



THE GOSPEL OF MARK

Seeing Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God



Part 23

"Discipleship & Dependence Upon the Lord"

10-31-21

Introduction: A Focus on Discipleship

- Having left Galilee, Jesus began a phase of His ministry that was focused on His followers. Although they had experienced much success in the ministry that He had entrusted to them (Mark 6:13-14), they still had much to learn about the nature of discipleship. As they journeyed towards Jerusalem, He continued to speak to them of what was going to happen to Him while also teaching them important lessons about what it would mean to truly be His followers.

Key Point: Jesus taught by His own example that _____ was the means by which His followers were to live lives of dependent faith.

The Limitations of the Disciples & the Power of Jesus—Mark 9:14-29

- When they came down from the mount of the Transfiguration, they immediately went and found the other disciples.

Mark 9:14, 16-19—¹⁴ And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and scribes arguing with them... 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... So I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able." ¹⁹ And he answered them, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me."

Observations:

1. The disciples are engaged in some kind of _____ with the scribes.
2. In response to His question about the argument, a man came forward to tell Jesus about the condition of his son.
⇒ The boy is experiencing demonic affliction and was perhaps _____ brought to them.

"The son evidently had been brought as a test of the authority that belonged to Christ and as a test of the disciples as His representatives."
—Dwight J. Pentecost, *The Words & Works of Jesus Christ*

⇒ The father highlighted the disciples' _____ to cast out the demon.

3. Jesus' response was a statement of exasperation directed towards all who were around:

⇒ He described them as "_____"
"the scribes...crowd" "the disciples"

"Their faithlessness is symptomatic of the wider human condition, as Jesus in His ministry so often encountered it, an unwillingness to take God at His word and a horizon limited by mere human possibility." —R.T. France, *Mark*

4. The spirit immediately reacted to the _____ of Jesus.

Key Point: Jesus' _____ in the Lord stands in contrast to the unbelief of all the others.

- Jesus then took the boy and his father aside away from the crowd in order to speak to him.

Mark 9:21-24—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." ²³ 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!"

Observations:

1. The father explained how long the boy had suffered and then beseeched Jesus to help him, ____ He could.
2. The Lord's response to the man was intended to call him to _____ in the power of God to work through Him.

Key Point: The father's _____ on Jesus for help is specifically highlighted within the account.

"This through the felt unbelief of faith he attained true faith by laying hold of the Divine Savior, when he cried out..."
—Alfred Edersheim, *The Life & Times of Jesus the Messiah*

- **Jesus then cast the unclean spirit out from the boy.**

Mark 9:25-27—²⁵ 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.

Observations:

1. Jesus’ _____ and _____ were demonstrated to the crowd as He drove out the demon from the boy.
2. Jesus’ _____ was demonstrated in His raising up of the boy.

Key Point: Jesus’ success in casting out the demon stands in contrast to the _____ of his disciples.

- **The disciples then asked Jesus about their inability to cast out the demon.**

Mark 9:28-29—²⁸ 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.”

Observations:

1. Their question makes sense in light of their previous success in this area of ministry but also reveals their own self-focus.

“...the disciples’ question reveals that they are guilty of an “anxious self-concern” and a “misplaced” self-confidence.”
—David Garland, *A Theology of Mark’s Gospel*

2. Jesus’ response to their question is intended as a subtle _____ of their own lack of faith which was shown by their prayerlessness.

“Prayer is essentially an attitude of utter dependence upon God. These men seem to have been trusting their previous experiences or trusting the authority that had been conferred on them instead of depending on Christ and trusting Him to perform miracles through them.”
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Key Point: Jesus’ words were intended to call the disciples to a _____ relationship with God.

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- **Mark wants his audience to understand the significance of true faith to the life of a follower of Jesus.**

“All things had been possible to faith; not to the external belief of the disciples, which failed to reach ‘that kind,’ and ever fails to reach such kind, but to true spiritual faith in Him. And so it is to each of us individually, and to the Church, to all time.”
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- **Mark wants his audience to understand that dependent faith is evidenced through a life of prayer.**

“Mark is suggesting then that self-confident optimism may “feel” like faith, but it is in fact unbelief, because it disregards the prerequisite of human powerlessness and prayerful dependence on God.”
—Christopher Marshall, *Faith as a Theme in Mark’s Narrative*

Concluding Thoughts

- **Believers are _____ repeatedly in Scripture to live lives of dependent faith!**

1 Pet. 5:6-7—⁶ Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, ⁷ casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you

1 Thess. 5:16-18—¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

- **Believers are dependent upon God and He mercifully _____ us even in our prayerlessness.**

Heb. 7:25—Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

Rom. 8:26-27—²⁶ Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. ²⁷ And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.



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Key Point: Jesus’ words were intended to call the disciples to a **deeper** relationship with God.

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