

STONE HARBOR

P.O. Box 4049
Monterey CA, 93942
831.655.5800
www.stoneharborchurch.org
Pastor Johnny Potter

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Who Is Jesus & Why He Matters

Three Quotes Worth Memorizing, Three Lessons Worth Learning

Mark 9:14-29

INTRODUCTION

Jesus calls, prepares and teaches us to meet the challenges of being His disciples.

This morning we will continue our study in the Gospel of Mark in Chapter 9 as we look at how Mark unfolds the story of who Jesus is and why He matters. We will pay special attention to the lessons Jesus taught His disciples based on the difficulties they encountered when He had left them to take Peter, James and John up on the mountain where He was transfigured. While they were up on the mountain with Jesus catching a sneak preview of His glory, the rest of the disciples had been down below trying to cope with angry religious leaders, a demanding father, and a stubborn demon that would not be cast out.

Our text is Mark 9:14-29. Let me tell you the story and then we will organize our thoughts around three quotes worth memorizing and three lessons worth learning.

“BRING him to Me!”

- A. Quote: Mark 9:19b: Jesus says of the boy with the evil spirit, “**BRING** him to **Me!**”
- B. Key Passage: Mark 9:14-19
- C. The Discussion

- Jesus' remedy for the problem of the boy with the evil spirit was that the problem be brought to Him!
 - Implication: His disciples had not "brought" the boy to Jesus, but had tried to extricate him from his bondage apart from Jesus.
 - On the one hand their NOT bringing the boy to Jesus seems reasonable due to Jesus prior vesting them with authority and sending them out to cast out demons, not to mention the fact that Jesus was away up on some mountain glowing with His inner circle leaving them alone to deal with the problem.
 - On the other hand it is also easy to see that we can't kick demons out of people in and of ourselves – we can't even see the things. Some have tried, Acts 19:11-17
- D. The Lesson: **Jesus**, is the Deliverer!
- It is not in the strength of the disciple standing on his or her own that deliverance can be brought to those in bondage, but if deliverance is to come to others through us it will be in our connectedness to – our union with -- Jesus.
 - John 15 Vine and Branches
 - Illustration: Relay Race vs. Yoked – We are not superstars in a relay taking the baton from Jesus, as much as we are oxen yoked to Him – the true source of our power.
 - What that looks like in our lives: How do we bring people to Jesus who is away from us so that He might deliver them? Hold onto that question and the rest of the text will bring the answer.

“All things are possible to him who BELIEVES.”

- A. Quote-2: Mark 9:23b: where Jesus again says, “**All things are possible to him who BELIEVES.”**
- B. The Text – Mark 9:19-27
- C. The Discussion
- Jesus' lamenting diagnosis of the problem, “O unbelieving...” (v.19)
 - The problem was lack of believing, i.e., faith, and by context faith in Jesus.
- **Q1: Who's unbelief was problematic?** Was it the unbelief of the father, the boy, the crowd, the scribes...?
 - The phrase “unbelieving generation” implicates all of those who were unable to affect the poor boy's deliverance, but Jesus disciples bear the greatest responsibility for faith. William Lane sees Jesus' “...poignant cry of exasperation...”. His “heart-break” as directed towards His disciples. p. 332 comment on v.19

- Somehow the disciples lack of faith prevented them from being able to cast out the demon and such lack of faith grieved Jesus. “O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you...?”
 - Stands Out: Jesus laments not the demon possession, but the disciples lack of faith to be able to deal with it.
 - The text raises another question too...
- **Q2: In what way was lack of faith problematic in the boys deliverance?**
 - Remember: It is Jesus who holds the authority and ability to deliver. Man apart from Jesus has no such authority or power to effect the supernatural. So, since faith is the diagnosed problem in the disciples inability to deliver, it follows that faith must link man to God in such a way that God’s power and authority flows through man to deliver – at least that is how it is supposed to work. But here, something had gone wrong.
 - Illustration: Think of a gas engine. If the spark doesn’t fire and ignite the gas the power of the gas remains latent. This reminds me of a joke I heard as a kid. A man bought a 5 acre parcel covered with small trees and he was going to clear the land, plant grass and raise a few cows. His neighbor said that he should get a chain saw so the clearing would go faster. So he went down to the local hardware store and bought a little chain saw... “What’s that noise!”
 - The spark ignites the power which is in the gasoline. No spark, no power. The power itself lies in the gas. No gas, no power.
 - Faith is like the spark that ignites the gas and releases the power. Jesus is like the gas that is the power. When mankind is involved in the supernatural it is only when faith is connected to Jesus that power is released to work the miraculous.
 - But, Jesus, of course, is not a piece of machinery to be used by us to accomplish our will. We can’t go randomly discharging sparks hoping that some of Jesus power will ignite for our good. Jesus’ power is under Jesus’ control. We get the joy of being the spark that releases His power when He wants to use us to direct His power to accomplish His will. Outside of His choice we are just a spark plug w/o the gas.
 - **Q3: What was it they did not believe?**
 - In light of the progressive revelation of Jesus in the gospel of Mark, they must not have fully believed that in Jesus:
 - the seed of the woman had come to crush the head of the seed of the serpent;
 - the king of the KOG had come to take back His rightful possession and restore the POG;

- the Christ had come and that Jesus was the beloved Son of God with all power and authority.

