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TEACHING THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD

Mark - Lesson 9C

Chapter 9:14-29

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- Last week we went into detail concerning the “after glow moment”, if you will, of the transfiguration moment.
 - It was at the start of the descent from the high mountain that Jesus dropped some heavy information on Peter, James, and John.
 - Some of those details Jesus discussed during the descent, we discovered, were the following:
 - 1. Jesus’ eschatological explanation of Elijah and the timing of Jesus’ first advent.
 - 2. Jesus’ explanation of God’s redemptive plan by means of Messiah’s death.
 - 3. How the believer should live with eyes for eternity in the here and now as we await the glorious return of Christ.
 - Tonight, we find Jesus and His 3 disciples having just arrived to the lower side of the mountain.
 - It will be as if they have moved from this glorious mountain top experience back to the reality of life.
 - And that reality will be a bountiful mess waiting to be addressed by Christ, Himself.
 - As we walk through the text tonight, I want to outline for us some thoughts as to the flow of the text.
 - Tonight, we are going to see the following:
 - 1. A Disappointing Welcome (v.14-18)
 - 2. A Detailed and Disturbing Scene (v.19-22)
 - 3. A Desperate Plea
 - 4. A Demonstrative Picture
 - 5. A Constant Dependence
 - If I were to place a tag on tonight’s text it would simply be: “After the Glow Has Faded”
 - I invite you now to open your bibles and meet me in Mark 9:14-29.

Mark 9:14 And when they came back to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them, and some scribes arguing with them.

Mark 9:15 Immediately, when the entire crowd saw Him, they were amazed and began running up to greet Him.

Mark 9:16 And He asked them, “What are you disputing with them?”

Mark 9:17 And one person from the crowd answered Him, “Teacher, I brought You my son, because he has a spirit that makes him unable to speak;

Mark 9:18 and whenever it seizes him, it slams him to the ground, and he foams at the mouth and grinds his teeth and becomes stiff. And I told Your disciples so that they would cast it out, but they could not do it.”

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!”

Mark 9:20 And they brought the boy to Him. When he saw Him, the spirit immediately threw him into convulsions, and falling to the ground, he began rolling around and foaming at the mouth.

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

Mark 9:22 It has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to kill him. But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!”

Mark 9:23 But Jesus said to him, “‘If You can?’ All things are possible for the one who believes.”

Mark 9:24 Immediately the boy’s father cried out and said, “I do believe; help my unbelief!”

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

Mark 9:26 And 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!”

Mark 9:27 But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him, and he got up.

Mark 9:28 When He came into the house, His disciples began asking Him privately, “Why is it that we could not cast it out?”

Mark 9:29 And He said to them, “This kind cannot come out by anything except prayer.”

- Let’s Pray.
- If I were to take a poll of what your top 5 highlights in life might be, I am sure in that top five would be your wedding day – it’s a day one would never forget.
 - Memories were made, photos taken, tears were shed, and joy was in the air.
 - However, after the wedding day has faded and the anniversary has past, life begins to settle in.
 - You encounter your first disagreement, your first let down, your first tragedy.
 - It is in those moments that you don’t rush to the photo on the fireplace saying, “Oh how I wish we could go back to this moment!”
 - It’s in those difficult moments that you are recalling the very words that you uttered before your spouse, the pastor, the people, and God Himself.
 - It becomes those vows and commitment to God’s definition of marriage that you realize your unwavering commitment to one another even when life gets hard.
 - Why? Because this commitment was a commitment till death do you part and God has established this means for your good and His glory.
 - It’s after this glorious moment on the high mountain that Jesus and His three disciples will arrive to the base of the mountain for reality to settle in.
 - And what we will see tonight is that the disciples, in a way, will need to be reminded of this cost commitment of listening and trusting Messiah above all things.

- Pick me up at verses 14-18.

Mark 9:14 And when they came back to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them, and some scribes arguing with them.

Mark 9:15 Immediately, when the entire crowd saw Him, they were amazed and began running up to greet Him.

Mark 9:16 And He asked them, “What are you disputing with them?”

Mark 9:17 And one person from the crowd answered Him, “Teacher, I brought You my son, because he has a spirit that makes him unable to speak;

Mark 9:18 and whenever it seizes him, it slams him to the ground, and he foams at the mouth and grinds his teeth and becomes stiff. And I told Your disciples so that they would cast it out, but they could not do it.”

