

Introduction

Last week we covered the transformation of Jesus on the top of the mountain. Mountaintop experiences are great, but that is not where most of life is lived. As the disciples came down the mountain, Jesus spoke to them again about His departure, how He would be rejected, would die, and be raised from the dead. His glory and majesty was revealed on the mountaintop, but down below there was an unbelieving and perverted world that needed a Savior. Jesus was the Lamb of God who had come to take away the sins of the world. He did not come to be served, but to serve and give His life as a ransom for many.

Last week I told you about a mountaintop experience that I had in Las Vegas, Nevada. It was a wonderful experience, one that I will never forget. Today, I want to open up with an experience in contrast to that mountaintop experience, a walk through the valley of the shadow of death, and God was with me in both experiences. In the summer of 1998 I was praying at some property we had bought in Acworth, Georgia. The Holy Spirit spoke to me that this was going to be a place of refuge. That made me really happy. I wanted our church and ministry to be a place of refuge for people. We built a house on that property, and I really enjoyed having a place to plant fruit trees and bushes. Karen ran a goat farm with Boer Goats, and I was her farm hand, building chicken coops, animal shelters, and fencing the pastures. Karen looks back at our time there and cherishes it. But, let me back up to April 2000, shortly after we had moved to the property. I was a chaplain at Cobb County Adult Detention Center, where I was seeing lots of men come to Christ. The Spirit was moving powerfully and men's lives were being radically transformed. But on this particular day, as I was driving back from the prison, Karen told me that the doctors had called her after Kathleen's school physical, and they wanted to see us. That evening, the doctor got right to the point. Our little six-year-old daughter's bloodwork showed that she had leukemia. The doctor wanted us to take her in to the hospital that night. We discussed that suggestion, but agreed to take her in to the Children's Hospital of Atlanta the next morning. We were not on the mountain. We were in the valley of despair. We found out on Monday that she had Acute Myeloma Leukemia, and that they did not have a cure for it. They gave our daughter three to eight weeks to live. In the natural realm, there was not much hope. We cried out to God on behalf of our daughter. He was our only hope and we ran to Him. We were not on the mountaintop; we were in the valley of despair.

In the world there is sickness, disease, strife, struggles, pain, and demonic warfare. In our text today, Jesus came down from the mountain and witnessed strife between the scribes and His disciples. He saw a man who had brought his son to His disciples and they had not been able to cast out the cruel demon that was trying to destroy his only little boy. This father loved his son and cried out to Jesus to cast out the demon and free his son. He said, "if you can help us, take pity on us and help us." Jesus exclaimed, "If I can? All things are possible to him who believes." This was not the mountain; this was the plight of the world. This was the plea of the father, and I identify with this father's plea to Jesus. And Jesus rebuked the demon and cast it out. When the disciples asked why they were not able to cast it out, He told them it was because of the littleness of their faith, and that this kind only comes out by prayer and fasting. All things were possible to those that believe. Let's read our text.

All Things Are Possible to Him who Believes (Mark 9:14-29)

1. The Plight of the World (Mark 9:14-19)
2. The Plea of the Father (Mark 9:17-24)
3. The Prayer of Faith (Mark 9:25-29)

(Mark 9:14-29) "When they came *back* to the disciples, they saw a large crowd around them, and *some* scribes arguing with them. {15} Immediately, when the entire crowd saw Him, they were amazed and *began* running up to greet Him. {16} And He asked them, "What are you discussing with them?" {17} And one of the crowd answered Him, "Teacher, I brought You my son, possessed with a spirit which makes him mute; {18} and whenever it seizes him, it slams him *to the ground* and he foams *at the mouth*, and grinds his teeth and stiffens out. I told Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not *do it*." {19} And He *answered them and *said, "O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him to Me!" {20} They brought the boy to Him. When he saw Him, immediately the spirit threw him into a convulsion, and falling to the ground, he *began* rolling around and foaming *at the mouth*. {21} And He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. {22} "It has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!" {23} And Jesus said to him, " 'If You can?' All things are possible to him who believes." {24} Immediately the boy's father cried out and said, "I do believe; help my unbelief." {25} When Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You deaf and mute spirit, I command you, come out of him and do not enter him again." {26} After crying out and throwing him into terrible convulsions, it came out; and *the boy* became so much like a corpse that most *of them* said, "He is dead!" {27} But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him; and he got up. {28} When He came into *the* house, His disciples *began* questioning Him privately, "Why could we not drive it out?" {29} And He said to them, "This kind cannot come out by anything but prayer."

