

Only By Prayer

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Preacher: Tim Doffing

[0 : 00] Good morning. I'm just reminded how my wife dresses me and takes really good care of me.

! My shirt was hanging out all morning. I didn't know it.! And she helped me remember that, put back together again appropriately. So thank you, Lord, for that. She takes great care of me. I was at the, yeah, you're laughing over there. I know it. I was at the 4th of July celebration at the fireworks, and I'm walking around with these nice new pair of shorts. And a dear sister, I won't mention who it is, but she's sitting over there next to Joe.

She goes, she goes, do you wear a size 34? So evidently I still had the tag on the back of my pants. Some of you guys know what I'm talking about. Admit it. So, it just reminds us how valuable, you know, my wife is and you guys are to this body of Christ.

[1 : 14] Yeah, she's sitting over there next to Joe. So we already know who it is. I just won't say her name out loud. So, you can see we're having a little trouble with the lights.

We're working on some new parts. So, you don't need to see my face that clearly anyway. You need to hear the word, right? So I'll give you that. And, so I'm going to pray in just a little bit, but I want to do a few things kind of leading up to our opening prayer for today.

So as we contemplate a little bit of last Sunday, the transfiguration and how important that was. They're up on the mountain and that incredible verse where, from the cloud, the disciples here, this is my son.

And listen to him and how important that was. And so then they come down the mountain to the other nine disciples that were below the mountain.

And we're going to learn a little bit about that story next when they come down the mountain. And it's really interesting how important it is just having to spend time with Jesus and what they learned.

[2 : 39] So one good thing is that they are spending time with Jesus. The disciples were. And as we're learning about that, all these disciples are struggling to really understand the mission and vision of Jesus.

But I was just still thinking that, apart from all that, that they still don't fully understand Jesus' mission. The good thing is they're spending time with Jesus. And that's such an important thing. Because I don't get it all either. I struggle why God does this or that. And I just know I need to spend time with Jesus. But I can know all about him.

Every detail from him, from the God's word. So that's what I intend to do. So let's pick up on Mark chapter 9, 14 to 29. I'm going to read it through like we always do.

And then we're going to come back and look more detail at what the story is. So let's pick it up here. So remember, remember they came down the mountain. And then this is where we're picking it up after the transfiguration.

[3 : 43] When they came to the other disciples, the nine, they saw a large crowd around them and the teachers of the law arguing with them. And as soon as all the people saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with wonder and ran to greet him.

What are you arguing with them about, he asked. A man in the crowd answered, Teacher, I brought you my son who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech.

Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not.

You unbelieving generation, Jesus replied, How long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me. So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion.

He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth. Jesus asked the boy's father, How long has he been like this? From childhood, he answered. It has often thrown him into a fire or water to kill him.

[4 : 53] But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us. If you can, said Jesus, everything is possible for one who believes. Immediately the boy's father explained, I do believe.

Help me overcome my unbelief. When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the impure spirit. You deaf and mute spirit, he said. I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.

The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently, and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said he's dead. But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet and stood up. After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, Why couldn't we drive it out? He replied, This kind can come out only by prayer.

So we see again this somewhat of an inward journey where they're at the transfiguration, the three disciples were with Jesus. And then they come down the mountain to the world, back to the world, you might say.

[6 : 03] It's very interesting. They're connecting with God in the mountain, and then they have to enter the world, much like us. Much like us. Moses.

Moses was up on the mountain with the Ten Commandments, and then what happened? He's connecting with God, and then he had to come down and face the world and the idolatry of the Israelites. Elijah was on a mountain.

He came down the mountain. He had to face wicked Jezebel and Ahab. So this amazing transfiguration, disciples are up there connecting with God, learning about God, being disciplined, coming down.

Now they've got to come down and face the real world with this story. And how important it is we need to connect with God. So that's where I wanted to pray.

And just, I feel like Sunday morning for many of us, hopefully all of us, it's like a mountaintop experience. We're worshiping God together. We're hearing the word.

[7 : 09] We have this amazing fellowship, connection. And yeah, sometimes we have little trials at church. We say the wrong thing and there's confusion. But for the most part, I think we come here, this is kind of our mountaintop.

And then we have to come off the mountain, so to speak, go to work tomorrow, face each other at home, and all these things occur in our lives.

So let's pray at this time and ask God to help us as we eventually are going to come off this mountain experience of fellowship and we're going to have to face the world. And let's ask God to help us to continue to keep him with us at that time.

