

“Trust Me” – Pr Jim Sprenkle – Pentecost 16, September 12, 2021

- I. **Mark 9:23-24** – 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!”
- II. **Our Gospel reading in Mark leaves us with a few questions today...**
 - a. Why couldn't the disciples drive out the demon without Jesus?
 - b. Why was the demon so difficult to drive out of the young man – and what kind of demon was it?
 - c. Why is Jesus so hard on the disciples for unbelief?
 - d. Why is prayer the only way this kind of demon is cast out?
 - e. All of these questions came up for me as I was reading through the text in preparation for today's message.
 - f. Many of the answers to these questions are related to trust.
 - i. Trusting in God's power is the key to living as a disciple of Jesus
- III. **Jesus, Peter, James and John walked up to a big uproar.**
 - a. They just walked down from the Mount of Transfiguration where Jesus transfigured and showed His divinity – that He is God in the flesh.
 - i. Peter, James and John were probably just spinning around in their own thoughts at the time, considering that they had just seen Moses and Elijah – along with hearing the voice of God the Father.
 - b. Quickly their focus changed as their other disciple friends were doing their best to represent Jesus in driving out a demon for a distraught father.
 - i. It wasn't too long ago that Jesus had sent out the 72, calling on them to drive out demons and heal the sick... so why couldn't they do it?
 - ii. A possible answer is, “that was then, this is now...” Jesus had not given them the authority at that point to carry out these tasks.
 1. It seems that the Master was away, and they took it upon themselves (for one reason or another) to cast out a demon.
 2. As they failed, the crowd and ever-present religious leaders were right there to argue and point out the obvious
 3. Not only that, but some in the crowd may have doubted the power of Jesus as His disciples could not help
 4. The disciples were trusting in their own power, rather than on God – that's why Jesus said later, only prayer drives this kind out (vs 29)
 - a. The point is that a true reliance on God is lifting up prayer and seeking His will... not our own power.
 - b. This demon may have been the type that was very difficult to cast out... all the more reason to trust in God alone to provide the power.
 - c. Jesus is disappointed in the disciples for a lack of faith and trust in God.

- i. The time had come for Jesus to begin the journey to the cross, and He was trying to get them to focus on Him and the Father.
 - 1. Just think about how Jesus spent so much time looking to and seeking His Father's will – trusting in His Father's direction
 - 2. HE was doing this, and yet, His disciples fell short of this trust in God over and over.
 - 3. I know God is patient and longsuffering, but I can also understand Jesus asking, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you?" (vs 19)

IV. **Where do you place your trust... really?**

- a. I say that to make you stop for a moment and consider whether Jesus Christ is the first place you turn.
- b. This question is just as much for me as it is for you... we have trust issues.
- c. Consider the times that we take on some situation or problem in our lives.
 - i. Do we look to God and His will?
 - ii. Do we remember the Scriptures and let them guide our thoughts and actions?
 - iii. Do we pray, seeking guidance and direction, or for God's help?
- d. What usually happens goes something like this...
 - i. A big crisis or situation comes up in our lives...
 - ii. We get online and Google the answers... "what do you do when...?"
 - iii. Or, we call an expert – a doctor, a professional, an attorney
 - iv. Or, we call a friend or family member – "what should I do?"
 - v. Or, we might just sit down and write up an action plan – as we get a long "to-do" list going, we start to feel a little better that we have regained some control.
- e. Now, maybe you go through all these different steps and sometimes that works – in fact, many times that works to get through trouble... however,
 - i. Sometimes the problem is way bigger than anything we can fix or plan our way out of.
 - ii. Sometimes the problem is the kind that requires a much higher source of power
 - iii. Sometimes it becomes clear that we have nowhere else to go... but to God Himself.
- f. Usually, the times when we finally go to God include a complete loss of control – diagnosis of cancer... Covid-19 and all the changes... societal upheaval and lawlessness... accidents... or loss.
- g. But God would have us go to Him under the smallest of circumstances!
 - i. Any situation and our daily walk with Him should begin with seeking His guidance and direction.
 - ii. We don't have to be in a life and death situation to call out to our Lord for help...

- iii. In fact, when we don't pray to God, our silence is a message that is loud and clear to Him – we don't trust Him or need Him.

V. **On the contrary, the boy's father needed Jesus to save his son.**

- a. The power the disciples' could not muster on their own would come in the presence of Jesus Christ, God in the flesh.
- b. The father had most likely looked for any possible solution and had nowhere else to turn... Jesus was the only one who could help.
- c. Yet, even he said to Jesus, "if You can" help me, please do. (vs 22)
 - i. Jesus responds, "If you can!? All things are possible for one who believes." (vs 23)
 - ii. And in one of the great responses in all of Scripture, the desperate father says, "I believe; help my unbelief!" (vs 24)
- d. This is our cry in the struggle to trust in God above all things.
- e. This is our cry in the times that we try to solve our own problems and take things on that are always best with God at the helm.
- f. Jesus has the same message for all of us – trust Me.
 - i. Trust me with your life...
 - ii. Trust Me in the bad times... AND the good times
- g. Jesus is our example and guide when it comes to trusting...
 - i. Think about when He was in the Garden of Gethsemane and He prayed to His Father – Jesus trusted His Father completely
 - ii. Jesus was thrown to the wolves so to speak, as He was arrested and tortured... Jesus willingly gave His back for striking, His beard to be pulled out, and His face to be spat upon... (Isaiah 50:6)
 - iii. He was charged with crimes He didn't commit... and executed as a criminal.
 - iv. He died our death and paid for our sins.
 - v. When Jesus says, "Trust Me..." He earned the right to be trusted...
- h. And for all the times we overlook Jesus or intentionally look somewhere else to solve our problems, He is a compassionate and patient God...
 - i. You are forgiven and empowered to trust in Him above all things
 - ii. You are set free to rely on God to get you through life
- i. We have nowhere else to go, and no one else to save us, only God is worthy of our trust.
- j. I end with the words of Isaiah 50:10 – "Let him who walks in darkness and has no light trust in the name of the Lord and rely on his God." Amen