1. **The Plight of the World** (Mark 9:14-19)

What a contrast in scenes. Peter, James, and John had just seen the glory and majesty of Jesus. His face shown like the sun and His clothes were radiant and whiter than any launderer could clean. As they came back down from the mountain and rejoined the other disciples there was a large crowd and the scribes were arguing with the disciples. They went from the presence of God to a large crowd and strife.

(Mark 9:14) "When they came *back* to the disciples, they saw a large crowd around them, and *some* scribes arguing with them."

When the crowd saw Jesus, they were amazed and began running up to greet Him. Jesus was probably still glowing. The crowd had probably gathered because they heard Jesus was in the area. Perhaps they wanted to get fed, like the four thousand or five thousand. Perhaps they wanted to see Him perform some miracles. Now that Jesus has come, they ran up to greet Him. Jesus asked His disciples, "What are you discussing with them?" The Greek word is *suzeto* (Strong's G4802), which means to dispute. The ESV reads, "What are you arguing about with them?" I think the ESV is spot on. The disciples did not answer, but someone in the crowd answered Jesus' question. The man that answered had a real need in his life. He told Jesus that his son is possessed with a spirit and how it was constantly trying to destroy him. The spirit would seize his son, slam him to the ground, cause his mouth to foam. He told Jesus that He had brought his son to Him, but had only found His disciples, and they had not been able to cast out the demon from his son. Apparently, the scribes and disciples were arguing about their inability to cast out the demon. They may have been arguing about why this boy had a demon. They may have accused the man or the boy of sins. The man did not share anything but the context; he had a need and got right to the point.

(Mark 9:15-18) “Immediately, when the entire crowd saw Him, they were amazed and *began* running up to greet Him. {16} And He asked them, “What are you discussing with them?” {17} And one of the crowd answered Him, “Teacher, I brought You my son, possessed with a spirit which makes him mute; {18} and whenever it seizes him, it slams him *to the ground* and he foams *at the mouth*, and grinds his teeth and stiffens out. I told Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not *do it*.”

There were many manifestations of the demon. It made the boy mute. It would seize him, which means it would take hold of him and control him. It would slam him to the ground. It was a violent demon. It would cause him to foam at the mouth. When I think of foaming at the mouth, I think of a rabid animal. They drool or foam at the mouth, and we call it a mad animal. In the Old Testament, David feigned madness (Psalm 34:1). The account is given in 1 Samuel 21:12-15. David acted insanely and let his saliva run down into his beard. King Achish said to his men, “Behold, you see the man behaving as a madman. Why do you bring him to me? Do I lack madmen, that you have brought this one to act the madman in my presence?” This demon caused this boy to act like a madman or a mad animal.

(1 Sam 21:12-15) “David took these words to heart and greatly feared Achish king of Gath. {13} So he disguised his sanity before them, and acted insanely in their hands, and scribbled on the doors of the gate, and let his saliva run down into his beard. {14} Then Achish said to his servants, “Behold, you see the man behaving as a madman. Why do you bring him to me? {15} Do I lack madmen, that you have brought this one to act the madman in my presence? Shall this one come into my house?”

The demon also caused the boy to grind his teeth and stiffen out. The grinding of teeth suggests intense anger. In Acts 7:54, Stephen preached and the Jews that heard his message began gnashing their teeth at him. They were intensely angry, furious, full of rage, and they stoned Stephen to death. This demon caused the boy to have intense anger and rage.

(Acts 7:54) “Now when they heard this, they were cut to the quick, and they *began* gnashing their teeth at him.”

This demon also caused the boy to stiffen up. When the Bible speaks of stiffening up, it generally refers to rebellious behavior. A man who stiffens his neck is rebellious and obstinate. The devil and his demons were cast out of heaven because of their rebellion. They are manifesting their true nature in this boy.

Later on, he told Jesus that it would throw his son into a fire or water. This demonic spirit was trying to destroy and kill his son. In John 10:10, Jesus said, “The thief comes only to steal, kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.” This demon was trying to steal, kill and destroy. The world below is full of strife, and pain and demonic forces of darkness that are trying to destroy the lives of people.

(Mark 9: 22) “It has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him...”

(John 10:10) “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have *it* abundantly.”