- It is here that we find Jesus, Peter, James, and John having arrived back to the 9 disciples, only to be faced with a disappointing welcome.
 - The text tells us in verse 14 that there was a large crowd around them, and in the midst of this crowd were some familiar faces.
 - Mark tells us that within this crowd of people were some scribes who seem to be arguing with the disciples.
 - Now one question that begins to surface at this point is: “What were the scribes debating about with the disciples?”
 - In fact, this is the exact question that Jesus asks the people.
 - We will find out this answer later on tonight. In the means time let's keep moving.
 - Verse 15 tells us that upon the crowd seeing Jesus, that they were amazed and began running towards Him to greet Him.
 - In other words, this crowd was excited to see Jesus – and what perfect timing it was.
 - It would be upon Jesus and the three arriving on the scene that Jesus questions the crowd as to the reasoning of the dispute with the scribes.
 - We can assume that Jesus and the 3 were either close enough to see a confrontation of sorts or Jesus had divinely perceived what was going on with the scribes there.
 - Whatever the case, it becomes apparent that Jesus’ line of questioning becomes hijacked by a concerned inquirer in the crowd.
 - Verse 17 mentions that a man amongst the crowd speaks up not to answer the question Jesus has just posed, but rather to file a grievance of sorts.
 - Check out what the man tells Jesus in verses 17-18.

Mark 9:17 And one person from the crowd answered Him, “Teacher, I brought You my son, because he has a spirit that makes him unable to speak;

Mark 9:18 and whenever it seizes him, it slams him to the ground, and he foams at the mouth and grinds his teeth and becomes stiff. And I told Your

disciples so that they would cast it out, but they could not do it.”

- What I don't want us to miss from this grievance filed is the subject by which the father of this demonic child is referring to.
 - Notice that he begins by saying, “Teacher, I brought You my son...” yet he ends by saying (in my own words) “I told your disciples, but they couldn't do it.”
 - What's the problem here?
 - The problem is that Jesus was not on the scene to have received the man's son in the first place, so why did the man address the question this way first?
 - What this father was getting at was the fact that these men have been with Jesus for some time.
 - And with that, because Jesus was not physically present to respond to this immediate need, he assumed the next best in line were the disciples themselves.
 - I can only imagine in this moment, Jesus giving these men the side eye as if to say “Oy Vey, come on guys. Are we still struggling to understand the big picture?”
 - I mention this phrase of frustration because, if you recall, there was a point where Jesus sent out His 12, missionally, by themselves.
 - We saw this instance in Mark 6:7-13 where Jesus sent them out two by two and gave them authority over unclean spirits.
 - However, what we must remember from that instance is the purpose of that moment: It was for the Apostles to depend upon the provision of the Father.
 - They could not accomplish the task at hand without relying upon God's power.
 - However, it seems as if the disciples were lacking in something because the father of the child mentioned that the disciples couldn't heal the child.
 - Can you imagine the tension in this moment between that of Jesus and His disciples?
 - Maybe as Jesus was locking eyes with them, they are locking eyes with the ground beneath them.
 - And we can estimate that there was some tension there because verses 19-22 provides us with Jesus' response. Check out the text:

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!”

Mark 9:20 And they brought the boy to Him. When he saw Him, the spirit immediately threw him into convulsions, and falling to the ground, he began rolling around and foaming at the mouth.

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

Mark 9:22 It has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to kill him. But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!”