Father, I want to say thank you for the word of God and the truth. They're so rich of many things to learn. I just can't believe what I'm learning through the gospel of Mark and how helpful it is to me and everyone here having a mountaintop experience, connecting with you and the worship and feeling your presence.

But we want that tomorrow. We want that the next day. Help us, Lord, to learn to fully understand how you're with us with the Holy Spirit, that you're walking with us to work.

[8 : 25] You're walking with us in our homes, to the grocery store, wherever it is, Lord. Lord, continue to show us that truth. Show us how to have faith. How to have faith.

We're going to learn about that today in the scriptures. Again, we lift up the sick and hurt people. Cancer is going on, Lord. You know these people. And help us come alongside of them. Continue that. We ask for healing. Please, God, do your miraculous work. We believe in you by faith. In you, Jesus.

Amen. So let's go back now to the beginning of the story and let's kind of tear into it. There's a lot to talk about. So verse 14 to 15, When they came to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and the teachers of the law arguing with them.

As soon as all the people saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with wonder and ran to greet him, to greet Jesus. So again, they're coming down the mountain here.

[9 : 29] There's a crowd of people and the disciples are arguing with the scribes. Pretty interesting. The other nine. There's a crisis going on.

And it's interesting, these other nine, they weren't with Jesus. That's oftentimes when crises occur. Don't they? When we forget about where Jesus is at, we forget the Holy Spirit's in us, there's a crisis.

Regardless of the circumstances, they were not invited. Nonetheless, they were apart from Jesus. We don't have an excuse for that. His absence is really felt as when he gets there, they run to meet him.

They run to meet him. Is it because they saw his radiated face from the transfiguration? Remember we saw that last night?

It was so bright, brighter than any bleach could ever be. Did they see that? Well, I don't think they did because Jesus told them, don't tell anybody about this transfiguration until after I rise.

[10:38] So I don't think that would have been the case. But Jesus' reputation was growing. His popularity was getting more and more. And people were saying, hey, he heals. We've got to come to Jesus.

With the disciples not being able to heal the demon-possessed boy, they see hope in Jesus. And so Jesus says, what are you arguing with them about?

He asked. A man in the crowd answered, teacher, I brought you my son who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and become rigid.

I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not. What are you arguing about? So he's asking questions again. We see that this is a really good way to helping people resolve their own conflicts by asking questions.

Help people. When someone asks me a question, I have to process. I have to think. It's a really good thing. We see a desperate father bringing his son to be healed.

[11:48] Anyone would do this. Any father would do this. I can't imagine. If I had a son that was possessed by an evil spirit, convulsing, foaming at the mouth, can you imagine?

Any parent, any parent would do whatever they'd be desperate to help this little boy out. A defenseless boy being assaulted by an evil spirit.

That's just amazing. And we see the graphic nature of it. It's horrible. It feels hopeless. It feels hopeless.

I can't imagine. We see the symptoms of a grand mal seizure here. But later we're going to see that really it's an evil spirit. It's an evil spirit as well.

Moving on. You unbelieving generation, Jesus replied, how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you?

[12:55] Bring the boy to me. So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth.

This starts out with quite a statement. It almost looks like Jesus is agitated, troubled. You unbelieving generation, how long shall I stay with you?

We see his humanity, right? We see his humanity. How long shall I put up with you? He's troubled. He's agitated. We also, we've seen this in other parts of Scripture back in the Old Testament in Numbers 14:11.

This is really interesting. It parallels this in the sense of this troublesome. The Lord said to Moses, how long will these people treat me with contempt?

How long will they refuse to believe in me in spite of all the signs I have performed among them? Unbelieving. Unbelieving people there, isn't it?

[14:09] A little different. But it has some similar overtones of, wow, how long? Again. So let's go back to the, back to the Scripture again.

So I said that it was not a, not just a grand mal seizure. It says here, when the spirit saw Jesus, that evil spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion.

That's how we know it's definitely an evil spirit there. It's not just some kind of sickness. He fell to the ground, rolled around, foaming at the mouth. And once again, we get to see the mission of Jesus.

It's to confront and defeat evil. That's his job. That's what he does. We don't have to do that. We're just vessels. We're vessels.

God uses us to help people, love people, and show people the truth. We learned about vessels, and I think it was 2 Timothy. I forgot to look up where it was, but that's one of the names of, that

were vessels.

