

Text— Mark 9:17-29

Fellow redeemed sinners, redeemed by the blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,

The events recorded in our Scripture selection took place not long after Jesus was transfigured upon a mountain top, while three of His disciples – Peter, James, and John – looked on, for Mark 9:3-8 reports, “his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them. And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus. And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid. And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him. And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves.” Hence, the disciples were struck with fear and awe as they beheld Jesus in amazingly bright shining glory. The transfiguration surely proved to Peter, James and John, that Jesus is indeed the Son of the living God.

My friends, it is good for us to always keep in mind that Jesus is not only true man, sinless man; but, Jesus is also true and very God, begotten of the Father from eternity. Jesus had to be true man in order to take our place under God’s Law, and in order to be able to suffer and die in our place. Jesus had to be true God in order that His perfect keeping of God’s holy Law might be sufficient for all of us sinful human beings, and in order that His life and His bitter sufferings and death with the shedding of His holy blood might be sufficient ransom for our redemption, and in order that He might be able to overcome death and the devil for us.

It’s as Hebrews 1:1-4 and 2:14 informs us, “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom

he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.” Thus, God’s only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, is the only Savior of sinners.

Our sermon text reinforces the fact that Jesus is who we all desperately need, for in our Scripture selection we behold:

“JESUS’ POWER OVER A DEVIL”

With that as our theme, may we, in view of our text and with the help of the Holy Ghost, see—

- 1) Why it was necessary for Jesus to use His power over a devil
- 2) How a man and his son were able to benefit from Jesus’ power over a devil
- 3) What we all need to remember about Jesus’ power over a devil

-1-

Verses 17 & 18, ----- (Mark 9:17-18)

Jesus arrived on the scene where a large crowd had gathered together around His disciples and a discussion was taking place, for just prior to our sermon text we read, “And when he came to his disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them. And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to him saluted him. And he asked the scribes, What question ye with them?” (Mark 9:14-16) Oh, the people were amazed when Jesus made Himself present and asked the scribes, who were flapping their mouths’

to His disciples, "What question ye with them?" The scribes then shut their mouths for the moment, *And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not.*

It was a sad case in which a man had a son who was possessed with a devil, an evil spirit, who rendered the young man unable to speak and unable to hear, for in verse 25 of our sermon text that devil is called foul, deaf and dumb. The evil spirit who possessed the young man was repeatedly attempting to cause him to harm himself while convulsing, for Matthew 17:14-15 adds that the father of the possessed young man came to Jesus, "kneeling down to him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water." Hence, the devil was regularly inciting that young man to violently kill himself by drowning or burning.

My friends, the devil – Satan, along with all the lesser devils – desires nothing else than to harm human beings and to bring them into hell, the place, "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." (Mark 9:44) Accordingly, we are all warned in 1 Peter 5:8, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."

As mentioned moments ago, it was a sad case for the young man who was possessed by a devil who rendered him unable to speak and unable to hear, and was regularly attempting to cause him to harm himself while violently convulsing. The demon-possessed individual's father had spoken to Jesus' *disciples that they should cast the devil out; and they could not.*

Interestingly, earlier Jesus had sent out His twelve disciples on a preaching tour, for Mark 6:7-13 relates, "And he called unto him the twelve, and

began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits; And commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse: But be shod with sandals; and not put on two coats. And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city. And they went out, and preached that men should repent. And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them." So, on previous occasions the disciples did cast out devils; but, the present case of demon-possession was extreme, and the disciples were not able to cast out that devil at that time in that particular young man.

Verse 19, ----- (Mark 9:19)

The man whose son was possessed with a terrible devil had said to Jesus: *I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not.* Jesus then *answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me.* Yes, Jesus answered the man in the presence of the crowd of onlookers; and, Jesus labeled them a FAITHLESS GENERATION.

The people lacked faith, despite all the many miracles they had beheld Jesus perform during His public ministry. Jesus would not be visibly present with those folks much longer, as the time of the supreme sacrifice of Himself for the sins of the whole world was then just months away. It was sad that the people by-and-large were unbelieving.

Likewise, it is sad today that people by-and-large are unbelieving, as is plainly evident by all the craziness and extremely brazen sinfulness throughout the world. The need for Jesus is as great now as it has ever been, for Romans 3:23 and

6:23 plainly state, “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; [and] the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Yes, Jesus is the ONLY SAVIOR! Every human being needs to repent of his or her sins and needs to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, for Mark 16:16 clearly informs us, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”

Verse 20, -----. (Mark 9:20)

The young man possessed with a devil was brought to Jesus, *and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming.* Think of it: immediately the devil caused the young man to convulse, fall to the ground in pain, and roll about foaming at the mouth— a sad sight indeed.