- Mark now moves us to a detailed and disturbing scene which involves a firm rebuke of the crowd, the father, and the disciples.
 - I mention this because these next four verses reveal 2 insightful points related to Jesus addressing the people. Those 2 points are the following:
 - 1) The lack of faith and unbelief that generation had despite the evidence that Messiah had shown previously.
 - 2) And the painful reality of demonic activity.
 - Let's address the first point:
 - Jesus' answer to the man's response seems to be directly targeted towards the crowd as a whole, including the disciples.
 - On one end, the people have witnessed the mighty miracles of Christ throughout the Galilee region.
 - However, the leadership complex of that day did not attribute these mighty works to God, but rather to Satan.
 - On top of that, if you look at Matthew and Luke's gospel, you'll notice that they both include a rather interesting word describing the crowd.
 - He mentions the word perverted; "You unbelieving and perverted generation".
 - This word "perverted" in Greek literally means mislead, distorted, or made crooked.
 - Well, this could potentially explain, on one end, the unbelief that was presented amongst the people.
 - On top of that we mentioned earlier that the scribes were in the midst of this crowd stirring up confusion and sowing seeds of division.
 - And to make matters worse, the fact that the disciples were not able to exorcise this demon out of this child would further cause into question Jesus' Messiahship by the people.
 - Friends, this was the situation in which Jesus was walking into.
 - And it becomes clear that the people's hearts and their ability to believe in the Person and work of Messiah was once again maligned by the scribes, but now the disciples themselves have, in a way, dirtied their witness.
 - So, Jesus rebukes the crowd because of their unbelief while also addressing the father and His Disciples.
 - The reality was that this man came seeking healing for His child from Jesus, which means that this man was familiar with who Jesus was and what He could do.
 - This type of demon possession was not something new for Jesus, the only difference now was that Jesus wasn't present at the initial moment.
 - However, the man trusted Jesus enough to trust the men who were following Him.
 - So at this point you could feel Jesus' frustration with His disciples as well as the father's frustration with Jesus' disciples as well.
 - This is where we see Jesus make His "How Long" statement.

- “How long shall I be with you?” It’s almost as if the disciples are still not realizing that there was a day soon coming in which Jesus would not physically be there with them.
- The disciples were missing something key that they have had all along, however this reoccurring theme of failing to get the lesson continues to ring forth.
 - So after the failure of the disciples, the lack of faith from the father because of the disciples, and the gathered crowd of spectators, Jesus takes this matter into His own hands.
 - Even with the unbelief in the crowd, Jesus moves towards this man’s need with much compassion.
- So Jesus tells the disciples to bring the child to Me.
 - In other words, “you jacked this all the way up, now I have to clean up this mess.”
- Mark tells us towards the end of verse 19, that as they bring the child to Jesus, the demon creates quite a disturbing scene.
- Notice the actions of this demon inhabiting this child:
 - 1. Convulsions
 - 2. Falling to the ground
 - 3. Rolling around and foaming at the mouth
 - 4. And as verse 22 notes trying to cause the boy to die.
- It’s at this point that I would like to address our second insightful point regarding this scene.
 - And that is the reality of the demonic realm and the enemies’ tactics.
- If you remember from our teaching of the demoniac in the Decapolis in Mark 5A, we mentioned several things regarding their goal/aim.
 - And if I were to sum up their goals in three simple words, their assignment is to kill, steal, and destroy.
 - And this pattern of behavior comes only from their leader, Satan himself.
- With demon possession, one of the objectives is to occupy the bodies of human beings in an effort to corrupt and destroy the very image of God.
 - If they can corrupt the body and cause fear and torment within the lives of humanity, they consider that a success.
- And as we witnessed in these encounters between Jesus and the demonic realm, the demons are operating in direct opposition of God and His ways.
 - They will attempt to do whatever they can to make much of their opportunity, however when faced with the mighty power of God they stand no chance.
- Lastly, we covered the fact that the only way in which a demon can escape its host is if it kills the host or if it is expelled.
 - And clearly, the disciples weren’t able to do that even with them having expelled unclean spirits before.
 - Well, this begs the question: “Why couldn’t they have expelled this demon?”

- Remember, there were three miracles that were solely reserved for the Messiah to accomplish.
 - And one of those miracles happened to be expelling a mute demon.
- The ritual of demon expulsion during that day was that in order for the leaders to expel the demon they had to know its name.
 - Well, how can you know the name of the demon if the means to communicate is hindered.
 - Therefore, we can see a few things: 1) Why the scribes were causing such a fuss, and 2) why the disciples looked like failures to the crowd.
- They should have known that they themselves could not expel the demon, only Messiah Himself could.
 - But there was also something else at play here internally for those 9 disciples.
 - The disciples assumed they could do what Jesus did in His absence merely because they were associated with Him.
- It's that sense of pride that because we have done it before, we have the ability to do it again.
 - The sense of accomplishing such great things as they did before with Jesus' authority having been given to them started to rise at this moment.
 - Can you see it now? The disciples seeing this child in the predicament he was in only to say, "Well Jesus isn't here now but we can handle it."
- Friends, this is a danger too often found in ministry if not resting and trusting in the one who gave you the ability to do the ministry work in the first place.
 - There are moments that God will use you mightily to accomplish a particular need, and there will be moments in which you are not used.
- This pride is one that tends to plague the pulpit ministry. The moment you become consistent in preaching week after week, there can be a developed sense of, "I preached that today"
 - And the habit becomes that you think you preached so well or taught so well, yet failing to realize that it was and is the Spirit of God using you to communicate God's truth.
- We must be humble in knowing that God can use such broken, unqualified people while recognizing it is only because of God's power that we are being used.
 - I believe this circles back to Jesus' warning from previous passages regarding the "leaven of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herod".
 - Don't let doing ministry or being in positions of power or associations of power get to your head.
 - Because apart from Christ, we can do nothing and will accomplish nothing. (John 15:5)
- So, with the disciples' misappropriation of their ability and having made a fool of themselves, as one could imagine the doubt has sunk in a bit for this father.
 - So in seeing the boy's predicament and the father's disposition, Jesus asked the question, in verse 21, "How long has this been happening?"
 - Here is where we see some of Jesus' compassion regarding the situation at

