

Read Mark 9:14-29

The Real Need in Life: Faith in Christ

Have you ever thought that if I just prayed more, or if I just believed more, or if I just read my Bible more then God will work in my life?

Although these spiritual exercises are very important to our growth and maturity in the Lord, we must be very careful not to make what we do the basis of our faith.

Even when we exercise faith in the Lord, it is not a perfect faith. Our faith is tainted with sin and unbelief, and this underscores how much we really need the Lord. Perhaps there is no better example in the Bible to illustrate the struggle between faith and unbelief, and our need of the Lord's help than in Mark 9.

According to this account there was a man who came to Jesus with a great burden. He had a son who was possessed of a devil.

We read in verse 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.”

In whatever place, at home or abroad, alone or in public this man was continually tormented by a devil.

The demon ripped and tore at him. This man was thrown into serious convulsions.

He foamed at the mouth, like a mad animal. These were all marks of violent derangement or madness.

And he pined away. He became thin, haggard, and emaciated. This was the effect of the violence of his struggles, and perhaps of the want of food.

What a sad and sorry state we find this man in. His father came to Christ seeking help for his son but he soon realized that he needed help as well.

We read about the father making an emotional plea to Christ in verse 24, “**Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.**”

Every one who comes to the Saviour for help has need of offering this prayer. In our unbelief and our doubts we need his aid, nor can we ever put sufficient reliance on him without his gracious help.

It wasn't the fact that this man had finally gotten enough faith through self determination and will power. He discovered for the first time in his life the true meaning of faith. True and saving faith wasn't to be found in a wishful outcome or in a man centered religion. The father learned that faith rests in Christ, and in Christ alone.

So how much faith did this man need, to see God work? Enough faith for his eyes to turn upon Jesus.

Tell about the story of Charles Spurgeon's conversion. **LOOK! LOOK! LOOK!**

Whatever faith you have it is because God in his mercy and grace has given it to you.

We read in Ephesians 2:8, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."

Faith is not a product of ourselves. It is not based on our good works, or wisdom. The source and object of our faith must be Christ. It is the object of faith which gives our faith value and worth. Without Christ, our faith would be bankrupt and powerless.

We see in Mark 9 how the Lord Jesus was drawing out of this man real and saving faith.

Unbelief had manifested itself in the hearts of the disciples, the scribes, the crowd, and the father of the demon possessed son, and had blinded them to the real need and issue of their hearts. Therefore, Christ addresses the vital need of faith.

The title of my message is, ***The Real Need in Life: Faith in Christ.*** Men can't exercise real faith in Christ until they are convicted of their sin and guilt and convinced of their great need of Jesus Christ.

Let us look more closely at the actions of the disciples, the scribes, the father, the crowd, and Christ and we will discover the real need in life: faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Let us look at the disciples. These men tried to solve the problem with the demoniac man in their own way, wisdom, and power. They were interested in their solution. We read in verse 18 how the disciples tried to cast out the demon from the young man but failed.

They did it their way and it ended in failure and embarrassment.

Notice the sharp rebuke Christ gave to his disciples in verse 19, “O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me.”

The FAITHLESS GENERATION describes the actions of the disciples as well as the scribes and people in the crowd. I believe Jesus is asking how long will you just seek the solution? How long will you seek control? How long will you just be interested in the results? When will you finally place your faith in Me?

This was not the first or last time the disciples were rebuked by the Lord for their unbelief.

We read in Mark 4:36-41, “And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships. And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And he said unto them, **Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?** And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

The disciples were fearful in the boat and were powerless with the demon possessed man. Unbelief can blind and cripple our faith. True faith learns to see Christ through the storms and sunshine of life.

The disciples were not able to exorcise the demon from the man because their faith was misplaced. It was in finding a solution rather than trusting in the Lord that led to the failure of the disciples.

2. Let us look at the scribes. These men were trying to exploit and take advantage of the disciples failure. They were very negative, hard, and critical on the disciples.

We read in verse 14, “And when he came to his disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them.”

The scribes desired to humiliate the disciples of Christ. They were questioning with and debating the disciples, and attempting to confound them.

This is what Christ saw when he came down from the mount of transfiguration. In his absence they had taken occasion to attempt to perplex and confound his followers. He found them surrounded by a great multitude, and the scribes disputing with them.

