

How to Deal with Frustration

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Text: Mark 9:14-29¹

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Series: Mark (Introducing Jesus)

Introduction: Open your Bible to **Mark 9:14-29**. This morning we are talking about “How to Deal with Frustration”.

Frustration comes at all levels. There are times when we are at a place in our life, and it seems like we are hitting a brick wall.

- Perhaps it is in your **personal walk** with Christ. You are frustrated with yourself. You want to grow and change, but you keep failing and neglecting your walk with Him.
- Often frustration comes because of **other people**. Someone said, “Consider how hard it is to change yourself and you’ll understand what little chance you have in trying to change others.”
- At times for those who are **married**, you feel like you are hitting a brick wall with your spouse or with your kids. Maybe you are facing that right now.
- You might be **single** here and you are frustrated with the single life. You are ready for Mr. Right or Miss Right.
- It might be an ongoing **health** situation that we have to live with, and we are frustrated.
- At times we are frustrated with our **family**, our **job**, our **church**, and often we are frustrated and sick and tired of **ourselves**.

What do you do when you believe you are following Christ as you should and you hit a brick wall? You can’t seem to get an answer. You find yourself frustrated, tired, and weary of the stagnation in your life. How do we deal with frustration?

There are 35 miracles of Jesus in the New Testament. Today we are going to see one that will impact us greatly because it is performed in a time of deep frustration, confusion, and desperation. The first way we deal with frustration is to...

I. **Understand that frustrating situations are all too common** (vs. 14-19a).

1 Corinthians 10:13, “No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.”

Why are we so surprised when we are dealt a difficult blow or we are given an ongoing trial that lasts months and sometimes years? This is common for the greatest of saints in the Scriptures. Frustrating situations try our faith. They were also common in Jesus’ day for the people of God. Apparently we have one here in Mark 9 that was going on for years.

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture is from the *English Standard Version* of the Bible.

Day after day, a man's son is tormented. He does all he can and no one can help him. He's frustrated. Desperate. We find this desperate father in **Mark 9:14-18**, "And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and scribes arguing with them. 15 And immediately all the crowd, when they saw him, were greatly amazed and ran up to him and greeted him. 16 And he asked them, 'What are you arguing about with them?' 17 And someone from the crowd answered him, 'Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a spirit that makes him mute. 18 And whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able." We ought not be surprised at their lack of power. You and I face this all the time. We lack power, spiritual zeal, holy joy, empowered living. We lack it. We're dry and powerless. Apparently the other nine apostles could not cast help this demon possessed boy.

A. We are often surprisingly **powerless**. Why? I want to know what it is that saps me of my power. Consider the disciples. The disciples had just come down from the Mount of Transfiguration. You would think there would be confidence and power exuding from these men. And yet, the very disciples of Christ "were not able" (**vs. 18**) to help this demon possessed boy. And they are surrounded by a gaggle of Pharisees arguing, very likely over theories of exorcism. The disciples have come down from the Mount of Transfiguration after seeing the Son of God in glory and power and majesty. They come into the valley to see another son. A demon possessed boy, and no one can help this other son. He's powerless to help himself.

1. Certainly compassion is not lacking. Look at the compassion of the father. He's doing all he can for his son. It's what we'd all do. We can all put ourselves into that father's place. We have often had someone near us that was hurting, and yet we could not help them. Powerless.

- Lost loved ones who we pray and share Christ with.
- We watch someone dealing with some habit of sin and we cannot help.
- Perhaps you look at yourself, and you are frustrated with your anger, frustrated with depression, frustrated with your lack of spiritual desire. You don't know what to do!
- I don't think it is compassion we lack.

B. We are **guaranteed** frustration if we do not turn to Jesus. We ought not to put our hope in God's servants. They are tools, vessels. Jesus said, "Without me, you can do nothing" (**John 15:5**).

C. Jesus tells us the reason we lack power: we **lack faith** (vs. 19a). The reason we are frustrated over and over and over again is because we lack faith. Now Christ apparently addresses the disciples in **verse 19a**, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me."

When I see the hard heartedness and stumbling of the disciples, I sometimes think, look these are just men! They are just like me! And that's right. We are often like the disciples—faithless!

We do not believe God is enough. We have our formulas and theological systems, and if those don't work, we've got our gimmicks and religious rituals. But perhaps we don't have a serious walk with God or trust Him with our life.

Application: We are doing all the right things, but are we walking with Christ? We have a form of godliness but are we experiencing the power of Christ?

II. **Understand that there is no such thing as a frustrating situation with Jesus** (vs. 19-22). He's all powerful. He's all wise.

A. **We need to bring ourselves and everybody we know to Jesus!** Jesus says in verse 19b, "Bring him to me". **Verse 20a**, "And they brought the boy to him." Christ has compassion!