Jesus asked the father, “How long has this been happening to him?” I don’t think Jesus asked this for His own knowledge. He was giving the father an opportunity to share his pain. The father replied, “From childhood.” This boy and this family had been tormented and dealing with this cruel demon for many years.

(Mark 9:21) “And He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood.”

When the father told Jesus that His disciples had not been able to cast out the demon, Jesus answered, “O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him to Me!” The world is full of doubt and unbelief. The same thing could be said today, of our generation. We are an unbelieving generation. The word believe is a word that is repeated a number of times in the passage. The Greek word believe is *pisteuo* (Strong’s G4100). The word here is *apistu* (Strong’s G571), which means not believing. The root word of believe (*pisteuo*) is *pistis* (Strong’s G 4102), which means faith. The root word of *pistis* is *peitho* (Strong’s G3982), which means to have confidence or to be convinced. In Hebrews, God defines faith for us. He said it is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” Our generation today is not convinced that there is a God, much less that Jesus is God. They are not assured of anything. They are not convinced of things not seen. We are also an unbelieving generation.

(Mark 9:19) “And He answered them and said, "O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him to Me!”

(Heb 11:1) “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”

The parallel passages in Matthew 17:17 and Luke 9:41 both say, “You unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you?” We are not just unbelieving, we are a perverted generation. Jesus and the disciples are in Caesarea Philippi, which is one of the most wicked and perverted places on earth at that time. There was idolatry, sexual perversions, bestiality, and many other perversions. The mouth of the cave there where the spring came out was a place dedicated to idol worship. It was called the “Gates of Hell.” This was an unbelieving and perverted generation, very similar to our generation today. We have removed God, His word, and prayer from our culture. Lawlessness is increasing so that we can do whatever we please.

(Matt 17:17) “And Jesus answered and said, "You unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him here to Me.”

(Luke 9:41) “And Jesus answered and said, "You unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you and put up with you? Bring your son here.”

In John 1:4-5, we read, “In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.” The plight of the world is darkness. Jesus is the Light of the world and He came down to the world to become the Light of men. As Jesus came down from the mountain, where His face shown like the light of the sun, and His clothes were radiant, He was coming down to the darkness below. Our text is a graphic picture of John 1:4-5, where the Light of men came down into darkness.

(John 1:4-5) “In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. {5} The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.”

2. **The Plea of the Father** (Mark 9:17-24)

The plight of the world is really the setting for the passage. Now we come to the plea of the father. His son has been cruelly demon-possessed since childhood. His father has been doing everything he can to keep him alive. When the demon threw him into the fire or water, you know that his mother or father were right there to pull him out. They could not take their eyes off of him for one minute. When the demon caused their sons teeth to grind and be full of rage and anger, you have to know that the parents felt the brunt of that anger. When it caused their son to stiffen up in rebellion, you know these parents were at their wits end about what to do. They were probably worn thin and exhausted. This man heard that Jesus was in the area and he brought his son to where Jesus was supposed to be. When he got there, only nine of the disciples were there, and when he brought his son to them, they had not been able to deliver the demon from his son. I am sure that this man’s hope had faded some over this disappointment.

When Jesus arrived, the crowd was amazed and ran to him. The dialogue here is with the father, so I have to think that he outran all of them. He wanted to be first in line to see Jesus. This was his last and final hope. There was a crowd of people here, but the focus of the crowd turns to the focus on the plea of the father, just one in the crowd. Jesus always took time for the ones in the crowd. He ministered to the crowds, but He also took time to minister to the one in the crowd. In Luke 15:3-7, Jesus told a parable about a man that had a hundred sheep and lost one of them. The shepherd left the ninety-nine and went and found the ONE that was lost. When he found it, he rejoiced. In Luke 15:8-10, He told the parable of the lost coin. The woman searched until she found the lost coin, and then she rejoiced. Then, in Luke 15:11-32, He shared the parable of the prodigal son. Those passages were really to show the joy in heaven over a sinner that repents and is found. The religious leaders were upset that Jesus spent time with sinners, but Jesus said that our attitude should be one of joy when a lost person is saved. But, the second lesson in all those parables is how Jesus reached out to the one sheep, the one coin, or the one son that was lost. In our passage today, Jesus took time to minister to this father’s son, the ONE who was cruelly possessed by a demon.

