

“Mustard Seed Faith”

Matt 17:14-21

Scripture Ref: 1 John 4:4; Eph 6:12; Rom 12:3; Rom 10:17; Heb 11:1-3

And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying, 15 "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water.

1. **Difficult situation – this man’s son is in a bad way -**
 - a. **The NKJ and NIV describe the boy as having seizures, but in the Greek the word that is used translates “lunatic”**
 - b. **See in Jesus day people thought that if you stared at the moon too long, you could become “moonstruck” – possessed by the moon – in other words - crazy.**
 - c. **So in context this statement paints the picture of a boy who was not in his right mind, and apparently he was trying to kill himself.**
2. **Why do I say that? Well if he was just falling down, he would fall down in a lot of places.**
 - a. **The fact that the father specifically says he fell into fires and water seems to indicate that the boy was trying to hurt himself.**
3. **And so, for just a moment, think about the pain that this father was in – his son, who he obviously loved, was out of his mind, trying to hurt himself, and nothing the guy tried seemed to help.**
 - a. **He probably took his son to every person he could think of, rabbi’s, seers, Greek healers,**
 - b. **...and hearing about these disciples of Jesus who were healing people and casting out demons – he even brought the boy to the disciples...**
 - c. **But they couldn’t help either...**

16 So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him."

4. **So it’s pretty safe to say that this guy was at the end of his rope – and there was only one thing left, he brought the boy to Jesus.**
 - a. **Some of you might be able to relate to this father...**
 - b. **You have a child that is sick, or acting weird, maybe even gotten involved in some really dark stuff.**
 - c. **And you have tried everything: Discipline, boundaries... even yelling!**
 - d. **Counselors, therapists, rehab**
 - e. **Maybe even a pastor in the church...**
 - f. **But nothing seems to help – you are right where this guy is, who finally brings the son to Jesus.**

17 Then Jesus answered and said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me."

18 And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour.

5. **Now – there are a few things that I would like to point out...**
6. **#1 – Jesus made a pretty strong statement about being “faithless and perverse.” Why? We will answer that in a minute...**
7. **#2 – This boys problem was not medical, it was spiritual**
 - a. **Now, not all lunacy is demonic possession – but I believe that some is.**
 - b. **I would go so far as to say that there are many people locked away in institutions, suffering every day, for the very same reason that this young boy is suffering –**
 - c. **There was a spiritual problem that had not been properly diagnosed.**
8. **#3 – It is a reality that there are demonic forces in our world, and some kids get involved with these things, not having any idea of the danger.**
 - a. **I find it interesting that many people especially kids - are attracted to the ‘supernormal.’**
 - i. **Some of it seems innocent – kids love superhero’s with supernatural power. The like these characters because they are drawn to their power.**
 - ii. **What kids doesn’t fantasize about being Superman (faster than a speeding bullet!), or Spiderman, with his ‘spidy-senses?’**
 - b. **There is the ‘Sci-Fi’ world, like Star Wars – having “the force”**
 - i. **Kids love to fantasize about being Luke Skywalker, making things move and putting thoughts into their head.**
 - c. **You can go a little darker – the current rage is vampires – (I know, better not crack on Edward, because he is a good vampire!)**
 - i. **The kids are drawn to the mystery – and especially the powers that these vampires have.**
 - d. **Of course you take it even further – getting into the demonic – death metal music, satanic symbols, kids making themselves up to look like vampires...**
 - i. **In some clubs you might think you are in a “Revenge of the Zombies” movie.**
9. **What these kids may not realize is this: Demon’s are real – and if you open up your life to these supernatural creeps, *they will come on in.***
 - a. **Kids think its cool to join up with the demonic, they think they’ll get some power from them.**