Verses 21 & 22, -----. (Mark 9:21-22)

Jesus inquired of the father of the possessed young man as to how long he had so suffered the affliction of having a devil. The father responded that it had come upon his son when he was a child. You can picture the father weeping as he said to Jesus: *And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.*

Thus, it is obvious that it was necessary for Jesus to use His power over a devil because that possessed young man would never obtain relief without Jesus Christ providing relief. Take it to heart that none of us can have relief from sin, death and the devil, without Jesus Christ Himself providing the relief, for Acts 4:12 tells us in no uncertain terms, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

-2-

As we ponder the next few verses of our sermon text, let us see how a man and his son were able to

benefit from Jesus’ power over a devil.

Verse 23, -----. (Mark 9:23)

The man with the demon-possessed son had said to Jesus: *if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.* The problem was the man’s confounded “IF” — for the man should never have questioned Jesus’ ability to help. The man should have said: “if it be thy will, dear Jesus, I know that thou canst help me and my son.” So, since the man was not confident in Christ, *Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.* Note well the “IF” that matters: IF one has faith – full trust and confidence in Jesus Christ as one’s personal Savior and Lord – ALL things are possible to him who so believes.

For example, consider the case mentioned in Luke 5:12-13, “And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy: who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And he put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him.” Observe that the leper had faith in Jesus that He could indeed heal him if it was Jesus’ will to do so; that leper was right in his faith in Christ, for Jesus was willing to heal him, and He did so right then and there.

Take the following words from 1 John 5:14-15 to heart, “this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.” Fellow Christians, I’ve experienced it in my life and I’m sure you have too if you stop and think about it. Oh, sometimes we ask for things and God says “no”; but, such is the case when we have asked for something that it is not the Lord’s will to give us. We must trust that the Lord always knows what is best for us and does what is best for us, for, “He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just

and right is he.” (Deuteronomy 32:4)

Verses 24-27, -----. (Mark 9:24-27)

The man with the devil-possessed son got the point Jesus had made, for *straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.* Yes, the man presently addressed Jesus as “Lord” and confessed that he believed but was weak in faith as was evident from his doubting, for he needed Jesus’ help to grow him in the faith. Oh, the man made a right confession— the same confession we must all make if we would be honest, that being, that Jesus Christ is Lord and we are so often weak and need Him to strengthen us in the faith.

My friends, the faith that saves sinners rests and relies on Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and is God-given, for Holy Writ relates, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” (John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8-10) Realize that even a weak faith is saving faith as long as the Lord Jesus Christ is the object of that faith.

Consider what happened after the father of the young man possessed with a devil had *cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.* The onlookers gathered, and *When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead.*

Note well that the man’s faith was NOT misplaced when it had Jesus as its object, for Jesus commanded the deaf and dumb devil to come out of the man’s young son, and in a great final

convulsion and cry the demon came out of that young man. Suddenly, the man’s child just lay there still and silent, and the people gathered around and thought that the young man was dead; but he wasn’t; he was now at peace and no more possessed by a devil, for *Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose.* The people that were watching, “were all amazed at the mighty power of God,” declares Luke 9:43. Indeed, Jesus’ power is the mighty power of God because Jesus IS GOD in addition to being true man. Therefore, take it to heart that faith in Jesus Christ is never misplaced but rather has the right object— the one true Savior.

Thus, both the man and his son were able to benefit from Jesus’ power over a devil, for the man’s faith in Jesus was increased and his son was freed from being held captive by an evil spirit who sought his harm.

-3-

As we ponder the remaining verses of our sermon text, let us see what we all need to remember about Jesus’ power over a devil.

Thus far we’ve already noted from our sermon text that faith in Jesus Christ as one’s Lord and Savior is necessary, for He demonstrated His power over the devil who had possessed a young man and had thereby rendered him deaf and dumb, and had repeatedly attempted to move the young man to commit suicide by drowning or burning himself. We also noted that Jesus Christ is the only Savior of sinners since the Holy Bible states, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12) Oh beloved, such is indeed the case since Jesus Christ alone is our Savior from ALL devils, including the chief of the devils— Satan himself.

Verses 28 & 29, -----. (Mark 9:28-29)

Once the disciples were again with Jesus away from the crowd, *when he was come into the house,*

his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out? And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.

We also read in Matthew 17:19-20, "Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you."

Hence, Jesus' disciples' weakness in faith prevented them from being able to cast the devil out of the young man when he was possessed of it. Thus, intense prayers of faith coupled with fasting in order to improve one's concentrating on the Lord while pleading with Him is what the disciples had lacked.

My friends, if we are honest we must all admit that we are frequently weak in faith. Accordingly, what we all need to remember about Jesus' power over a devil is that JESUS STILL HAS POWER OVER ALL THE LESSER DEVILS AND THE CHIEF DEVIL, SATAN. Indeed, Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior, our Deliverer from sin, the devil, and never-ending death in hell, for Jesus Christ who cannot lie says in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

Let us therefore daily and sincerely repent of our sins. Let us keep our full trust and confidence in Christ Jesus as our personal Savior and Lord. And, let us go forward never forgetting what we've contemplated as we've pondered our sermon text beholding Jesus' power over a devil. Amen.

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