Application: One day Jesus said that about you and me. "Bring him to me". "Bring her to me". That's what we are doing in evangelism. We are confronting people with their sin and their powerlessness to cleanse themselves. What can wash away my sins? Nothing I can do! Nothing but the blood of Jesus! Jesus calls to your lost loved ones: "Bring them to me". Jesus cries out to your lost son or daughter. "Bring him to me; bring her to me". Jesus is never frustrated by you or anyone or anything else.

Jeremiah 32:27, "Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is anything too hard for me?"

B. **As we make spiritual progress in our life, we ought to expect satanic opposition.**

Verse 20, "And when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth." It seems when Jesus is near there is much attack from the wicked one. When we draw near to Jesus, Satan distracts us. When we share the Gospel, phones ring, dogs bark, etc. When something great is about to happen, there is satanic attack and deep discouragement. Remember the darkness is greatest before the dawn. Do not be surprised by satanic attack. Expect it, and remember: "resist the devil and he will flee from you". Also, don't be discouraged when your lost loved ones take two steps forward and three steps back. Realize that "greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world!"

C. **Jesus is especially compassionate toward frustrating, hopeless cases.** Look at verse 21, "And Jesus asked his father, 'How long has this been happening to him?'" And he said, "From childhood. 22 And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." This case was so desperate and frustrating that the father speaks of his son as "us".

Look at the compassion of this father. This seemed like a hopeless case to him. Jesus is especially compassionate toward hopeless frustrating cases. We see a special encouragement to believing parents to go to Jesus with hopeless cases.

Perhaps you have a son or daughter that you believe is a hopeless case. Take your child to Jesus with fervent, urgent, earnest prayer. It is your responsibility, and you will find only compassion with Jesus.

III. **Realize that faith is essential if you are to find REST in Jesus for frustrating, impossible situations** (vs. 23-27).

A. *Believers all have a measure of imperfect faith.* Look at **verses 23-24**, “And Jesus said to him, “If you can’! All things are possible for one who believes.” 24 Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, “I believe; help my unbelief!””

Our faith sometimes wavers. We also pray, “Help my unbelief” (vs. 24). The earliest disciples’ faith was very imperfect—so much so that the Lord referred to them as a “faithless generation”. That’s shocking but true. Our faith is imperfect. We can all intellectually accept that Jesus is the Savior of the world and that He deserves to be Lord of our life. But we still fight with worry. We battle unbelief. We understand it intellectually, but when backed into a corner, we often fight with carnal weapons. Remember Peter when Christ was seized? Peter cuts off the ear of the high priest’s servant. We all have our backup plans when our faith wavers, right?

God does not despise imperfect faith. But we all need to get to a point where we can trust Jesus Christ with every detail and circumstance in our lives. This man had a son who was being destroyed by a demon. What do you have that you need to trust God with?

- An impossible financial situation?
- A frustrating, slow changing marriage?
- Health issues?

Application: We don’t have a demon possessed son, but if we did, perhaps we would find it easier to philosophize and argue with the Pharisees than to trust Jesus. We can get sympathy from friends and loved ones and church family, but that doesn’t satisfy and we all know it. We need to rest in Jesus. We need to know it is going to be ok. It is hard to believe, isn’t it?

So our point is that: Faith is essential if you are to find REST in Jesus for frustrating, impossible situations. Are you resting in Jesus? Can you trust Him in trials? Can you wait on Him? Do you believe that Jesus can change your situation if He wants to? Are you willing to trust that His way is best whether He changes your situation or not?

B. *We need to understand what faith is.* This man had a measure of faith. Look at **verses 23-24**, “And Jesus said to him, “If you can’! All things are possible for one who believes.” 24 Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, “I believe; help my unbelief!”” This man had the beginning of faith, but he needed help. What is

faith? It is certainly something I need because Jesus said, "All things are possible for one who believes." (vs. 23).

1. *To have faith is to know that **Jesus alone** can help me.* Jesus is the only one that can help. This man evidently believed that could help him, for he says, "I brought my son to you" (vs. 17). He would not have brought his son to Jesus unless he had some measure of confidence in him. It is well to be aware that the salvation of the soul must come from the work of Jesus, and from no one else, since no other name is given among men whereby we must be saved.
2. *To have faith is to believe that Christ can help you in **your own situation**.* This father said—"if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." Often we think our situation is so difficult and severe that we question if our situation can really be helped. This boy's case was especially severe. . Look at **verse 21**, "And Jesus asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?"" And he said, "From childhood. 22 And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him".

Isn't it strange that we can believe that God can help others, but that in our own situation it might be too much for God!