(Luke 15:3-7) “So He told them this parable, saying, {4} What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? {5} When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. {6} And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!' {7} I tell you that in the same way, there will be *more* joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.”

(Luke 15:8-10) “Or what woman, if she has ten silver coins and loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? {9} When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin which I had lost!' {10} In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

When Jesus asked what the disciples and scribes were arguing about, he answered. He began telling Jesus about his son, how he was possessed with a spirit that makes him mute, and how it

seizes him, slamming him to the ground and causing his mouth to foam. He told Jesus that it causes his teeth to grind and his body to stiffen out. After Jesus answered them, "O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you?" He was not saying this only to the father. He directed this to everyone. Then, He said, "Bring him to Me!"

(Mark 9:17-19) "And one of the crowd answered Him, "Teacher, I brought You my son, possessed with a spirit which makes him mute; {18} and whenever it seizes him, it slams him *to the ground* and he foams *at the mouth*, and grinds his teeth and stiffens out. I told Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not *do it*." {19} And He answered them and said, "O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him to Me!"

When they brought the boy to Jesus, the spirit immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. In the presence of Jesus, this demon was putting up a fight. This demon knew who Jesus was, and he wanted to stand his ground. It would be his last stand though.

(Mark 9:20) "They brought the boy to Him. When he saw Him, immediately the spirit threw him into a convulsion, and falling to the ground, he *began* rolling around and foaming *at the mouth*."

Karen and I visited Life Center, a church in Atlanta that was being pastored by Dr. Buddy and Dr. Mary Crum. The worship was wonderful and the presence of God was powerful. The presence of God got so strong that in the seat immediately behind us a man with a demonic spirit began screaming out. The ushers quickly came and took him to a room to minister to him. These demons cannot stand the presence of God and they often will manifest. That is what happened to the little boy; the demons manifested themselves in the presence of Jesus.

After Jesus asked him how long this has been happening, he told Jesus, "From childhood." And the man added the details about the fire and water. Then, the man said, "But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!" This was not a statement of faith, but a question and a plea all in one. The man may not have had a lot of faith, but he had made the effort to come out to find Jesus. He had gone to the disciples, and now he had beat the crowd to Jesus. He was determined to see Jesus. He did not know if He could do something, but the father was not going to leave any rocks unturned. If Jesus could do something, he wanted his son to be freed. And the father said, take pity on us and help us. He asked Jesus to have compassion on them and to come to their aid. The Greek word for help that is used is *botheo* (Strong's G997). The compound word is made up of *boe* (to cry) and *theo* (to run). The man is crying out to Jesus to run to help him or to hurry to help him. He is pleading with Jesus for help.

(Mark 9:21-22) "And He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. {22} "It has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!"

Jesus responded "If You can?" It is not really a question, but an exclamation. It is as if Jesus was saying, "Are you serious? If I can? Do you not know who I am?" Then Jesus said the key verse of the passage, "All things are possible to him who believes."

(Mark 9:23-24) “And Jesus said to him, " 'If You can?' All things are possible to him who believes." {24} Immediately the boy's father cried out and said, "I do believe; help my unbelief.”

The man immediately cried out and said, “I do believe; help my unbelief.” The word for cried out really suggests that he screamed out to Jesus. There was some emotion and passion in his cry to Jesus for help. The father did not want to stand in the way of seeing his son delivered and freed. He wanted Jesus to help him with any area of unbelief so that nothing would hinder the healing of his son. This was the plea of the father.

3. **The Prayer of Faith** (Mark 9:25-29)

When Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering, He took care of business. He rebuked the unclean spirit, and commanded it to come out and to not enter him again. He was not looking to entertain the crowd. He was not looking to perform a sign for them. Jesus was going to deliver the boy, for the glory of God, not for any other reason. Our passage does not give the results, but Luke recorded that they were all amazed at the greatness of God, and were marveling at all that He was doing.

(Mark 9:25) “When Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You deaf and mute spirit, I command you, come out of him and do not enter him again.”

(Luke 9:43) “And they were all amazed at the greatness of God. But while everyone was marveling at all that He was doing...”

After rebuking the demon and commanding it to come out, the demon put up one final stand and threw the boy into a terrible convulsion. This was a power confrontation, but Jesus has all authority and all power and this demon had to go. After the demon had left, the boy became like a corpse, and most of them thought he was dead. But notice the response by Jesus. He has just cast out a demon, showing His power and authority, and now He took the boy by the hand and raised him up. We now see the tenderness and gentleness of Jesus.