hand and what we find is quite saddening.

- Verse 22 tells us that this boy has been in this predicament since childhood – unable to speak and bound by constant torment and death.
 - As one could imagine, this father had nothing left and has not been able to communicate with his son in years.
 - And at times this father has to be on a constant watch over his child because at any moment, his child could attempt suicide because of the possession.
 - This once again emphasizing the reality of demonic possession and the goal of the enemy.
- So with the current disappointment from the disciples' lack of healing his child and hearing the debate between the scribes and the disciples the father says:
 - “But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us.”
 - It was this statement that caused Jesus' ears to perk up and it was this statement which confirms that Jesus included the father in verse 19.
 - The lack of faith from this generation was ever increasing even with all that Jesus had done in that region.
- One would assume from the stories of Jesus having healed so many and expelling demons that the faith of the people should have increased their trust in Jesus – sadly this was not the case.
 - So Jesus has to personally check the man and get him to see why He sought Jesus out in the first place.
- As a quick note, isn't it interesting how difficult circumstances can serve as a gauge as to where your faith lies.
 - Check out verses 23-24.

Mark 9:23 But Jesus said to him, “If You can?’ All things are possible for the one who believes.”

Mark 9:24 Immediately the boy's father cried out and said, “I do believe; help my unbelief!”

- It is here that Jesus confronts the father's desperate plea regarding the healing of the child being possible by stating the phrase, “If you can?”
 - It's almost as if Jesus has to redirect the father's understanding as to who Jesus is.
 - In other words, the issue at hand is not Jesus' ability nor His availability, the issue is the man's ability to exercise faith in the One who can heal the boy despite what he may see.
 - Jesus lets him know that all things are possible to him that believes.
 - Meaning, because you know I am Messiah, you know that I can do all things and am not limited by anything.
 - So with that being said, you must have full confidence and assurance not in what you see. But rather in who you know.
 - This is why I have mentioned time and time again, our Faith has an object, and

that object is a Person and that Person is Jesus who is God.

- Therefore, we must trust that God is trustworthy and He is a truth-teller and therefore what He wills and what He says will be accomplished.
- I would also like to acknowledge what faith is not.
 - Faith is not me just saying I want this thing or need this thing and I slap on at the end “In Jesus name”.
 - Jesus is not a genie in a bottle that you rub the lamp for what you want and if you recite His name three times, He’ll grant you what you want. No!
- Faith is trusting in who Jesus is and leaning on His will and purposes on the matter.
 - Faith misapplied and misaligned to our will rather than God’s will is not the faith of scripture.
- So after Jesus lets the man know that all things are possible to him who believes, it is as if the man burst forth with a new profound confidence that was hidden under the disappointment from the disciples.
 - He cries aloud in verse 24, “I do believe, but help my unbelief!”
- Have you been there? You trust and know that God can do all things and you trust Him as you are praying about a particular situation for a certain end?
 - Yet in the end you find that what you have been praying about doesn’t come about as you expected?
 - This was the original sentiments of the father. He came to the disciples looking for them to be able to heal his son.
 - In their failure to do so, the scribes seed of mocking, laughter, and debate regarding the disciples begins to raise doubt in his mind.
 - By the time Jesus arrives on the scene, the very hope of life is beginning to dwindle from his body because he expected something from a group of men who couldn’t do what only Jesus could!
- And I believe this is the climactic point for this story here and that is, there are only things in which God alone can do and we must trust in Him alone for that.
 - Too many times we see skeptics and non-believers criticizing the church because the people in the church have failed them miserably.
 - Yet at the same time, we must realize that our faith is not in the people who do ministry in the church, our faith is in Christ who holds the church.
- For some people, looking at the church as a place of hope is difficult because they have been let down by the people in the church, yet when we fix our eyes on Jesus, there is this sense of peace in knowing, “He is holding us together – not the other way around!”
 - Jesus is getting this father who sees a desperate and dismal situation and is fixing his gaze upon the One who is able to do what seems impossible.
 - As Jesus stated in Mark 10:27 regarding how hard it is for a rich man to enter the Kingdom:

