

Facing The Impossible

- *Matthew 17:14-20*

- **I am glad to be in the House of God this morning & I want you to know that I am glad you are here. You being here today has the opportunity to change your life.**
 - God has given us this opportunity this morning, this hour together, to focus on Him & praise Him & worship Him.
 - Don't you allow this time to go by this morning without focusing your attention on Him & desiring to meet with Almighty God this morning.
 - We had an absolutely tremendous service last Sunday morning, and I know that every service can't be like that one. But I do believe we ought to anticipate meeting with God like that every time we come into the Lord's House.
- **I realize that there are some of you who are under a load of weight this morning in your lives physically & perhaps even spiritually.**
 - You are not sure about tomorrow,
 - You are finding yourself today absorbed in despair & heartache in your life,
 - The day by day struggles have left you empty & exhausted,
 - And truthfully, you came to church today out of obligation rather than anticipating a touch from God or meeting with Him.
- **If that's you, I hope this morning that you will be encouraged as we discuss a topic that is very real in our world today as it was even in the times of Christ.**
- **If we are not careful, we will look at our difficulties, the situations surrounding us & even the world we are living in & we may find ourselves saying, "It is impossible for anything to change!"**
 - "This is the new normal,"
 - "This is the way life is going to be from now on,"
 - But I will remind you that Jesus said, "Nothing, absolutely nothing shall be impossible unto you", and when we read those verses, for whatever reason we don't believe that those verses pertain to our lives.
 - "Well, maybe we'd better water that down or explain that away."
 - Why don't we just believe it? Why don't we just simply believe what God has said?
- **As we come to this passage of scripture this morning, Jesus, Peter, James, & John have just returned from the mountain. They have seen Jesus transfigured in all of His glory, and they have taken this vision that they have seen it & hid it in their hearts.**
- **While they are on top of the mountain, Jesus has left the other 9 to minister to the people & this is where we pick up our scripture reading this morning.**
- **READ SCRIPTURE**
- **When we compare the Gospel accounts of this dramatic scene, we discover that this only son was in some great trouble and great danger.**
 - Matthew recorded that the boy was an epileptic (lunatic), very ill, and suicidal, falling into the fire and the water.
 - Mark described him as a mute, who often fell to the ground foaming at the mouth and grinding his teeth. After this display, the boy would go into a kind of *rigor mortis*.
 - Luke said that the boy was an only son and that he would scream as he went into these convulsions. While some of these symptoms can have natural causes, at the end of the day he was in serious trouble as he was at the mercy of this demon.
- **Jesus comes down from the mountain, the rest of the disciples were in dismay, the father was begging for someone to help his son & Jesus sees several things as He comes on the scene.**

1. The Tragedy Of No Power (vv.14-16)

- **The disciples had been helpless to do anything, and in a panic, the Bible tells us that the father rushed to Jesus' feet.**
 - Listen, I can sympathize with this father. When my children are hurting, when they are in despair, when I don't know what to do, I want someone to take the pain from my children.
 - I automatically think back to when my children were much smaller, especially with Dylan, our first child.
 - Many of you remember, as a new parent bringing that baby home for the first time, those books you read when you were expecting just don't seem to cover everything that you experience right?
 - And I remember those first few days very vividly still.
 - Every time he cried, we panicked.
 - If he moved, we jumped & ran to his side.
 - There were times we did everything in our power to try to stop the crying, but nothing would work.
 - When he was about 3 months old, he had been experiencing a lot of pain & sleepless nights & we went to the Dr. & he told us that he had a hernia that needed to be removed.
 - Well I certainly didn't want to see this young baby go through surgery; but more than that, I did not want to see him hurt anymore. I wanted someone to help my child.
 - Even worse than surgery is when you go to the Dr. & they can offer no help, right?
- **Well this is a similar predicament that this father is in as he approached Jesus. He has already been to the disciples for help, but they could offer none.**
 - He has become suicidal & is threatening harm on himself & perhaps even others in the process.
 - He has come to the disciples expecting them to do something, after all, they were followers of Jesus. But something was missing & they could not help him. There was no power for them to give.
 - Do you ever feel like something is missing in your life?
 - Not that you are not saved, but maybe things have changed.
 - You come to church out of duty instead of the excitement that once filled your soul. Something has changed.
 - These men had seen Jesus perform many miraculous works before.
 - They saw him heal the sick, feed the poor & even raise the dead.
 - And the power of God had been given to them, so he expected some kind of help.
- **And as tragic as this young man's condition is, perhaps even more tragic is the fact that Jesus' followers were powerless to do anything about it.**
 - There are people in the world today who need God to do something in their life.
 - Physically healing, emotional healing, or spiritual healing.
 - And the church has a responsibility in their time of need to point them to Christ. We don't need to stand around wringing our hands in despair. We have a Heavenly Father who can meet their every need.
 - You say, "Yes, but we don't have the power to heal like Jesus had given these disciples." While that is true, God has given us the power of prayer.
 - So let me ask you, do you pray for others & with others? Do you believe that God can change their situation? Let me ask you this morning, do you believe God can change your situation? Have you prayed about it lately?
 - James 4:2 – "ye have not, because ye ask not."