(Mark 9:26-27) “After crying out and throwing him into terrible convulsions, it came out; and *the boy* became so much like a corpse that most *of them* said, "He is dead!" {27} But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him; and he got up.”

After casting out the demon, they went into the house. We don't know whose house it was. Jesus and His disciples were not from Caesarea Philippi. I believe that they went into the father's house. I believe the father was so grateful that he invited Jesus and His disciples over to his house to feed them and honor them. While at the house, Jesus' disciples began questioning Him privately about why they could not drive the demon out. That is a good question. In Mark 6, Jesus had sent out the disciples and given them authority over demons, and we find in Mark 6:13 that they were casting out man demons and anointing those who were sick with oil and healing them. So, why did it not work this time?

(Mark 9:28) “When He came into *the* house, His disciples *began* questioning Him privately, "Why could we not drive it out”

(Mark 6:13) "And they were casting out many demons and were anointing with oil many sick people and healing them."

There are lots of different thoughts on why they were not able to cast it out. I believe that there is an organizational chart in the kingdom of God and also in the kingdom of darkness. The religious leaders had accused Jesus of being Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons. We saw in Mark 1:13, when Jesus went into the wilderness to fast for forty days, that He was with the wild beasts. I told you that the Greek word for wild beasts is therion, and it is the same word that refers to the beasts in Revelation 13. The dragon, Satan, had given authority to the beasts. I believe these are some of the spiritual forces of darkness and Jesus had overcome these in His prayer and fasting.

(Mark 3:22) "The scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, "He is possessed by Beelzebul," and "He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons."

(Mark 1:13) "And He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to Him."

I believe that Jesus' response confirms what I believe. He said that this kind cannot come out by anything but prayer. In Matthew's account, he said, "But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting." There is a bracket around that verse in Matthew, and there is a note in most Bibles that states that this particular verse is not in some of the earliest manuscripts. It was accepted in the KJV as part of the Masoretic text that they approved and used. To me, it is a moot point. The verse in Mark is not disputed, and fasting is associated with prayer.

(Mark 9:29) "And He said to them, "This kind cannot come out by anything but prayer."

(Matt 17:21) "["But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."]

When I did my forty-day fast, I did not fast to gain authority; I did have, however, have some reasons. First, God put in me a desire to do a forty-day fast for many years. Because I was playing professional golf, I did not have the opportunity to do it. Second, I wanted to see my ministry become more balanced. I was very word oriented, which is a good thing, but I wanted to see an increase in ministry of the spirit. Third, when I had done a lot of smaller fasts, I had derived great benefits from those fasts. I saw a tremendous increase in spiritual alertness and activity when I fasted. People would call me from all over the country and ask me for counsel or to come minister. Fasting also brought alertness and discernment, particularly related to recognizing demonic forces working in people. So, those were the reasons for my fast. But something happened to me during that fast. God gave me a new level of spiritual authority. I did not ask for it; God just raised me up a few notches. There was an intensity and a commanding authority that I did not have before. It came during that fast.

So, when Jesus said that only comes by prayer and fasting, I believe there are some levels of spiritual authority that are needed in dealing with certain demonic forces. There is a prayer of faith that is needed to deal with these demonic force.

The word believe or unbelief is used four times in this passage; that is significant. The first occurrence was when the boy was brought to Jesus and He said to them, "O unbelieving generation." The second time is when Jesus said all things are possible to him who believes. The third and fourth time are when the father said, "I do believe; help my unbelief."

Our passage does not include the comments that Matthew recorded. He answered the disciples in Matthew 17:20, saying, “because of the littleness of your faith, and, “if you had the faith the size of the mustard seed.” Earlier I gave you the Greek words for believe and faith. They both have the same root word, *peitho*, to be convinced or persuaded. Belief and faith are very much related.

I believe the main point of this passage is that all things are possible to him who believes. The disciples did not have enough faith to cast out this demon. The crowds were an unbelieving generation, and did not have faith. The starting point of seeing God move is faith; we must have faith. We don’t need a mustard tree of faith; we need the faith the size of the mustard seed. But, we need to exercise that faith, and let it grow. Jesus said to them, “How long shall I be with you?” Jesus was getting ready to go to the cross, be raised from the dead, and then take His place with the Father. He was not going to be here. Jesus wanted His disciples to step up and start handling some of these matters. He did not want them to stay at the level they were at.