D. The Lesson: Faith is Essential!

- Faith in Jesus as God's beloved Son and the Christ who was re-establishing God's rightful rule on earth by displacing evil like the demon in this passage who's intent was to destroy.
- Faith joins us to Jesus and "Jesus is the deliverer!" (first lesson)
- Non-Faith (sin?) separates us from Jesus and His delivering power.
- Point of clarification: God accomplishes His will irrespective of man's strong or weak faith. Example: Abraham and Isaac's lack of faith in giving their wives over... yet God still brought from them the son of His covenant. But, should any man seek to advance the Kingdom of God, He can only do so as one united with God through faith in Jesus. "...apart from Me you can do nothing..."
- Jesus engaged the boy's father in conversation and steered the discussion off of His already proven ability to deliver ("If you can!") and onto the father's faith, or lack thereof. What a disturbing thought for the father! Is it my lack of faith that prevents my son's deliverance?
- If God is to use us to effect the deliverance of our loved ones from the power of Satan that holds them in bondage, it will only happen in the context of our faith in Jesus. Let's go ahead and cry out with the father, "I do believe, help my unbelief." O, Doubt, be vanquished. Our Father...Your kingdom come...!
- Warning! Do not be deceived! While it is true that all things are possible to him who believes, it is **NOT** true that all things the believer wishes for will come true. Why not? Because we do not yet fully know the will of God in every circumstance of our life. And further, our will is not fully aligned with His will. What we wish for often is a hold over from the old man and contrary to the will of God at this time. What we wish for may be based on a misunderstanding we have about how and when God will work.
- But don't let that reasonable limit on what God will do through us, diminish the clear teaching of the necessity of faith! All things are certainly NOT possible to him who does NOT believe! All things are possible **to him who believes**.
- With Jesus pointing out the essential nature of our faith, The father cries out, "I do believe, help my unbelief!" And then Jesus speaks the words of deliverance, "You deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and do not enter him again."... See the result in v.26-27
- Note, it was the father who believed and Jesus who delivered. That is the way God's kingdom comes.
- How do we bring people to Jesus who is away from us so that He might deliver them? Hold onto that question just a little longer and the remaining text will bring the answer.

“This kind cannot come out by anything but PRAYER.”

A. **Quote-3: Mark 9:29b:** “This kind cannot come out by anything but PRAYER.”

B. The Text – Mark 9:28-29

C. The Discussion

- As He has done before Jesus gives His disciples some private instruction – in this case I think we can call it “remedial tutoring”
- They could not cast out the demon, Jesus says, because, “This kind cannot come out by anything but prayer”
- Had the disciples not prayed? That would be the implication.
- It sounds almost impossible that Jesus disciples had not prayed to God in their efforts to cast out the demon. But then all we have to do is look at our own prayer life and we see exactly how they could have been doing God’s work without prayer.
- Remember, it is not a relay we run individually, we must be yoked to Jesus.
- If lack of faith was the problem, lack of prayer was the evidence of the problem.
- Faith calls forth prayer. If we truly believe, we will surely pray.
- Jesus to His disciples: You should have prayed!
- Here is the lesson...

D. The Lesson: Prayer is Instrumental!

- Prayer expresses our faith and recognizes our dependence on Jesus to do the actual supernatural work that we have no power in and of ourselves to do.
- In our engine illustration: Prayer brings the spark to the gas!
- In our relay illustration: Jesus has come not to hand us the baton so that we can run the next leg independent of Him. He has come to restore our intimate communion with God. We are whole and restored when we are united to God through faith in Christ.
- Prayer is an expression of that communion and unity with God.
- Prayerlessness expresses separation, independence, autonomy...
- Prayer is a teen asking her parents for the keys to the car
- Prayerlessness is that teen sitting in the car w/o the keys getting frustrated that the stupid car won’t go.
- Why don’t we pray more?
- Let’s pray more, even now.

Do you have friends and family still in bondage to sin and not restored to God through faith in Jesus?

As I mention some relationships, as a natural expression of your **faith** in Jesus, **pray** for the people in your life and thereby **bring them to Jesus** that He would do the supernatural work that only He can do.

Let's bring the spark to the gas in prayer right now.

- Pray for your spouse
- Pray for your parents and grandparents
- Pray for your siblings
- Pray for your children
- Pray for your grandchildren
- Pray for your nieces and nephews
- Pray for your friends
- Pray for your colleagues
- Pray for your brothers & sisters in Christ still in partial bondage