**Everything is possible for one who believes**

Mark 9:14-29

Key verse: 9:23 **23**“‘If you can’?” said Jesus. “Everything is possible for one who believes.”

In our lives we often encounter obstacles that seem impossible to overcome. This is why it is important we need to remember that “Everything is possible for one who believes” which is also the title of today’s message. In today’s passage, we will see Jesus driving a demon out of a boy and teaching His disciples a lesson. In this miracle, Jesus emphasizes the importance of faith and prayer. Actually, these are the important but uncomfortable topics for Christians. Having faith and praying are more difficult especially when we have to deal with the seemingly impossible challenges in our daily lives.

Nevertheless, Jesus wants us to have faith. And Jesus wants us to put our faith in God and communicate to Him through prayer. When we obey Jesus' word, as the boy's father did in the passage, we will see God coming to our aid. We must not sever the bond of prayer that connects us with God. I pray that we may think about faith and prayer by meditating about the passage deeply at this moment.

1. **Unbelieving generation (14-19)**

Look at verse 14. Verse 14 reads, “**14**When they came to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and the teachers of the law arguing with them.” After Jesus and the three disciples heard the voice of God in the Mount of Transfiguration and they made it down the mountain, they saw the other remaining disciples. But the disciples were not alone. The other nine disciples were surrounded by a large crowd and were arguing with teachers of the law. Verse 15 states that, “**15**As soon as all the people saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with wonder and ran to greet him.” At this time, as soon as the whole crowd saw Jesus, they were caught with wonder and ran to Jesus and greeted him. The people looked like they felt relieved as if they truly met the real expertise. Then what on the earth happened to them while Jesus and three disciples were away?

Verse 16 reads, “**16**“What are you arguing with them about?” He asked.” Jesus asked his disciples what type of a situation they get themselves into. But the disciples did not say anything. It would be accurate to say that they were hesitant, and maybe ashamed, to explain to their teacher. Then breaking the temporal silence, someone in the crowd answered.

Verses 17 and 18 read, “**17**A man in the crowd answered, “Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. **18**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.””

This was the boy’s father who answered, the man whom the disciples had tried to help. According to verses 17 and 18, we know that the boy was possessed by a demon who had the power to make him unable to speak. And it is also true that when the boy was possessed by a demon, he was thrown to the ground, frothed in his mouth, grinded his teeth, and his body was paralyzed. Seeing this son suffering and unable to live a functional and normal life, the boy's father must have been in so much pain. And when he finally heard of the healing power of Jesus, he brought the boy to the disciples since Jesus was up in the mountains and begged them to be healed.

However, the disciples were not able to heal the boy. The father must have been depressed and frustrated. It must have been very frustrating for the disciples as well. The nine disciples must have been embarrassed and even more puzzled. They had remembered the time when they went on a mission trip before. At that time, they were able to heal and cast out demons using the spiritual authority that Jesus had given them. They had expected and were confident that they would simply exert their spiritual power and authority again by healing just one child. But somehow, they failed.

So then what was Jesus' response? Verse 19 reads, “**19**“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.”” Jesus said, “You unbelieving generation.” He rebuked the disciples and others as an unbelieving generation. Jesus spent much time teaching about God’s kingdom and faith. Yet, His disciples were completely unable to conjure up enough faith for healing one child.

So, what kind of generation is an unbelieving generation? An unbelieving generation seems to refer to a group of people who have taken faith for granted. It is a generation that thinks it does not need to worry about faith. In many ways, this can be applied to every generation as they grow up. So what does it mean to have faith? To have faith is to acknowledge the existence of God and come to God with reverence. Hebrews 11:6 reads. “**6**And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek him.”

Hebrews 11:6 clearly mentions that faith requires believing in God and earnestly seeking Him. In the context of today’s passage, the faith to please God is that the boy’s father should believe in the existing God and earnestly seek Him. The reward must be the boy’s healing. But the great reward for the boy’s father is his understanding and knowledge of God and his changes in his spiritual life.

Then, in the light of Hebrews 11:6, the boy's father is directionless and in despair amid the boy's suffering because the disciples could not help. The disciples who tried to cure the boy had no faith. Jesus had pity on the disciples, for this was the reason why Jesus had been with them and did not give up on them long ago. He wanted to help them to grow in faith and was still waiting for them, but at that moment, they were not yet ready.