2. The Rebuke Of No Power (vv.17-18)

- **And the father comes to Jesus, our Lord's first response was one of sorrow; but His sorrow was not just for the boy, but also for His disciples.**
 - Jesus addresses their issues when he points out the reality of a faithless & perverse generation.
 - What was wrong with the disciples that Jesus would call out them out in this way?
 - Faithless: without trust or belief; not adhering to promises, vows, or duty.
 - Perverse: to distort, to twist or to turn away.
 - As He looked upon the faces of His embarrassed disciples, the arguing scribes, and the needy father and son, the Bible tells us that Jesus groaned inwardly and said, "How long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you?" (v.17)
 - Their spiritual perversity had become a burden to our Lord. And as I read that passage of scripture, I asked myself, "What must Christ feel as He looks at powerless believers today?"
- **Jesus had given them the power to heal. It was sufficient to meet the needs of the people. Yet they had not used the power & others were suffering b/c of it.**
 - Though He was saddened at the suffering of others, Jesus was just as heartbroken that His own followers had become useless in their time of need.

3. The Reason For No Power (vv.18-21)

- **The disciples came running to Jesus after He had healed the boy & asked, "Why couldn't we do that?" Jesus pulls no punches as He brings the reason to the forefront ... their unbelief.**
 - Jesus reminds them, "Guys, I am not always going to be with you." You need to put your faith into action. You need to start trusting in me & believing in the power I have given to you. After all that they have been taught, after all that they have seen, & yet they still don't believe! Does that sound familiar?
 - How many times has God met a physical need in the life of another person that you prayed for & yet when you need physical healing, you never ask?
 - What about when God answers a need in our life (Though it may seem small), but when an urgent need arises, we never seek His face?
 - They knew that God had given them the power, they had used it before, but now it had seemingly disappeared & was gone from them. "Why?" they asked, Jesus replied b/c you have failed to believe.
 - Jesus own disciples had become disconnected in their relationship with God & had become too connected to the world.
 - Now I am going to tell you something. Part of the problem with the church today is that we are too connected to the world & not connected enough with Jesus.
 - Jesus said b/c of your lack of faith & your relationship with the world, you have lost your power & your ability to minister to others.
 - Why don't Christians see God moving in their life today like He used to? Has God changed?
 - Why don't our prayers get answered like they use to? Is He too busy?
 - Why don't we feel the presence of God in our lives anymore? Why don't we get excited about the things of God anymore? Could it be the same reason as these disciples? Have we failed to believe? Has our faith been weakened?
 - Unbelief comes in several forms in the life of a Christian:
 - Questioning the power of God in our lives.
 - Is God really able to do what I am asking?
 - Does He have the power to heal my body or meet my need?
 - Questioning our own faith.
 - Are we close enough to God for Him to even hear us?
 - Do I have enough faith to believe in God & His power?

- **We don't know specifically why these 9 disciples had neglected God, perhaps they were jealous because they had not been called to go to the mountaintop with Jesus. During the Lord's absence, they began to grow self-indulgent. They neglected prayer, and as a result their faith weakened. Then, when the crisis came, they were unprepared. Like Samson, they went out to battle without realizing that their power was gone.**
- **If there is one sin that displeases God greatly, it is the sin of unbelief. God has promised us the power of faith if we will place our trust in Him.**
 - The greatest difficulties in life can be removed by a man or woman who chooses to put their faith in God.
 - Does that mean that God will always change our circumstance? He can, but not necessarily. He doesn't have to change our circumstance to remove our difficulty.
 - However, if our faith is in God, we will be content & our faith will be strengthened regardless of the outcome.
- **Prayer & faith can do anything for God. They can remove the mountains of:**
 - Fear - Temptation
 - Disappointment - Guilt
 - Depression - Loneliness
 - Sickness - Persecution
 - Heartache
- **The Bible reminds us in Hebrews 11:6 – “But without faith it is impossible to please him:” Jesus reminds them that even a small amount of faith, "Faith as a grain of mustard seed", God can do some miraculous things in our life.**
 - Faith like a mustard seed is *living* faith that is nurtured and caused to grow.
 - Faith must be cultivated so that it grows and does even greater things for God.
 - Had the nine disciples been praying, disciplining themselves, and meditating on the Word, they would have been able to cast out the demon and rescue the boy.
- **There are mountains in your life today that seem impossible to conquer. But through the power of God & our faith in Him (even as small as a mustard seed), even the largest mountains in our lives can be moved.**
 - Matthew 21:22 – “And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.”
 - Mark 9:23 – “Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.”
- **How is your faith today? Are you struggling to trust in God? Have you neglected to bring your needs to God in prayer?**
 - Perhaps you are here today & you have convinced yourself that God could never forgive you, you have done too much wrong, and your need is too great for God to handle.
 - Let me remind you this morning that we serve an awesome God, a God that went to the cross to bear EVERY sin so that we could be set free.
 - Don't you allow Satan or anyone else to deceive you into thinking you can't turn to God or that He won't hear you.
 - John 3:17 – “For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”
 - II Peter 3:9 – “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”
 - Maybe you are here this morning and you know you are saved, but your faith has taken a beating in the past several days or weeks & you just need to come & talk to God this morning & renew your trust in Him.
 - Perhaps there is a specific need in your life today & you need some relief, you need some help. Why don't you run to Jesus this morning.