

Help Me Overcome My Unbelief
A Crisis of Faith

Mark 9: 14-24

By

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14 When they came to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and the teachers of the law arguing with them.

15 As soon as all the people saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with wonder and ran to greet him.

16 What are you arguing with them about? He asked.

17 A man in the crowd answered, "Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech.

18 Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not."

19 **"O unbelieving generation"** Jesus replied. **"How long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me."**

20 So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth.

21 Jesus asked the boy's father, **"How long has he been like this?"** **"From childhood."** He answered.

22 "It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help him."

23 **"If you can"** said Jesus. **"Everything is possible for him who believes."** 1

24 Immediately the boy's father exclaimed "I do believe help me overcome my unbelief!" 2

Help Me Overcome My Unbelief! A Crisis in Faith

This year marks my 59th year as a Christian, the 47th year of my Gospel Ministry, and my 44th year an ordained preacher. To say that I have some years of experience behind me is a mild understatement. In all of my years as a follower of Christ I have seen and experienced much of God's favor and His grace. I have been picked out of crowds as a man of God wearing a simple pair of jeans, a tee shirt, and ball cap. I have been called upon in the middle of the night to help families in distress. I have at times found myself at the right time and the right place to be a blessing for others. I have spoken be-

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fore thousands of worshipers and brought the Gospel message. I have been to the White House and conversed with the President. I have met with the President of Belize at his Presidential Palace, been in the presence of the Queen of England on more than one occasion, dined with the Vice President of Ghana while visiting that African Nation. While I was not fortunate to be able to serve in our nation's armed forces, I have been blessed to travel from Asia to Africa and many smaller nations in between. There have been times when I have had more money than I had sense to spend it and times when I could not rub two pennies together without the help of family or friends. I can truly identify with the Psalmist when he said "I have been young and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." I have been party to, experienced and witnessed many miracles in my life time. I have lived a well-rounded life. God has been and still is good to me. And yet, in spite of all of my years of experience, and all of the places I have been, all of the things I have done, and all of the people I have seen, there have still been times when I have had to cry out "Lord I believe, but help me overcome my

unbelief." That right, there have still been times when my faith has been challenged to the point that I have fallen short. I have been weighed in the balance and found wanting. I'd like to say that I am an exception to the rule, that most Christians never fall short, but the wearisome reality is that we have all sinned fallen short. I mentioned my ups and downs to let you know that it does not matter what you station in life is, it does not matter how much power or influence you might think you have, It does no matter how deep your pockets may be, Life can and will take you to places that can challenge your faith.

In our text today we find a man who is in a desperate situation and is having a crisis of faith. Now I must tell you a desperate situation and a crisis of faith is lethal combination. The message that I hope to convey to you is that we are not defend by our situations, but rather how we respond to them.

At the time of the recording of this text Jesus, along with Peter James and John, were returning from the mount of transfiguration experience. If you will recall. It was there on Mount Herman that Peter, James, and John witnessed Jesus

in the presence of Moses and Elias. The Spirit had changed the Lord's countenance and God spoke to the disciples and said "This is my beloved Son hear ye him." Jesus was described as having raiment or clothing so bright that it was whiter than anything man could possibly produce. Well, they have now rejoined the other disciples and Jesus finds some unrest. Some controversy is stirring in the camp. It seems that there were some scribes present who were responsible for the disturbance and Jesus wanted to know what it was all about. Neither the scribes nor the disciples said anything until finally a man steps forward and said "Master I have brought my son to you." Now I urge you to take particular notice to the actions of this desperate man. He does not come with criticism or complaints against the disciples. He does however state the facts as they are: "My son is possessed of a dumb spirit. At times it makes him stiff as a board. He falls down and foams at the mouth. He grinds his teeth and sometimes he even falls in the fire sustaining life threatening injuries. I brought him to your disciples but they could not heal him. So, I am bringing him to you and if you can do anything for him I would be so grateful." The father of the

young man does not complain, criticize or condemn, instead he comes with a spirit of humility and he brings his problem to Jesus, the Master, in hopes of a cure. Well, Jesus has the full picture. The controversy in the camp is over the inability of the disciples to heal the man's son. The failure of the disciples has the scribe feeling empowered now that they have something to criticize Jesus about or so they thought. Listen to how Jesus responds to their short lived, ill-conceived, victory: **"O unbelieving generation! How long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me."**

Even Jesus gets tired of foolishness. He told the father to bring his son to Him. No sooner than the son is in the presence of Jesus the evil spirit takes over in a very violent and defiant way, which is the nature of the devil. Jesus asked the father how long has the young man been suffering like this and the father said since he was small child. In other words all of the young man's life he has suffered. Some of you have been wrestling with some life issues for a long time, so much so until the times have become desperate. I want you to know today it does not matter how long you have

been fighting your issues, do what the desperate father did, bring it to Jesus! Jesus will fix it. The young man's father said. If I may paraphrase, I know that my child has been suffering for a long time and your disciple's best efforts have failed, but if you can do anything to help him, anything at all please do so. Jesus's reply was "If I can" in other words are you saying you doubt my ability heal him? **"Everything is possible for him who believes."** Jesus asked him if he believed all things are possible and that is when the full measure of the desperate father's faith fell short. "Yes I believe" said the father: Help me overcome my unbelief" I have gone as far as I can on what little faith I have, help me overcome where my faith falls short. The father brought his problem to Jesus. The father brought his own issues, frailties and faults as well and Jesus fixed it.

"Here bring your wounded heart, bring your sorrows and your cares, bring your pains and suffering, bring it all to Jesus. He will help you with your unbelief and no matter whatever else your issue might be.