That is what Abraham did. He did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith, being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able to perform. We need a mustard seed of faith, and then we need to let that mustard seed grow.

(Rom 4:20-21) “yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, {21} and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.”

We find in Romans 10:17 that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word. The Greek word that is used here is not *logos*, but *rhema* (Strong’s G4487). *Rhema* means a word, or an utterance. When we are reading God’s *logos*, His word to us, the Holy Spirit will give us impressions or words about that word, and we call this *rhema*.

(Rom 10:17) “So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”

We need to base that faith on the promises of God. God will always do what the things that He promises to do. We can stand on His promises. Very often these *rhema* words come during our prayers. When the Lord speaks a very specific word to me, I usually check it out and try to confirm it. It is not that I don’t trust God; it is that I don’t always trust my hearing. Peter missed it in Mark 8. He had a revelation from the Father about who Jesus was, and then in the next moment he has his mind set on the things of man, not the things of God. I recognize that I can easily set my mind on the things of man and miss it. So, I like to get confirmation from people that I trust. Mark Virkler calls these spiritual advisors. When I hear a *rhema* word, I will stand on it. I have faith in it. These *rhema* words need to line up with the *logos*, the written word of God. If they do not line up with the written word, I forget about them.

There are some that say that with our faith we can move mountains and get anything we want. I believe that our faith needs to be based upon God’s word and His promises, not our fleshly desires. So, I believe that all things are possible to him who believes that this is God’s will in a matter. Consider 1 John 5:14-15. John wrote that we can have confidence when we pray according to His will.

(1 John 5:14-15) “This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. {15} And if we know that He hears us *in* whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.”

Consider John 16:23-27 where Jesus said that when we ask or pray in His name, we will receive what we have asked for. When we ask in Jesus' name, we are asking on His behalf. I have a box of corporate checks in my office. I have authority to write checks on behalf of our company. I do business in the name of our company. However, that authorization is not for buying things for my personal use; it is to be used for company business. In the same way, praying in the name of Jesus means that we are representing Jesus in this request. We have determined that this is God's will and we are asking in His name. When we believe that the matter is God's will, all things are possible. God has all authority and can do whatever He wants whenever He wants, and we can have confidence in what we are praying about or doing.

(John 16:23-24) "In that day you will not question Me about anything. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you. {24} Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full."

I want to close on one final contrast and thought. Jesus said in John 5:30 that He could do nothing on His own initiative. He did not seek His own will, but the Father's will.

(John 5:30) "I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."

In John 5:19-20, He said again, "the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner." Then He added that the Father shows Him all that He is doing. When did the Father show the Son what He was doing? I believe that we hear and see these things most often when we are spending time in prayer with the Father. All things are possible to him who believes, and this kind comes by prayer and fasting.

(John 5:19b-20) "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless *it is* something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner. {20} For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and *the Father* will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel."

Conclusion and Applications

How do we get faith? We get faith by placing our faith in Christ. We have to believe in Christ, and place our faith in Him. When we do that, He comes into our lives and He gives and seals us His Spirit. But, that is only the starting point. Then, we need to spend time with the Lord in prayer and in His word.

There may be someone who has never received Christ here this morning. You identify with the generation of unbelief, but you want to believe and place your faith in Christ. If that is your desire this morning, you can pray with me right now.

"Jesus, I do believe that You are the Son of God. I believe that You came and died for my sins, and that You were raised from the dead. I ask You to come into my life and I now confess You as my Lord. I ask You to help me to grow strong in my faith. Help me to walk in that realm that all things are possible to those who believe. Amen."

Introduction (Mark 9:14-29)

1. **The Plight of the World** (Mark 9:14-19, Ps 34:1, 1 Sam 21:12-15, Acts 7:54, John 10:10, Matt 17:17, Luke 9:41, John 1:4-5)
2. **The Plea of the Father** (Mark 9:17-24, Luke 15:3-7, 15:8-10, 15:11-32)
3. **The Prayer of Faith** (Mark 9:25-29, Luke 9:43, Mark 6:13, 3:22, 1:13, Matt 17:20-21, Rom 4:20-21, 10:17, 1 John 5:14-15, John 16:23-24, 5:30, 5:19-20)

Conclusion and Applications