Mark 10:27 Looking at them, Jesus *said, “With people it is impossible, but not

with God; for all things are possible with God.”

- Therefore this man needed to be reassured of what he believed despite what he saw and was experiencing.
 - Check out what Jesus does in response to the man’s demonstration and outcry of faith. Check out verses 25-27.

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

Mark 9:26 And 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!”

Mark 9:27 But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him, and he got up.

- I don’t want us to miss what is happening here in these three verses as these three verses will set us up to see a demonstrative picture of Christ and the cross.
 - It’s apparent from the text in verse 25 that Jesus, the father, and the demoniac have pulled away from the crowd for privacy.
 - This occurred because, again, Jesus was not performing miracles where there was no demonstration of faith.
 - This private retreat becomes confirmed because verse 25 also notes that before the crowd could fully form and surround this scene, Jesus calls out the Spirit.
 - And notice what type of spirit this is, “a mute and deaf” spirit.
 - This further confirming that the disciples were not able to get rid of this kind of demon therefore confirming this as a Messianic Miracle.
 - Notice however, that no name is mentioned here, simply the fact that the result of the host’s physical condition was that he was deaf and mute.
 - This once again speaking to the authoritative nature of Jesus as well as His identity as Messiah.
 - And not only did Jesus exercise the demon, but the text says that the demon was commanded to never enter the child again.
 - From this point, one would expect an immediate withdrawal from the child therefore allowing the child to be set free from the hold of the demon.
 - However, Mark mentions that the withdrawal was not immediate.
 - Instead, the demonic spirit refuses to leave without putting on a show of sorts.
 - The text states that the demon threw the child to the ground into “terrible convulsions”.
 - In other words, not only was the strength of this demon great but the force in which it was trying to kill the child was of equal strength or greater.
 - So as its final hurrah, the demon drops the child to the ground as if to leave him lifeless.

- Mark tells us in verse 26b that the body looked as if the child had died – this was not only what Peter had witnessed, but what the crowd had seen as well.
- What a scene! Can you imagine the father and the crowd looking at this situation?
 - The father is probably helpless and in disbelief.
 - The crowd is in shock because, it seems as if there is no coming back from this – the boy is dead.
- To the onlooker, it would seem as if Jesus had failed to save the boy and salvage his life.
 - The moment that seemed as if all hope was lost, while everyone saw a dead body lying on the ground, Jesus reached down to the child.
 - And notice verse 27b states that the moment Jesus' hand touched the body of that dead child, life entered back into his body.
- I can imagine at this point, the father is embracing his son as if he had laid eyes on him for the first time in a long time.
 - The life that the father once knew about his son has now forever been changed because Jesus has intervened.
- Friends, this response from Christ was begot by the faith of this man despite the doubt that he was wrestling with!
 - I can imagine at this point, on one end, the disciples are overjoyed for the father, yet perplexed as to why they couldn't do what was just done.
 - I say this because verse 28 tells us that after the miracle was over and the crowd has disappeared, the disciples, in private ask Jesus a question.
 - Check out the last two verses, verses 28 and 29.

Mark 9:28 When He came into the house, His disciples began asking Him privately, “Why is it that we could not cast it out?”

Mark 9:29 And He said to them, “This kind cannot come out by anything except prayer.”

- Well Jesus and His disciples arrive to a home in the region near Caesarea Philippi – who's home, the text does not tell us.
 - However, we do know that it is a home in which allows privacy for Jesus and the disciples.
 - And it is in the privacy of this home that the disciples asked Jesus a question that had been messing with them since the scribes had arrived earlier that day.
 - And that question was: “Why could we not cast out the demon?”
 - Here is where we get to the heart of the matter regarding the disciples.
 - Jesus answers their question in verse 29 and tells them that “This kind cannot come out by anything except prayer.”
 - Notice that Jesus describes this demon by saying “this kind”. Why?
 - The word for “kind” here is *genos* which simply means this type of demon or

this particular level of demon.

