

THE GOSPEL of

MARK

Help My Unbelief!

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Unbelief!

Where we are in the Gospel of Mark...

- Peter, James and John just witnessed the “veil of Jesus’ humanity” lifted during his transfiguration and are making their way back to the other disciples.



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Mark
9:14-29

¹⁴ And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and scribes arguing with them. ¹⁵ And immediately all the crowd, when they saw him, were greatly amazed and ran up to him and greeted him. 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. ¹⁸ And whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. 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.”

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Mark
9:14-29

²⁰ And they brought the boy to him. And when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. 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!" 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."

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Mark
9:14-29

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. 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."

A Confrontation with Darkness

1. Jesus is Amazing!

- One of the goals of Mark is for the reader to continually see the amazement and awe that Jesus drew from the people
- In our story, Jesus doesn't even do anything – he just shows up and the people are amazed!
- Our journey through Mark is not about hearing familiar stories, but rather is meant to draw you in to the person and work of Jesus and to marvel at him

A Confrontation with Darkness

1. Jesus is Amazing!

2. The Paradox of Faith: I believe; help my unbelief

- Perhaps the most honest statement ever uttered
 - Man responds to Jesus by admitting he is part of the faithless generation
- Runs against many religious views of faith – if you have doubts, push them down & pretend that you don't
 - Jesus doesn't hold back due to the man's confession
- You need to be honest about your unbelief – faith does not come from conjuring up some sort of belief, but rather is a gift given from God (Rom 12:3; Eph 2:8)

A Confrontation with Darkness

1. Jesus is Amazing!

2. The Paradox of Faith: I believe; help my unbelief

3. The Sickness of Self-Reliance

- Jesus tells the disciples the reason they could not cast out the demon was because “this kind cannot be driven out by anything except prayer”
- Jesus already gave them authority to cast out demons in 6:7 and they did as well as heal many
- “Faithless generation” was directed at his disciples – or at least he put them in the same boat as everyone else
- Lack of prayer is evidence of self-reliance

What we Can Take Home With Us...

1. Be honest about your unbelief

- Pretending is not the way of the believer, but rather the way of the religious leaders
- Rom 12:3... For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.
- Be honest with yourself so that you can be honest with God and others

What we Can Take Home With Us...

1. Be honest about your unbelief

2. Beware the sickness of self-reliance

- Faith is difficult and we tend to choose self-reliance over faith because of this
- Our drift will always be towards self-reliance not towards trust and faith
- What does it look like for you to rely on God?
- What areas in your life are you holding on to?
 - Indicators: Anxiety, stress, over-bearing, controlling, despair... Or pride, looking down on others, lack of understanding and compassion for people in pain, lack of prayer...

What we Can Take Home With Us...

1. Be honest about your unbelief
2. Beware the sickness of self-reliance
3. You need Jesus
 - More than anything else, you need Jesus, you need to celebrate him and give your life fully to him
 - Do you want a stronger more vibrant faith? Ask Jesus, attune your ear to his word, and then do what it says.