

Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ

Mustard Seed Faith-less Generation

Last Time: PJ&J were discussing among themselves the role of Elijah in the coming of the Messiah, trying to reconcile the scribes teaching of that with what they saw and heard on the Mount of Transfiguration

Jesus brings some clarity on the issue...“I say unto you” vs the scribes

Note: the “2 Eljahs” is more clarity on the 2 Comings of the Messiah

This time...Jesus, PJ&J join up with the other 9 disciples, who are in the center of a controversy

We will be in Mark 9 and Matt 17

Luke 9:37-42 is the other parallel passage but it is a very summary account, offering no additional details to the accounts in Mark and Matt than those I will mention

Mark 9

v14-16 disciples...multitude...scribes...What question ye:

Jesus, PJ&J have come down from the high mountain and re-join the other 9 disciples...and see that they have lots of company

A great multitude is gathered around the 9...and scribes (opponents of Jesus) are questioning the 9

- disputing/arguing with
- heckling, taunting, harassing, bullying

Where are we?

Presumably back in Caesarea Philippi and Mount Hermon still looms large

What is going on?

The enemy is opportunistically attacking the disciples while Jesus has been gone...very devil-like

What is the dispute/argument/controversy about?

We are about to find out but the multitude

1. see Jesus and are “greatly amazed”

Astonished to see Him...right at this moment

Perfect timing!

There is a lot of tension and anxiety here involving

- the 9 disciples
- the scribes

2. come with eagerness and urgency to welcome Him to the controversy

Jesus is now at the center of the controversy

And He, the Good Shepherd, tends to 1st Things 1st:

He comes to the defense of His own!

Face-to-face with the scribes, He asks them (wolves) why they are
heckling/taunting/harassing/bullying His men (sheep)

In the future, Jesus will come to the defense of His own who were being bullied
by Saul of Tarsus; that confrontation would take place on the Road to
Damascus, which ran thru Caesarea Philippi

As His sheep, we can rest assured our Good Shepherd sees when we are being
bullied by the devil's cronies...and He comes to our defense

v17-18 one of the multitude answered...my son:

Who answers Jesus' question to the scribes?

Not the scribes, who probably are caught off guard by Jesus' sudden appearance
and, being busted by Jesus, would want to slither away

Instead, a father with a demon-possessed son, who are the "cause" of the hubbub,
answers Jesus:

Master...Teacher, a term of respect

I brought to You (Thee vs ye/them) my son...only child, per Luke 9:38

who has a dumb/mute spirit

- seizes his son
- convulses his son (spasms)
- causes his son to foam at the mouth
- causes his son to grind/grate his teeth
- his son is withering away (clenched teeth hinders his eating?)

The scribes and Pharisees would cast out demons by learning the
name and casting it out by name

They taught that only the Messiah could cast out a dumb/mute
demon

Jesus has cast out a mute demon (Matt 12)

This father must have some faith that Jesus is the Messiah, at least
enough to come seeking Jesus

(but You were not here)...so I spoke with your disciples about casting the
demon out, but they could not.

Thus...the controversy with the scribes and the 9 disciples
The scribes hotly disputed the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth
Jesus gave the 12 power over unclean spirits when He sent them
out 2x2, but they could not cast out the mute demon
And the bullies jumped at the chance to attack the disciples,
and Jesus (the real center of the controversy) thru them

v19 He answereth:

Jesus' response is a rebuke

O faithless generation...disbelieving people (plural)
Who? Which people?

How long shall I be with you?
He knows, they have no clue
(although the disciples have more knowledge)

How long shall I suffer/endure/put up with you?
A hint that God's longsuffering has a limit
A: Until Rev 19, the return to earth of Messiah the King

v20-22 tare him...of a child:

When the demon-possessed son saw Jesus, the demon immediately freaked out

- violently convulsed the boy
- threw him on the ground
- caused him to roll around, foaming at the mouth

Just like a violent epileptic seizure

Jesus asked the father how long this has been going on: from the boy's infancy
The father adds that the demon has in the past thrown his son into the fire and into
water, in violent attempts to murder his son

Dads, imagine the father's torment about the well-being of his only child,
a son and his stressful, endless vigilance to keep him safe

Then the father pleads, "**If You are able to do anything**, please have compassion
on us and help us."

He had enough faith to come seeking Jesus' help...but he still has doubts
and reservations, he is not fully persuaded.

Jesus' response is very interesting...table-turning and convicting

v23 If thou canst believe:

If I can?

Oh, I can...but can you?

Can you...are you able to...believe (have faith/trust/confidence) in Me?

Jesus calls the father out on his double-mindedness and half-heartedness

And, clearly, Jesus is acknowledging

- the choice this man has: believe in Him or not believe in Him
- therefore, the choice (to believe) is man's, not God's

Scripture says something to me much different than what Calvinists say

In His foreknowledge, God chose to let man choose.

Man chose.

God chose to make possible a correcting choice for man to choose,
if he would.

God presents the choice to man: life or death

Every man must choose and is given the free will to do so.

In His foreknowledge, God knows every man's choice

God's choice is final

Hence, "the elect" are those who have rightly chosen and are
therefore chosen

ALL things are possible to him that believes (in Me).

Work of doing all things: God's

Choice to believe in God Who can do all things: man's

And the father's response to Jesus is...awesome!

v24 with tears:

The father of an only child, who has been demon-possessed from infancy,
erupts from the deep, unfiltered recesses of his soul

He shrieked with tears.

Lord...Supreme Authority, an upgrade from "Master" in v17

I believe, help my unbelief!

I believe...partly, not wholly

I don't believe...partly

Have mercy on me, take away this double-mindedness and the
instability/struggle in my divided heart!