- b. The bigger thing that kids don't realize is this: Demons are not interested in 'giving you power" or "teaming up with you".
 - c. Their real agenda is to destroy you. Satan and his demons don't just hate God and His people, they hate ALL people – because people were made in the image of God.
10. Look at it this way – say I committed some terrible crime, and my sentence was that the police were going to lock me in my house, and set it on fire – burn me alive.
- a. But the weeks leading up to my sentence, I was out on bail, and I started inviting people over to my house to party and have a big time.
 - b. And the day of my execution I have a big party and invite you – and right in the middle of the party the police come and lock the doors, and set the house on fire.
 - c. Would you think that I was a good friend, or a total psychopath that knew I was going to die, and tried to take as many with me as I could?
 - d. You might even wonder why the police didn't try and let you out – but they would say "hey, you knew who this guy was – you made the decision to hang out with him."
11. That is a picture of Satan and his demons – they know where they are going, the sentence has been handed down –
- a. They are going to end up in the eternal lake of fire – eternal damnation.
 - b. And they want to take as many of us dumb humans with them as they can
 - c. And I would only have to imagine when people say "I am going to invite the demonic into my life, and have power with the darkness"
 - d. Those demon's must laugh their heads off and think "those stupid people"
12. But here is the bigger truth: When one of our kids does get mixed up with the demonic, all is not lost!
- a. Something I think is relevant with this father, and I think should be foremost in all of our minds is this: **NEVER, EVER, EVER GIVE UP** on your children!
 - b. No matter how far they have gone, no matter what they have done, no matter how dark things might seem – never give up!
 - i. See, the therapists might not have been able to help...
 - ii. The rehab might not have helped
 - iii. The counsel of friends and even pastors might not have helped

iv. But there is one thing we have that the therapists, the clinics, to friends don't have – WE HAVE JESUS!

- 13. How many more kids must die from self-destruction before we begin to realize that the solution is not the “drug war” or “banning that devil music” or the professionals that make \$100 an hour talking to the kids**
- a. We must realize that there is one answer to the dark plagues of this world – the person of Jesus Christ!**

1 John 4:4 You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

b. See, the apostle Paul tells us...

Eph 6:12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

- 14. “But,” you say, “I have prayed for my son, my daughter, and nothing happened”**

19 Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" 20 So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. 21 However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."

- 15. Many times we think that our prayer wasn't answered because we “didn't have enough faith.”**

- a. So then we have to ask ourselves, ‘how much faith is enough?’**
- b. Maybe you see some guy on TV, or a strong Christian friend, and you think *they* have enough faith – “maybe they will pray for me”**
- c. Or we wonder how we can grow our faith, so that we can “have enough faith.”**

- 16. But Jesus tells us “if you have faith as a mustard seed”... God will do great things.**

- a. If that is true, then what is mustard seed faith? And... how do I get it?**
- b. Perhaps Jesus is trying to get us to see that the important thing is not the initial size of the seed,**
- c. ...but what it can do when it is planted, watered, and grows.**

- 17. Think about how a seed grows – you plant it into the soil, you water it, it get nutrients, and with those three things – the plant will grow**

- a. And it's the same with our faith – God is the one who plants it:**

Rom 12:3

God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

b. It grows by the word of God...

Rom 10:17 *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

c. The writer of Hebrews tells us

Heb 11:1-3

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2 For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. 3 By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

18. You see – faith is believing God – not just ‘believing *in* God, but taking God at His word for everything that He is.

- a. **And the prayer and fasting? That is not “emergency prayer and fasting” – that is having a life of prayer and fasting.**
- b. **Prayer draws you *to* God – fasting draws you *away* from your flesh.**
- c. **Faith is believing that prayer will accomplish the work of God**
- d. **Faith is seeing a difficult situation, and believing God for a miracle.**

19. Guys – we have an incredible privilege as parents – we can do so much more than hope our kids don’t get sucked into drugs and demonic activity.

- a. **We can pray daily – fast for our kids – we can take them to Jesus, and say to Him “Lord, everything else hasn’t worked, will you heal him? Will you have mercy on him?”**
- b. **And I believe God will!**

20. So what is your situation?

- a. **Child?**
- b. **Marriage?**
- c. **Sin you are in bondage to?**

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