After rebuking the people present, Jesus told them to bring the boy. Jesus rebukes those who do not have faith, but God is loving and merciful, and He accepts and heals the sick and the weak. This is why we must always bring all kinds of our problems to Jesus, the Lord and Shepherd and teacher and healer.

1. **Everything is possible for one who believes (20-27)**

Verse 20 reads, “**20**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.” According to the Merriam Webster dictionary, a convulsion is defined as “an abnormal violent and involuntary contraction or series of contractions of the muscles.” As soon as the evil spirit saw Jesus, it made the boy have seizures and fall to the ground, rolling over.

The evil spirit was trying to oppose and interfere with Jesus and to sow doubt in the father and the disciples. Truly, we can feel, when the boy convulsed, how the father's heart was filled with even more helplessness and despair. However, what we need to understand here is that no matter how much power the spiritual reality uses, it is ultimately driven out by the words and power of our Lord Jesus.

Upon this interference, what did Jesus do? Did Jesus heal the boy right away urgently? Look at verse 21. “**21**Jesus asked the boy’s father, “How long has he been like this?” “From childhood,” he answered.”

Jesus started a conversation. This seems odd if His priority was to heal the boy. But Jesus asked the boy’s father how long the boy had been in so much pain. Jesus' conversation with the boy’s father was to help him to realize his helplessness before God and to have faith in God. The boy's father replied that the boy had been in that situation since he was a child. And the pain of the past sufferings engulfed him from his heart. Verse 22 makes this clear. Verse 22 reads, “**22**“It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us.”” What were the implications of the boy's father's words? It implied that ‘Jesus, the hardships my child suffered, and the moments I saw him suffer in are so painful to watch. And now I feel so helpless. I don't know if the child could get better or what Jesus can do, but please have pity on my son and me and help us.’

What did Jesus say? Look at verse 23. Verse 23 reads, “**23**“‘If you can’?” said Jesus. “Everything is possible for one who believes.” Jesus helped the boy's father to look to and hold on to God, taking it one step further. When we hear these words of Jesus, we see a bright light in a world full of darkness and despair. There is hope in God. Because God exists. All things are possible when we believe in this God.

Of course, the current situation may not change right away, and it may remain the same for some time. And the fact we just bring problems to God doesn't always mean that things are going the way we expected.

But please remember that God is good and leads us in the best way. When we do what God wants us to do, God will help us. In this way our prayers to God are heard and answered.

What did the boy's father say? Look at verse 24. Verse 24 reads, “**24**Immediately the boy’s father exclaimed, “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!”” He acknowledged his helplessness and humbly looked to God.

According to verse 25, Jesus rebuked the impure spirit. He said, “You deaf and mute spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.” Seeing the boy's father's faith, Jesus began to work. He drove out the evil spirit. A miracle happened when Jesus commanded. Verses 26 and 27 read, “**26**The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, “He’s dead.” **27**But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up.” When the father believed in Jesus, the darkness disappeared and the boy who was almost dead was brought back to life.

1. **Only by prayer (28-29)**

Look at verse 28. Verse 28 reads, “**28**After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, “Why couldn’t we drive it out?”” The crowd left, and the boy and his father breathed a sigh of relief and returned home with gratitude. When Jesus entered a house, the disciples asked him. They wanted to know why they couldn't heal the boy and why they couldn't cast out the evil spirit.

What did Jesus respond to their question? Verse 19 reads, “**29**He replied, “This kind can come out only by prayer.”” Jesus said this because it is only possible through the power of God to cast out demons, and to call upon the power of God through prayer. Faith is to come to God. What does it mean to come to God? It is to pray. It is talking with God. When we continue to talk with God by faith, God's work displays.

John 14:13-14 says, “13 And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.” How wonderful of a promise we have and how powerful this privilege we have in Jesus. We must keep praying constantly. So let’s pray for peace in this world. Let’s pray for our children and our painful problems. And let’s pray for God’s ministry.

In conclusion, we must have faith in God and never stop praying. Faith comes from praying to God, and admitting our flaws, shortcomings, and problems. When we have faith, the way and the perspectives we look at the situations are changed. We will be able to know and pursue what God wants. Through prayer, we must hold on to the good, everlasting, and unchanging God, and continue walking on the journey of life in faith with confidence. Amen.