

Message #42

Luke 9:37-45

Don't you wish that life could be lived problem free and hassle free? Don't you wish life could be lived in utopia on a mountain top? Well life doesn't work like that. There may be peak moments of mountain top experiences, but they will soon end and you'll be back down in the valley. If that happened to Jesus Christ, it certainly will happen to us.

For nearly two years the disciples of Jesus Christ had been traveling with Him. For the most part they had been in Galilee and they are about to witness the last Galilean miracle that Christ will perform.

These disciples had lived with Christ, eaten with Christ, listened to Christ, learned from Christ, watched Christ and they have even ministered for Christ. They had watched Christ do some amazing things in Galilee:

- 1) He had cast out the unclean spirit - 4:33-37
- 2) He had healed Simon's mother-in-law - 4:38-39
- 3) He had given them a miraculous catch of fish - 5:1-11
- 4) He had miraculously cleansed a leper - 5:12-16
- 5) He had healed a paralyzed man - 5:17-26
- 6) He had healed the centurion's servant - 7:1-10
- 7) He had raised the dead son of the widow of Nain, in the middle of the funeral - 7:11-17
- 8) He spoke to a storm and the storm went away - 8:22-25
- 9) He healed that demon-possessed man in Gerasene - 8:26-39
- 10) He healed the woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years - 8:42-48
- 11) He raised Jairus' dead daughter - 8:40-42; 49-56
- 12) He miraculously fed thousands with five loaves of bread and two fish - 9:10-17

These disciples had seen all of this. They lived every bit of this. You would think by now that these guys would be rock solid in their faith. But the truth is they were still doubting and struggling. So as humiliating as this is, Jesus had to address His disciples once again and what He teaches them is this:

SOME OF CHRIST'S DISCIPLES DO NOT ACCOMPLISH ALL THEY SHOULD BECAUSE THEY LACK FAITH AND THEY DO NOT COMPLETELY OBEY GOD, AND THAT MAKES JESUS CHRIST ANGRY AND HE REBUKES THEM.

What we should want is that Jesus Christ is pleased with us, not that He has to rebuke us all the time. There will be some of God's people who will miss seeing God do wonderful, powerful things simply because they are too stubborn, too rebellious, too unbelieving to simply obey the Word of God. There are some of God's people who make God mad.

They partially believe the Word of God until it requires that they actually step out by faith and apply it. These are people who play it safe in their world of unbelief. These are people who do not ever say, let's really obey the Word of God on this and see what God will do.

There are two stinging rebukes that Jesus Christ gives to His own disciples in this text:

REBUKE #1 – Jesus Christ rebukes His disciples for a faithless lack of action. **9:37-42**

This must have been a depressing moment for Jesus Christ. He has been up on the mountain, talking with Moses and Elijah, two O.T. prophets who by faith accomplished some amazing things, and He comes back down the mountain to an unbelieving world who is complaining about inactive and impotent disciples. David Garland said He returns “to the world of human and demonic mayhem” (*Luke*, p. 403).

Sometimes after you have had a wonderful experience with God, don’t be surprised that you soon find yourself facing some disgruntled, faithless person who pulls you down. When Moses came down from the mountain after experiencing the glory of God, he was immediately confronted by God’s people worshipping an idol.

Verse 37 says that the next day after they had come down the mountain they are met by a massive crowd. According to **verse 38**, some man from this crowd shouted at Jesus for Him to look at his son, which was his only son.

That verb “shout” means that this man is yelling at Jesus in a very emotional and loud voice. The emphasis of this Greek word is that he is yelling with a very emotional voice (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 83). After the tranquility of the mountain, Jesus is back down and this guy is yelling at Him.

Now what we don’t want to overlook is that the father of the boy identifies Christ as a teacher (**v. 38**). He doesn’t identify Him as God or as the Savior or as the Messiah or as the King. He identifies Christ as a teacher. In fact, in the Greek text, he doesn’t even identify Him as “the teacher,” just teacher. How humiliating is this? Christ is down the mountain from actually displaying His heavenly glory and some guy is shouting at Him as if He is just a teacher. To the rest of us this would be flattering, but to Jesus Christ it is demeaning.

Now in **verse 39**, we learn six facts about the boy’s problem:

Fact #1 - He was demon-possessed. **9:39a**

The noun “demon” is singular. So apparently this was one demon who possessed this boy. The verb tense indicates this was a continual happening.

Fact #2 - The demon would cause the boy to suddenly start screaming. **9:39b**

The word “scream” is different from the father’s “shout.” This word indicates an inarticulate loud crying or screaming like an animal (*Ibid.*, p. 83). He would just suddenly and unexpectedly start screaming like some wild animal.

Fact #3 - The demon would cause the boy to have a convulsion. **9:39c**

The word “convulsion” is one that refers to a violent tearing, twisting, mangling (*Ibid.*, p. 412). In fact, Matthew adds that the demon would throw the boy into water or fire (Matt. 17:15). This is not simply some epileptic seizure; this is a real demon possession seizure.

