

Growing Faith? Mark 9:14-29

It is obvious that the Bible clearly teaches us that it is on in our power that we can accomplish anything. I suggest it is also clear that while it is not by our power that things are accomplished it is by our faith, or lack of it, that God can move. Faith is defined in *Hebrews 11:1 NASB* Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Faith grows by the study of the Word of God. *Romans 10:17* So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. *Hebrews 11:6 NASB* And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. Faith is critical because God wants us to trust Him.

The setting of our text is the day after the events on the mount of Transfiguration. Jesus, remember had been on the mountain with three of the 12 disciples. The other nine were in the valley struggling to heal a boy and then disputing with the scribes. They were there faltering in faith, being ridiculed for their human frailties and lack of faith. There was also a man who was desperate for some help in his situation. We are told in *1 Peter 2:1-2* Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, 2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: Out of this background I think God would ask the question to us today do we have "Growing Faith?"

I- Divine Timing:

Mark 9:14 And when he came to his disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them. Jesus is needed, and as God does so often He showed up with perfect timing. They were not expecting Jesus to come when He arrived. *Mark 9:15* And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to him saluted him. One thing about faith is that we must learn to trust the timing of God.

The scribes used the inability of the disciples to belittle not only them but also the Master. The inability of the disciples should not be attached to the inability of Christ.

If we will look around when we are at our weakest moments is the time that we can see Him appear?

II- The Reason for the Dispute:

Mark 9:16 And he asked the scribes, What question ye with them? The HCSB says in *Mark 9:16 HCSB* Then He asked them, "What are you arguing with them about?" The one that answers before anyone else can is the father.

Mark 9:17 And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; 18 And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not.

The man says that he was the cause of the entire dispute, or at least was the one that got it started. He had brought his son to Jesus to be healed but Jesus was not there so the disciple had tried but failed.

III- The Hearts Cry:

1- **The Heart Cry of Jesus:** Notice the emotion of Jesus as He cries out from His heart. *Mark 9:19* He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? How He wants me and you to be all you can be, but we so slowly change our human nature and become men and women of God.

2- **The Heart Cry of the Son's Father:** Jesus quickly moves forward to minister to the need of the individual before Him. He tells them in *Mark 9:19* ...Bring him unto me. Jesus questions the father. *Mark 9:20* And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. 21 And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. 22 And oftimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him...

The burden was not only on the boy who endured this thing but the family. Hear the father's helplessness in his voice. He had arrived with hope but now after the failure of the disciples his hope had faded. He says to Jesus not if you will but if you can. *Mark 9:22* ...but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.

Notice the response of Jesus leaves no room for if but He attaches it to faith. *Mark 9:23* Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. The healing was not waiting on the power of God but on the faith of the father. What if God gives us just exactly what we have the amount of faith for?

Now notice the heart cry of the father. Not it was not for healing of his son but it was for more faith. *Mark 9:24* And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

IV- The Contrast:

What can cause us to cry this to God? May I suggest because it is that the stark difference between the inability of man, as evidenced in the failure of the disciples, and the ability of God, here displayed in Christ, are vast.

Mark 9:25 When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. 26 And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead. 27 But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose.

The contrast between what the disciples could do and what the Messiah could do was immeasurable. Jesus spoke to the demon and he came out after one last ripping of the fiber of the child. The child looked like he was dead and Jesus took him by the hand and raise him. The failure of the disciples because of lack of faith gave rise to the manifesting of the greatness of God.

V- The Need to Live Closer:

The scene moves into the house where the disciples ask the why question. Why could they not do what Jesus did? *Mark 9:28* And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out? 29 And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.

Why do we not see more movement of God in our lives and the life of church? Could it be today that God is saying to us that you need to move up closer to Me in your spiritual lives so I can do more through faith? Could it be that we need to grow more in our relationship with God? Could it be that we need to cry out for Him to help us grow in faith?