- This is to suggest that the demonic realm has different strength levels, if you will, within the spiritual world.
- And Jesus makes the notion, in a way, that this demon requires an even greater opponent.
 - At this point some may ask the question: “Well didn’t the disciples expel demons before while Jesus was not physically with them?”
 - And the answer to that question is, Yes! However, we must recognize that the disciples were only able to accomplish what they did because of who gave them the authority to do so.
- In other words, it was the father’s will at that point in time for the disciples to exercise that muscle of dependence, independently, if you will, knowing who gave them the ability to accomplish the purpose.
 - However, this situation was not the case. It seems as if these men took it upon themselves to expel this demon in their own power and ability.
 - This is what has caused them to be in this mess in the first place.
- The disciples assumed that because they were associated with Jesus and had been following Him for some time that they had “permission” to take that task on themselves.
 - Now, I can hear some of you now saying, “But Jesus wasn’t around at that time, what were they to do?”
 - And the answer to that is simple: These men should have trusted in God and His ability to take care of the need rather than relying on their previous mission trip.
 - In other words, their faith was more dependent upon their attempts of healing rather than their dependence upon God.
- And once again the disciples fail to see the point of what Jesus is trying to show them – they were getting in their own way!
 - And how humbling this moment shined light on the fact they too were operating with such little faith, as Matthew’s gospel states. (We are prone to respond in this same manner – guard your heart)
- There is a significant takeaway we see from this section of scripture that we mustn’t rush over.
 - And that is matters of faith.
- When we think about faith we must always remember that faith must be in an object and for believers, that object is a person: Jesus the Son of God.
 - Demonstrating this faith means that we are aware of His identity as Messiah, and we recognize that our very source for all things is in Him.
- Where the disciples failed here was that although they believed that Jesus was Messiah, they placed faith in themselves to accomplish the work.
 - And as a result, the disciples were not only humiliated publicly, but their witness for Christ was diminished.
 - The father, the disciples, and the crowd all struggled placing faith in the

proper object which led to their individual failures.

- Where the father of the demon-possessed boy failed was he had placed his faith in the disciples' ability to heal his son, since they were disciples of Jesus.
 - So, the moment that the disciples couldn't heal his son, his faith in Jesus began to wane more as to Jesus' ability to heal his child.
- The crowd demonstrated no faith as they were led astray by the deception and wickedness of the scribes.
 - I believe that there is a key takeaway for those who are seeking to grow in their maturity in Christ.
 - And that is: Your trust in Christ must solely be based upon His words and His person: Not your church, not your Pastor, not your small group leader.
- I see too many times within the global church that people build their entire hope and faith based upon the place in which they worship rather than the God they should be worshipping!
 - I have heard too many stories about Pastors who have become so prideful that they think they are doing something special for God.
 - However, the reality is God has done something special and unique for you that He allows us to participate in His work.
 - We must be ever so careful not to contribute what we do to how good, or the lack thereof, we think we are.
 - Psalm 115:1 tells us this:

**Psalm 115:1 Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory,
for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness!**

- And as Paul tells us in Philippians 2:13 "...for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure."
 - This was Jesus' point in Matthew's ending of this story in Matthew 17:20.
 - Jesus told his disciples that their failure to drive out the demon was based upon their "littleness of faith".
 - To put it plainly, their faith accomplished nothing because they themselves were their own "object".
 - There is no power or authority in what you do or say no matter how much oil you use in prayer or how many times you say Jesus.
 - The power and authority of God is found in His Person and that is exclusively found in Jesus Christ. There must be a constant dependence upon Jesus.
 - (Listen to Him)
 - You want to see your range of faith increase, trust even more in your Messiah even when things around you look bleak.
 - The reality is all things are possible only when your faith is in the right object and your will is aligned with the Father's plan and desired outcome.
 - The question on the table tonight is who is your faith in?

- Is it rested upon how many years you've followed Jesus?
- Is it rested upon your title and position in the church?
- Is it based upon your level of bible knowledge?
- Or is your faith placed in Christ therefore allowing your maturity and faith to increase even more.
- Let's Pray.