If you have ever seen an epileptic seizure, it is scary. The person just stares as if they aren't there and their legs and arms have this almost locked jerking movement. This demon-possessed boy was far more scary than that.

Fact #4 - The demon would cause the boy to foam at the mouth. **9:39d**

Literally this refers to a foam that does come out of the mouth (*Ibid.*, p. 72).

Fact #5 - The demon would rarely leave the boy. **9:39e**

Fact #6 - When the demon does leave, it mauls the boy. **9:39f**

The Greek word “maul” is a word that means to shatter something or break something into pieces in the sense of crushing it and bruising it (*Ibid.*, p. 434).

A couple of observations we make before we move on.

- 1) Those who get involved with Satan and demons will not have a peaceful, tranquil, happy life.
- 2) Those who are demon-possessed do not have control of themselves.
- 3) Jesus Christ is the only One who can cure demon possession. The world lies in the power of the Evil one, but not the believer (I John 5:18-19). When one invites Jesus Christ into his or her life, “greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world” (I John 4:4).

Now in **verse 40** the man tells Jesus Christ that he “begged” His disciples to cast out the demon and they could not do it. The verb “could not” indicates these disciples apparently informed the man that they were not capable or powerful enough to take care of this demonic problem.

So in all reality what you have are disciples of Jesus Christ who are basically saying Satan and his forces are stronger than we who are connected to Jesus Christ.

Now there are two points of discipleship that we need to consider here:

Point of Discipleship #1 - Jesus Christ had specifically given these disciples power over ALL cases of demon possession. **9:1**

So the disciples did have the power necessary to do this. Their problem is not lack of power; it is lack of faith, which implements the power.

Point of Discipleship #2 - Jesus Christ had specifically taught the disciples how to use the power in certain cases of demon possession.

Mark informs us that one of the things that Jesus taught His disciples was the importance of prayer in casting out demons (Mark 9:29) and Matthew said sometimes even fasting is necessary with the prayer (Matt. 17:21).

We may assume from Christ's reaction in **verse 41** that He had taught them this and they didn't do it.

What a depressing picture. Here was some stranger, yelling at Jesus Christ that His disciples are a bunch of powerless duds. This is humiliating for Jesus Christ. There are two ways a disciple of Jesus Christ can depress Jesus Christ:

- 1) By doing what he is not supposed to do.
- 2) By not doing what he is supposed to do.

Think how depressing it must be for God to watch some disciple who says - I just don't have the power to get victory over this sin, when God's Word actually says that "sin shall not dominate you" (Rom. 6:14).

Think how depressing it must be for God to watch some disciple say - "I just am too afraid to witness and speak up for Jesus Christ and the Word of God."

Think how depressing it must be for God to watch some disciples say - "I am too tired or busy to go to church" when God's Word says do not forsake yourself.

I wonder how many people we have known will be able to say one day to Jesus Christ, how come those people of yours never told me or demonstrated they had any relationship with you.

When Jesus heard this, He was both exasperated and angry and in **verse 41** He issues a stinging rebuke that includes His own disciples. He actually gives three rebukes:

Rebuke #1 - You are unbelieving.

This is the way God sees it. If His people don't believe His Word and follow His Word, they are faithless.

Rebuke #2 - You are perverted.

The word means if a disciple does not obey the Word of God, he is twisted and distorted (*Ibid.*, p. 111). The word means he is perverted and not normal.

Rebuke #3 - You are a waste of My time.

Jesus says how long do I have to put up with your lack of commitment, faith and obedience?
You are a waste of My time.

Jesus Christ does get fed up with disciples who don't obey Him.

At the end of **verse 41**, Jesus told the man to bring Him his son and according to **verse 42**, the father obeyed. While he was bringing his son to him, the demon slammed the boy to the ground. Just the presence of Jesus Christ causes violent reactions among those who are demon-possessed. Jesus rebuked the demon and healed the boy and gave him back to his father.

Verse 43 says they were all amazed at the greatness of God and that they were marveling over what they had seen.

REBUKE #2 – Jesus rebukes His disciples for their ignorant lack of understanding. **9:44-45**

Now while the crowd was buzzing about the demon-healing, Jesus turned to His disciples and said you let these words sink into your ears. You need to be faithful men who obey Me and My Word. You guys need to carefully listen to what I am telling you - **The Son of Man will be delivered into the hands of men.**

It is true that I have power over everything, including the Satanic world. However, I must die by the hands of men because the entire salvific program for Israel and for sinners is on the line.

You disciples need to be faithful and obey My Word because I am the Son of man; but I am going to be killed. Time is running out. I am going to leave and you guys are My representatives.

But **verse 45** says they didn't know what He was talking about. These disciples had not only forfeited their power of healing, they had forfeited their power of hearing. They not only were not doing things for God, they did not even understand the things of God.

There is clearly one thing to see from this text. Jesus Christ has the power to set you free from anything. You may have dabbled in Satanic things. You may have dabbled in perverted things. You turn your life over to Jesus Christ and you will see God do some wonderful things in your world.