Piercing, convicting honesty of a desperate man

Jesus' response in v23 (If you can believe) tells us the father who had enough faith to come looking for Jesus' help is among those Jesus addressed in v19...disbelieving people

"Faithless" must, therefore, include those double-minded with a divided heart
James 1:5-8

We should be able to relate to this man...having imperfect faith, sometimes an unbelieving belief in Jesus

The shriek from the unfiltered recesses of his soul should be ours as well!

v25-27 rebuked the foul spirit...lifted him up:

Jesus did have mercy...and He could help, wanted to help

He rebuked the demon (deaf = of hearing or speech) and commanded him to come out and stay out of the boy

The demon

- is now the tormented being
- violently convulsed the boy again
- departed...for he MUST obey his Creator.

The seizure was so violent that the boy appeared to be lifeless

Jesus then finishes the good work He had started

With amazing gentleness of One so powerful, Jesus took the boy's hand and helped him to his feet

As to the controversy involving the 9 disciples and the scribes...case closed

What have the scribes to say now?

Nothing...for they choose to not believe on Jesus

v28-29 Why could not we:

Afterwards, in His de-briefing with the 12 disciples, the 9 ask why they were not able to cast out the demon.

Jesus told them that that kind of demon is cast out only by prayer and fasting

What does this mean?

Fasting...only with prolonged, intense focus on the Lord?

Fasting by who?

The one suffering the seizures or those praying for him/her?

Rachelle's neurological insight: epileptic seizures can be "reset" with fasting

Matthew's account has fewer details than Mark's account, but has additional details that are important

Matt 17

v14-16 lunatic:

“moonstruck”

People in that time believed that those with the symptoms like the father’s son were influenced by the moon

Latin for moon is *luna*, from which we get lunatic

v17 faithless and perverse generation:

In Mark’s account, Jesus’ rebuke was to a faithless people

In Matthews account, His rebuke is to a faithless and perverse people

- disbelieving
- corrupt
- distorted and misinterpreting (not rightly dividing what? The Word)

Is Jesus rebuking the scribes?

v18-21 rebuked the devil...your unbelief...faith as a grain of mustard seed:

Here, there is no record of the interaction Jesus had with the father

Jesus rebuked the devil...and that was that

But in the de-briefing with His disciples, when the 9 disciples asked Jesus why they were not able to cast out the demon, He said it was because of...

THEIR unbelief in Him

- disbelief
- double-mindedness
- divided hearts, half-heartedness
- spiritual instability
- fear (anti-faith....2 Tim 1:7, faith the antidote to fear)

So when Jesus rebuked the faithless and perverse people in v17 (and Mark 9:19), to whom was He speaking?

- the father of the demon-possessed boy
- the scribes taunting and bullying His men
- the disciples, His men
- the multitude
- everybody

Then Jesus gives a perplexing yet penetrating lesson in faith

I say unto you...Thus says the LORD

mustard seed...smallest of seeds

If you had faith even the size of the smallest seed,

- you could move this mountain (Mount Hermon, a giant rock)
- nothing would be impossible by you

Q: Who here has by faith commanded a mountain to “Go over there!” and it did?

(Q: Who has by faith walked on water?

How could Peter...and why did he sink? Think about it)

Therefore, Jesus is saying our faith is smaller than the smallest seed!

Therefore, are we saved from hell and the wrath of the Almighty God by **our** faith?

I sincerely hope not!

Eph 2:8-10

Whose grace are we given?

Whose faith are we given?

Whose work?

Therefore, are we saved from hell and the wrath of the Almighty God by the faith **of** Christ?

Absolutely!

Heb 12:2 Author and Finisher of faith

Acts 26:18 “...sanctified by faith that is in (location) Me”

Compare Textus Receptus/Majority Text (Geneva, KJV)

vs

Alexandrian Text/Minority Text (newer English translations)

Rom 3:22

Gal 2:16

Gal 2:20

Gal 3:22

Phil 3:9

James 2:1

“of” vs “in”...His vs ours
twice, sandwiching our choice

The newer English translations subtly make man the center of the controversy (saved by grace thru faith), when Jesus is the center!
I prefer the TR/KJV

We can NEVER rest on **our** faith, we can ONLY rest on the faith **of** Jesus Christ

Eph 4:12-13 For the perfecting of the saints (a lifetime process),
for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:
Till we all come in the unity of **the faith**, and of the knowledge of
the Son of God, unto a **perfect man**, unto **the measure of the
stature of the fulness of Christ**...

1 John 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth **not yet** appear
what we shall be: but we know that, **when** He (Jesus) shall appear,
we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as he is...

1 Cor 13:12 **then shall I know** even as also I am known

Therefore, if we do not shriek from the deep, unfiltered recesses of our soul like
the boy's father did in Mark 9:24 (Lord I believe, help my unbelief!),
we are self-deceived about

- faith, thinking we have more of it than we really do
(aberrant doctrine like Word of Faith, Name-It-Claim-It)
- salvation, thinking we have more to do with it than we do

Final word...Acts 17:11, search the Scripture with all readiness of mind, not a

- closed mind because of pre-conceived ideas
- double-mind of unbelief

Application

In your agonizing, heart-wrenching trial,

Do you choose to believe in Jesus or to not believe in Jesus?

Is your faith imperfect, double-minded in a divided heart that has doubts?

Do you shriek from the unfiltered recesses of your soul, just like the father of the
demon-possessed boy in Mark 9:24?

Are you resting on your faith or on the faith of Christ?

No matter how overwhelming and agonizing, no situation is impossible...

when Jesus is in the center of it

We must choose to believe...and cry that He helps our unbelief!

He **is** able, He wants to help!

1 John 4:4b

Father's, do you really trust your children with Jesus?