No doubt these scribes were mocking and ridiculing the apostles with their inability to cure the demoniac boy, and insinuating doubts even of their Master's ability to do it; while they, zealous for their Master's honor, would no doubt refer to His past miracles in proof of the contrary.

It was just like the professional scribes to take an evil interest in the failure of the nine disciples to cure this poor boy. They gleefully nagged and quizzed them. Jesus and the three, Peter, James, and John find them at it when they arrive in the plain.

These scribes had caught the apostles in one and perhaps the only case where they had failed to cure, and they were making full use of the advantageous opportunity to discredit Christ and his apostles before the people by asking sneering and sarcastic questions.

The scribes spurned Christ and the disciples by finding fault with them.

3. Let us look at the crowd. The crowd witnessed the problem of the demon possessed man, with a keen interest in the results. We read in verse 15, “And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to him saluted him.”

The multitude were greatly amazed. They were astonished and surprised at Christ’s sudden appearance among them.

They saluted him, and received him with the customary marks of affection and respect. It is probable that this was not by any formal manner of salutation, but by the rush of the multitude, and by hailing him as the Messiah.

A Commentator observes, “No doubt his face was resplendent with some relics of the glory which had beamed from him upon the holy mount: yet it is remarkable that the people were not terrified, but ran to him and not from him: the glories of Jesus are always attractive.”

The people were captivated and electrified by the moment. Was Christ going to work one of his miracles on the demon possessed man? They looked at Christ and the demon possessed man as no more than a spectacle, a show to dazzle the senses. We see that true faith was absent in the crowd.

4. Let us look at the father and his son who was demon possessed. The father came to Christ when he was at his whit's end. He probably tried everything he could to help his boy.

He was in need of a miracle, and was probably willing to place his faith anywhere to see his son made better. At first, it appears the father was seeking the outcome of his son being healed more than Christ.

Christ challenges the father in Mark 9:23-24, “Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.” It is as if the Lord applies fresh spiritual eye salve to the father’s spiritual eyes and now he can see vital matters of the soul like faith and unbelief. The father is stirred up and cries out with tears, “Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.”

We read in Hebrews 11:6, “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

We see the condition of the mental and spiritual state of the father change, don’t we. He believes that Christ can make his boy well. But he also faces the ugly side of his own unbelief, and asks the Lord to help him with it.

The verb for *help* has the idea of instant and continuous help. This word comes from two words: to cry and to run. When we put them together it means *to run at a cry for help*, a vivid picture of this father's plight.

The spark of faith had been kindled in the heart of the father. If his faith is not strong enough, he prays the Lord to give him stronger faith.

So should we always pray this way. If your faith is weak, cry out to the Lord for help. He will help you!

The father realizes, “It is useless concealing from the Lord the unbelief that still struggles in my heart. I bear witness that I do believe in the power of the Lord; and if distrust still remains, I disown it, I wrestle with it, I seek help from the Lord against it.”

He felt the power and presence of unbelief in his heart. He was conscious of his sin but convinced of the mercy and grace found in Jesus Christ.

He appeals to Christ for help against his felt unbelief-
-a feature in the case quite unparalleled, and the
insight he had attained into the existence of a power
in Christ more glorious than any he had besought for
his poor child.

The Lord answered the cry of the father and
delivered his son from the devil, never again to return
to his victim. This great miracle was done according
to Christ's word.

**5.The Savior (vs. 16,19) - Christ is interested in
the deeper issue here and that is true and saving
faith.** We learn that true faith has a clear, present,
and concrete object, and that is Christ.

Christ said to the father, "If thou canst believe." This
was an answer to the request; and there was a
reference in the answer to the doubt in the man's
mind about the power of Jesus. I can help him. If
THOU canst believe, it shall be done. Jesus here
demanded faith or confidence in his power of
healing. So he demands faith of every sinner that
comes to him; and none that come without
confidence in him can obtain the blessing.

“All things are possible to him that believeth.” All things can be effected or accomplished by God--in favour of him that believes; and if thou canst believe, this will be done. God will do nothing in our favour without faith. It is right that we should have confidence in him; and if we have confidence, it is easy for him to help us, and he willingly does it. In our weakness, then, we should go to God our Saviour; and though we have no strength, yet he can aid us.

In closing, Christ teaches us the greatest need we have in life is faith. True faith rests in Christ alone for help and salvation. Our faith is imperfect because it is mixed with sin and unbelief. But Christ gives our faith value and worth. May the Lord help us to believe in Christ and overcome our unbelief. Let us pray!