[15:20] His job, not our job. But we do need to put on the armor of God. Ephesians 6. That's not today's message, but it's really important we put on the God's armor, the breastplate of righteousness, the helmet of salvation.

You can look those up and study those. Put those on, protect yourself. And the sword, we go into battle with the word of God. If you remember, we had a story back in chapter 3.

I don't have that verse up here. Mark chapter 3, 27. Jesus binds the strong man. Read that story. It's his job. It's his job to take care of the evil one.

It's not ours. We're just vessels. Vessels used by God. We continue on, verse 21.

Jesus asked the boy's father, How long has he been like this? From childhood, he said, he answered. It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him.

[16:29] But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us. If you can, said Jesus, everything is possible for one who believes. Immediately the boy's father explained, I do believe.

Help me overcome my unbelief. This particular conversation, well, first of all, this story is also in Luke and Matthew, but this part of the story, this conversation, is not in those two books.

It's in Mark. Mark often has a little more detail of some of the stories. But we can glean, certainly, from the other gospels as well. It's very important. They're all very important as well.

We can see that by this exchange, the emphasis is on who Jesus is and not totally on what he does. We need to put our faith in him and who he is and not what he does.

What I really love about this is Jesus is giving this father a chance to tell his story. I just love that he asked that question. How long has he been like this?

[17:41] He's probing. He's probing the father. How long has he been like this? This is such a good example for us to learn to ask questions in order to help people.

It's easy just to give an answer right away when people have trouble. Jesus could have just, with a word, he could have just healed this guy, healed the boy right away. But instead, he's asking questions.

He wants to hear their heart, hear their story. You know, it's such a wonderful thing to, when you're in a conversation, someone starts to share their heart. I really encourage you to listen carefully.

It's such an important thing in our walk with God. I kind of liken this father to the mustard seed. He's got this mustard seed of faith that's going to start to grow in this experience.

He's coming to Jesus. That's where our faith grows. Like a little mustard seed that's going to get big. We heard that story as well back in Mark, didn't we, about the mustard seed starting of faith.

[18:42] Again, he could have just healed with a quick word, but he wants the father to learn about faith and everyone that's seeing this event. We're going to see in Mark 10, I'm going to steal a couple of verses from future here.

Jesus looked at them and said, with man, this is impossible, but not with God. All things are possible with God. It's about faith in God.

That's where the possibilities occur. Continuing on, or back to the same scripture, I'm going to focus in on two verses.

If you can, said Jesus. Another question. Everything is possible for one who believes. Immediately, the boy's father explained, I do believe.

Help me overcome my unbelief. That's a humble guy. That's a humble guy. Hudson Taylor wrote this really interesting phrase.

[19:47] I don't have a slide, but I'll read it slowly if you want to write it down, but it's really good.

So remember, Hudson Taylor was the missionary to China, and he was an amazing, God used him amazingly.

He said this, unless there is an element of risk in our exploits for God, there is no need for faith.

Unless there is an element of risk in our exploits for God, there is no need for faith. He risked his life to go to China.

He literally risked his life many times. Death was knocking at the door with war skirmishes and people not understanding what he was about. He risked the money.

He never asked people for money. God provided it. They saw, he's going, I'll give you some money, I'll give you a check, and it came in the last minute. Peter risks slipping into the sea when he stepped out of the boat.

[20 : 56] That was a risk. Remember the story of Peter? He walks on water, steps out of the boat, his eyes are on Jesus. Of course, we know he got his eyes off of Jesus and he started to slip into the water, and who grabs him?

Jesus. That's the thing about risks. He'll take care of us even when we slip. We risk our reputation when we share the gospel.

I don't know why it's so fearful to do that. It's probably the hardest thing I think Christians have when I talk to other Christians, sharing our faith with someone. It's risky. I think we fear rejection.

It's a risk. God wants us to take it. We risk our relationships when we speak truth. It's hard. It's hard. I tend to be a people pleaser. I just sometimes just don't want to share truth with people. Now, I know we do it in grace and love and kindness, but it's easier just not to avoid the confrontation.

[22 : 03] I'm just not going to share anything. Let's let it go. That's the common way we have to take a risk at times. in our relationship to say, hey, this is going on.

I'm troubled. Whatever it is, whatever that trial you have with people. But we do know that when you have more than one person in a room, there's trouble. Trouble will eventually show itself in different forms.

Take a risk. Take a risk. True faith looks to the more powerful one, Jesus, who stands in the place of God. God. And John the Baptist said it really well.

