

Ninety-Nine And A Half Won't Do! Part 7- Help Me Overcome My Unbelief

Description

14When they returned to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd surrounding
16 "What is all this arguing about?" Jesus asked.
17One of the men in the crowd spoke up and said, "Teacher, I brought my son so
19Jesus said to them, "You faithless people! How long must I be with you? How
20So they brought the boy. But when the evil spirit saw Jesus, it threw the ch
21 "How long has this been happening?" Jesus asked the boy's father.
He replied, "Since he was a little boy. 22The spirit often throws him into the
24The father instantly cried out, "I do believe, but help me overcome my unbel
25When Jesus saw that the crowd of onlookers was growing, he rebuked the evil
26Then the spirit screamed and threw the boy into another violent convulsion a
28Afterward, when Jesus was alone in the house with his disciples, they asked
29Jesus replied, "This kind can be cast out only by prayer."

Mark 9:14-29 NLT

This is an often spoke about and read passage, but I believe its significance can be missed if not considered deeply. The man in the passage has a son who suffers from epilepsy or demon possession, but he has heard of Jesus who is able to heal his son of his condition. I can imagine the man rising early that morning with great hope and probably a little fear. Waking his son and helping him to get dressed, and possibly telling him that today he was going to visit someone who could actually help him. I imagine that the man and his son traveled a long distance from home to reach where Jesus and his apostles would be that day. The man probably thought with each step he took that his son was closer to being healed, and all the things he'd desired to do with his son since birth was about to be a reality. As they arrived where Jesus and his followers were located, they encountered a large crowd of people who were also seeking a healing from Jesus. The man's hopefulness possibly weakened thinking he wouldn't get his son to Jesus because of the crowd. Add to this weakening confidence the realization that Jesus isn't even here, just 9 of his unknown disciples. Faith that began the day at best 100%, but likely less, was possibly at this point 70%; yet the father believed enough to have the disciples pray for his son. I imagine that the 1st disciple steps up and lays his hands on the boy.....nothing happens. Then the next disciple, and so on until they all had tried. Which each failed attempt, I believe the man's faith continued to weaken. I believe the man was reaching crisis stage, believing that his son would return home the same way he had left that morning. Lo and behold Jesus arrives, and the man sees an opportunity for his son to be healed. From the father's perspective, some people are fangirling over Jesus, others are seeing the opportunity to put Jesus to the test over religious doctrine. The father instead sees a last opportunity to have his son healed, and out of desperation confesses his need to Jesus in the presence of everyone else with no shame.

Have mercy on us and help us, if you can

mark 9:22

The man empties his heart before Jesus. "I brought my son to your disciples and they couldn't heal him." The man came looking for Jesus, but originally encountered his disciples. Jesus wasn't offended by either of the man's statements, and he doesn't rebuke him, or dismiss his concerns. I believe that Jesus appreciated the father's boldness and honesty, or more accurately, his transparency. This father was in the perfect position to encounter Jesus. He was in need, everything else he believed in or had tried had failed, his already damaged faith was on life support and all he had left was a mustard seed worth of faith and hope that Jesus was able and willing to do it. "If you can do it?" Jesus highlights the "if," not because he is scolding the man, but because he recognizes something that he can work with. "If" is the mustard seed of faith, it's all the faith the father has left, and it's all that he can offer to Jesus in the moment. Jesus takes hold of that ounce of faith and multiplies it. The man acknowledges that he has faith, but admits that his faith has been impacted by years of disappointment, regret, failure, and silence from God; which has all culminated in this moment where Jesus is making him decide between 99.5% or 100%. Faith isn't the absence of fear or doubt, but rather the decision to believe/trust God's word in spite of the circumstances. One thing to note is that even after Jesus releases his authority in the form of healing over the son, the situation appeared to grow worse than it was before. Jesus didn't even respond to the father's statement, he instead verbally rebuked the spirit. The boy appeared to die, and the father was left with an unanswered question. It grew worse before it got better. It's important to not prematurely label or decide something before God is done with it, because he can take what looks dead or damaged and breathe new life into it. New life in the passage looked like Jesus reaching down and grabbing the healed boy by the hand, don't underestimate what he can do in your situation.

Reflection Time

What is the status of your faith currently? Do you remember the situations in life that tested your faith? Did your belief or trust in God weaken after these experiences? Do you still have enough faith to bring your pain or issues to Jesus, and trust that he can and will do what he promised in his word.

Category

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