiritual lunatics! In our foolishness, we try to destroy ourselves. We oppose our own salvation! We do all that we do to save ourselves without coming to Christ and simply resting on Him and His finished work! By our sinful behavior we actively try to destroy ourselves. And worst of all, we worship idols of man's religion: our free-will, our good works, our religious experiences -- as if these were cause for confidence before God and distinction among men! We try to manipulate God by our promises of reform, our tears, our emotions, our decision, our commitments, and our sincerity. We do not see ourselves as nothing but sin! We think we only need help in a few areas of life, things that are socially embarrassing. In all of this, we oppose Christ and His truth! We do not realize that we are in a prison of our own unbelief (Rom. 11:32; Gal. 3:22-23)! Rather than looking to Christ alone, we look to our prayers and our service and our worship as our confidence for coming to God!

6. Finally, the **sixth** person in this account is our Lord Jesus Christ. Out of the darkness of the confused crowd and the opposing scribes, out of the unbelief of His disciples, in spite of the seemingly impossible case of sin and evil, the spotlight of heaven shines bright on our compassionate, almighty, sovereign Savior! He comes down the mountain of His honor and glory. He defends His little flock of disciples against the scribes. He listens compassionately to the sad tale of woe that sin and satan have brought into the life of this father and his son. He sees the evil spirit. He rebukes the scribes and unbelieving crowd. He now reveals to His disciples and the father the only salvation for this boy and every sinner: "***Bring him to me!***" When Christ is thus lifted up by God in the Gospel of His saving grace, His disciples will believe Him. They will see Jesus only! All else now fades into the shadows as backdrop against the light of Christ shines: "*Bring him to me! 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*" (v20). Here we see something

unexpected. When the father brought his son to Christ, the evil spirit demonstrated its control over the boy in the very presence of Jesus. When Jesus rebuked the foul spirit, it “*rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead*” (v26). When we see that Christ is our only salvation, our sin may very well appear more powerful than ever. This pattern is repeated in scripture. When Moses told Pharaoh to let Israel go, Pharaoh laid more burdens on Israel. Moses prayed to the LORD and said, “*Why have you evil entreated this people? Why have you sent me? Since I spoke to Pharaoh in your name, he has done evil to this people; neither have You have delivered this people at all*” (Ex. 5:22-23)! “*Then the LORD said unto Moses, Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh*” (Ex. 6:1). The people of Israel saw what they could do; they were helpless to deliver themselves from Pharaoh! Moses saw what he could do! He could not make Pharaoh let Israel go! And Moses saw what Pharaoh could do! He hardened his heart and refused to let Israel go! Then(!) the LORD said, “*Now thou shalt see what I will do to Pharaoh!*” Salvation is what God has done in Christ! Faith is seeing what Christ has done and believing Him for it! God raised up Pharaoh to destroy him in the height of his pride and strength so that God’s name would be declared throughout all the earth. And that is how God saves His people! God saves His own when every obstacle against our salvation appears in its greatest strength. God’s justice cries out for our punishment! We have no power against our sinful corruptions. We are confused and deceived by the devil’s lies. Then God shines the light of Christ into our heart! We see that He is all of our salvation! We are persuaded of it, and we rest in Him and we glorify God for His mercy!

The **Gospel** is the power of God to salvation because in it the righteousness of God is revealed. That righteousness is the obedience of Christ in His life and death. Christ’s obedience is the justifying righteousness of everyone who believes Him! He is able to save to the uttermost all who come to God by Him! Come and tell Him all that you are not and ask God to show you all that He is. Then look to Him

as He reveals Himself in scripture, and call upon Him to save you from the enemies of your soul!