He said, and this was his message. After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie.

We know the power of God. Limitless. Believing him and his authority restores life from chaos. life gets chaotic when we don't have faith in him.

[23 : 05] It gets chaotic in my personal life, it gets chaotic in my family, and it gets chaotic in the church when we're not having faith in him to do his work. I was just thinking about this.

What if faith was easy? What would that be like? No risk. No risk involved. We'd share the gospel wherever we want, whenever we want.

No worries. We'd give generously on a drop. We wouldn't think twice about whether we have enough money left over. I know there's common sense in giving, but it would just be easy, free.

And I'm not condemning anyone for giving. Please don't take it that way. I know you are generous people here. I'm just saying, just think about that. Faith was easy.

We would ask forgiveness immediately. We would forgive immediately. We wouldn't hold a grudge. We just trust God. He'll take care of it. We wouldn't be afraid to meet new people, even if we were shy.

[24 : 12] As I mentioned earlier, you know, I tend to be a people pleaser. I wouldn't have to worry about that anymore. I'd be able to just share freely by faith. Let's continue on.

Verse 25. When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the impure spirit. You deaf and mute spirit, he said, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again. The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said he's dead. But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet and he stood up. And this wonderful ending here of the story, Jesus rebukes the deaf and mute spirit to come out and never enter again.

He also does it quickly because he doesn't want to make a scene. Because remember, he says they're running to the scene, so he quickly rebukes it and takes care of this. He wants people to come to him not just because he heals, because they need to come to him.

[25 : 23] We need to come to Jesus. We see clear authority of Jesus over demonic forces.

Unlike some of the other exorcisms that we've read in Mark, this one shows itself a bit violently. It's a very different one. And if you also remember here, at the end, it says there, he shrieked, convulsed, and then he's dead.

It said he's dead there. It appears that he's dead. And Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up to his feet. If you remember last week, when they're on the way down from the mountain from the transfigurations, they're arguing about what it means to be raised from the dead.

You can find that verse in there. Really interesting. Here's Jesus giving them a live example of what it means to be raised from the dead. He's showing them, look, he's alive. And we know this is a foreshadow of him.

What it's going to look like, he's going to come alive, literally come alive when he dies for our sins and become resurrected. And they're going to see it, just like they saw this. It's an amazing

example when you put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ.

[26 : 42] His resurrection is victory over sin. It allows us to have a living relationship with him. It's what the whole purpose was about. They were struggling with this, to understand this message of the gospel.

And after Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, why couldn't we drive it out? He replied, this kind can only come out by prayer.

And it's like how he takes the disciples indoors in a private place in his more teaching moments. Another teaching moment. You know, we're at a big event, take them to the indoors and I'm going to teach you some more things into this private place.

And this is typical of Jesus, explaining parables and things privately with the disciples. disciples. So why? So they asked Jesus why we couldn't expel the demon.

And he simply explains it only can come out by prayer. And prayer is a demonstration of faith in God, isn't it? And I want to talk a little bit about prayer.

[27 : 55] There's three times where Jesus, we read in Mark, there's three times where Jesus went off to pray alone. Here's the first one. Very early in the morning while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to pray in a solitary, went off to a solitary place where he prayed.

This, this special prayer, being alone, was really amazing because he did it. If you read before and after the context of this scripture, he was healing and casting out demons before this happened and after this happened.

He needed to connect with God. It was taxing. Remember, he was a human, fully human. He was getting taxed and tired, healing people and helping people.

The truth is, when we help people, when we preach the word, I'm going to be tired after this, I'll be honest with you. This is hard work. My preparation time, it's hard work.

It's not easy. When we help someone, love someone, take our time to go to their house, visit somebody, spend time praying, it can be hard work.

[29 : 12] We need this. Another example. After leaving them, he went up on a mountain to pray. We talked about mountains. Well, this happened right after he fed the 5,000.

That was a taxing event. That was a taxing event. Afterwards, he walks on water. He needed to go see the Father.

We all have taxing events in our life. Finding a time to be alone. Maybe you can't go up on a mountain. We don't have mountains here. Maybe you can climb a bluff. Maybe you can go down to your basement.

Find a quiet place. That'll be your mountain. I don't know where you go, but I sit at the kitchen table because I don't have kids around anymore. Maybe you've got to lock yourself in the bathroom so the kids can't get you.

I don't know what you do to get alone. Right? Find a time, a place. Does it have to be early morning? No, it doesn't necessarily have to be early morning.

