

Inadequate ~ Mark 9: 14-29

Jesus comes down the mountain and immediately meets chaos: arguing scribes, a desperate father, a demon-possessed boy, and nine defeated disciples. That pattern matters. Moses came down from Sinai to rebellion. Elijah left Horeb to face Ahab and Jezebel. Jesus comes down from glory and meets darkness. **Be ready after the mountaintop.**

While Jesus was gone, the disciples tried to cast out the demon and failed. That's strange because in Mark 6 they had already cast out demons. **What changed?** They had been given Christ's authority, but that authority was never theirs independently. They were supposed to exercise it by faith, in dependence upon God. Somewhere along the way they became complacent, self-sufficient, and spiritually negligent. Jesus calls them a "faithless generation." Matthew says plainly: "Because of your little faith." They tried to do the work of Jesus without depending upon Jesus.

That's us. We go through the motions. We have the title, the experience, the routine, the theology, the ministry position, but the hose isn't connected to the fountain. Jesus says, "Apart from me you can do nothing." Paul says, "Our sufficiency is from God," and "the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us." We are totally inadequate to do Christ's work in our own strength.

Then the father becomes the lesson. He says, "If you can do anything..." Jesus responds, "If you can?" The question mark is on the wrong person. Christ's ability is not in doubt. "All things are possible for one who believes." The issue is whether this man will trust Him. Stop putting the question mark over Christ. Put it over yourself. Is Jesus able? Yes. Will I trust Him?

The father answers perfectly: "I believe; help my unbelief!" That is faith. He doesn't pretend his faith is strong. He brings Christ the little faith he has and asks Christ to supply what is missing. True faith knows its weakness. Faith isn't confidence in the strength of my believing. Faith is throwing the whole weight of my weak soul upon a strong Savior. "Bring him to me." That is always the answer.

Then the disciples ask, "Why could we not cast it out?" Notice the emphasis: why could **we** not do it? Jesus answers, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer." They didn't need a better technique. They needed renewed dependence upon God. **Prayer is Christ's remedy for weak faith because prayer is faith turned toward God.** Prayer says, "I cannot. You can."

Prayer and fasting don't make us worthy. They don't manipulate God. They bring us back into conscious dependence upon Him. Prayer is for us, not because God needs information, but because we need alignment. We need humility. We need to remember where the power comes from. We keep trying to do things **for** God without doing them **with** God. Then we wonder why there is no fire on the altar.

Your hurt, habit, sin, fear, bitterness, addiction, anger, or rebellion will not be defeated by your power. You cannot outwork it, outrun it, distract yourself from it, or discipline yourself into resurrection power. You are inadequate. So am I. Lay down your confidence in yourself. Come to Christ. "I believe; help my unbelief!"

If we want changed lives, changed families, a changed church, and revival in our community, prayer cannot remain an accessory. Who are we kidding trying to be branches apart from the vine? Leonard Ravenhill said, "If I want to know how popular your church is I'll come Sunday morning. If I want to know how popular the preacher is, I'll come Sunday night. If I want to know how popular God is, I'll drop in at the prayer meetings."

Look at the difference Jesus makes. Without Him: arguing scribes, a confused father, a tormented boy, defeated disciples. Jesus arrives: the scribes are silenced, the father is corrected and comforted, the demon is driven out, the boy is restored, and the disciples are taught. Stay close to Christ. Pray. Fast. Depend upon Him. Bring your mustard seed of faith and say, **"I believe; help my unbelief."** Because apart from Him, we can do nothing.