3. *To have faith you must believe that **Jesus is willing** to save and help you.* Looking up into Jesus' face, the man could feel and see the compassion of Jesus in His face, for He said, "if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us" (vs. 22). There are many people we could not go to for compassion—they are too busy with their own issues to help. They are not concerned about us; but the Savior was not this way; this father felt that Jesus was full of compassion. I think sometimes our faith fails here. We believe Christ CAN help us, but is He WILLING to help us?
 4. *True faith is to **trust**, to totally give my need to the Lord and to trust Him to meet it in His time and in His way.* It is to be happy and satisfied that Jesus will work His will in His way. We have a hard time with that don't we? How many of you would love to know the future. How is God going to work this out for my good and His glory? Listen, "we walk by faith and not by sight!"
- C. *We need to act on whatever faith we have.* Jesus instructed this man concerning faith in **verses 23-24**, Jesus said: "All things are possible for one who believes." **24** Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!" We need to believe that Jesus Christ in His own time and way will bring healing and justice and peace. The man got an answer when pleading with Jesus. This is the heart of prayer.

This father got an answer that very day in **verses 25-27**, "And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again." **26** And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, "He is dead." **27** But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up,

and he arose.” Notice Jesus again in compassion “lifting the boy up”. Wow! The answer will come in Jesus’ time and in His way.

Understanding the miracles

We need to understand that this passage is not teaching that Jesus will make a utopia for us if we have enough faith. That’s not it at all. The man got an immediate answer, but that is not always the case.

Jesus was bringing paradise conditions to people in His messianic ministry. Those conditions were temporary—to attest that Jesus was the Messiah, and to confirm the Word of God and the apostles ministry. So miracles were given to bear witness that salvation had come in Christ.

- **Hebrews 2:3-4**, “how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, 4 while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.”

As we read the New Testament miracles, the way to apply this is not to say, if I have enough faith then Jesus will heal me, or Jesus will take away all my financial burdens, or He’ll heal my marriage. He could and does do all of those things. But He may not do it.

I think we who do not live in the time of the miracles, and we who do not see Christ with our physical eyes need much more faith than those in Jesus’ day.

IV. Thank God for frustrating situations because they are designed to force us to seek God and experience lasting spiritual change (vs. 28-29). Spurgeon said, “Mighty prayer has often been produced by mighty trial.”

A. Frustration and faith cannot abide together. So many of our situations are not going to change immediately. We need to realize that frustrating situations are designed by God to draw us to Himself. He says in **verses 28-29**, “And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?” 29 And he said to them, “This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer””.

B. Understand that Jesus’ main purpose in coming to earth was not to heal us. If that was the case He might have founded a hospital instead of a church. We get the purpose of Jesus coming in **Matthew 1:21**, “His name shall be called JESUS for He shall save His people from their sins”. His main purpose was to save us and conform us to His image (**Romans 8:29**).

We need to understand that Jesus’ primary goal for His disciples was not to experience healing or miracles, but to know God and to walk with Him. Frustrating situations give us a fantastic opportunity to get to know our God. They force us to pray.

C. Frustration is a good thing because it is designed by God to draw us to the only one that can help us. Spurgeon understood that his preaching could do no good without earnest, fervent prayer.

The Boiler Room of Prayer

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, the London Baptist preacher of the mid to late 1800s, on one occasion he took a visitor through his church, the Metropolitan Tabernacle, and showed them the beautiful surroundings of the church. And then he took them downstairs and he said, "I want to show you the boiler room." So they were there to see all the furnaces and all the coal, and who would be shoveling it. He wanted to show this visitor how the church was heated. So he opened deep in the basement a very large room, and there were 300 people praying in small groups. And Spurgeon sent them message that this is where the real heat and the real power of the Tabernacle comes from.

I believe Spurgeon's hearers were changed because of the urgent prayer of the 300 below, but I also believe that those who prayed were changed as well!

In conclusion I want to make two applications.

Applications:

1. **Plan to react in faith to frustrating situations.** If you have children you especially will have plenty of opportunities. How can we get our children to know Christ and demonstrate Christlike character and love and compassion in their lives?

Let me give you an example of a frustrating situation. It can be something as simple as a child asking: Can I have a drink of water? "Go get it yourself!" No, serve your children if you want them to be servants. Love them if you want them to love you and love others. Be sweet and kind and self-controlled with them if you want them to be sweet and kind and self-controlled.

Anyone can pontificate. Any one can shout and complain at their children. Do we take the time in love to show Christlike love and compassion to them?

It could be a situation at work. Someone does something foolish. It is easy to pontificate there as well. "You should have..." Can we in faith trust God to demonstrate Christlike character and patience with people?

2. **Don't give up in praying for impossible, frustrating situations!** It's easy to give up after time passes and nothing happens. Keep trusting in God and whatever you do keep praying! Prayer will definitely change the situation, but do you have the faith to leave it totally in God's hands to work it out in His time and His way? Are you willing to keep praying and trusting God?

Prayer changes things. Are you living a life of faith or frustration? Don't give up in praying for impossible, frustrating situations! We may have feeble faith, but we have a mighty Savior!