[30 : 15] I do like the idea of some kind of connection with God before you start the day. I pick early morning if I can. And this very extremely important time of prayer.

We're familiar with this passage. Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible, the hour might come from him. So this is right before the crucifixion. So he was with the disciples and then he left them and then he went a little farther.

So he was alone here. Abba Father, he said, everything is possible with you. Take this cup from me, yet not what I will, but what you will.

Very stressful time. This human body that he was in. That he would have to go through this incredible, incredible crucifixion. In all three of these examples, he's alone praying to God.

Just him and God. And it's setting an example to us. Just him and God. Just you and God. God.

[31 : 31] Another example of prayer. This is one of the really, another very important one from Mark. Symbolizing prayer. going a little further, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible, the hour, I'm sorry, Mark 12, 38.

As he taught, Jesus said, watch out for the teachers of the law. They look to walk around in flowing robes and be greeted with respect in the marketplace and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets.

They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. These men will be punished most severely. They're praying to be heard. We don't want to be doing that, right?

We don't want to be praying to be heard. I'm sure I've done it. I know I've done it, probably being prayed to be heard. So I just have to, God, everything I do, I have to ask God to help me. Help me pray. Everything we do, we need help God, God's help. Another Mark verse on prayer. [32 : 42] Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it and it will be yours. And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them so that your Father in heaven may forgive your sins.

So here we see an example of prayer by faith. We believe it. but with forgiveness. If you're struggling with forgiveness in your heart, take care of it. Make a phone call, go meet someone, whatever you got to do, take care of it. Risk. Take the risk. There's nothing better than being felt forgiven. I've never felt better when I felt forgiven by someone when messed up.

There's nothing better when you forgive someone that hurt you. Because that troubles you, doesn't it? When someone hurts you. There's nothing better when you forgive someone when they trouble you.

That will help your prayer life. That won't interfere. It's hard to talk to God when you're struggling with someone. Clear it up. Very important part of our faith with God.

[33 : 52] Oh, I'm not ready for that one yet. Okay, so what are the highlights, what are the takeaways of the story of this today?

And I was thinking about this again. I do have one more verse. How the disciples were inadequate to cast the demon out. Here they're arguing.

Here they separated themselves from Jesus. Right? They were separate. The three disciples were on the mountain and the other nine were down with this father and the boy and no one could do anything and they're arguing about it.

Chaos. And I was thinking about inadequacy. I'm inadequate.

We all have our inadequacies. Jesus is tasking them to do things beyond their ability. And this really illustrates the need for Jesus in ministry.

[35 : 07] He's going to task us to do things that's beyond our ability. And we can't do it without him. And this is, actually I think about this verse an awful lot.

It says competency here and another version it says inadequacy. Second Corinthians 3, 5. Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competency comes from God.

Not that we're inadequate in anything to consider ourselves. But our inadequacy, I'm trying to put the word inadequacy in there but I can't do it right so you know what I mean.

The word competent, incompetent, adequate, inadequacy. I think it fits. And our inadequacy is not our fault. If you're inadequate in something that's not our fault.

God's gifted us in certain things but not everything. There's going to be a degree of things in our life that we're inadequate to do. But God's going to call us in those areas. He's going to call us in the things we're adequate to do.

[36 : 15] Both. We need them in both. But in our weakness, he shows his strength. He shows us the strength.

Jim shared, Jim Potter shared me that verse. Second Corinthians 12, 9. Is that where it is? And our weaknesses. Paul's weakness. You can look that one verse up. Second Corinthians 12, 9.

God shines in our weakness. Shines in our weakness. We realize our inadequacies and reach out to him and he has all the power we could ever possibly need to do his work of love and sharing him to the lost.

So I just want to share one last thought here. It says walking by faith is hard. It's scary. It's risky. But when we do it, God shows up.

He shows up. He loves it. Shows his mighty power. Let's pray. Thank you, Lord, for your goodness. Thank you, Lord, that you show up for us when we're down and out, when we're hurt.

[37 : 31] You show up when we turn our face to you. It's faith in you. Not just faith. It's faith in you. Please help us.

Show us the truth in that today. If there's one thing we can walk away with today, don't let it slip away, Lord. Help each and every one of us to take it with us. to our homes, to our workplace. Whatever we got going on tomorrow. So we're coming off the mountain, Lord, and we're going to go into the world with you and our faith. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen.