

The Cross-Shaped Life: Shaped by a Growing Faith

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Mark 9:14-29

Dominant thought: Jesus is our help.

Introduction:

Has there ever been a time when you were doing a task and, after you had finished, you realized if I had just asked for help it would have been a lot easier? For me a time that comes to mind is when me and my roommate, Travis, were helping out at our church we go to at college. Our job was to unload this truck full of plywood down by the fire pit that the church has. So, we loaded the truck and drove down to the firepit and unloaded the wood. What we had forgotten was that it had just rained a bunch the day before, so the grass was wet and the truck got stuck. So, I told Travis to get in the truck, and I'll push and we tried and nothing happened, so we switched and still nothing happened. Eventually we got the truck unstuck, but not before making a ton of tire marks in the grass and spraying a bunch of mud everywhere. The next Sunday was Easter, and this church does a sunrise service out by the fire pit. The same fire pit where all the tire marks were. Thankfully it was still rainy the next week, so they did the service inside. To this day we still haven't told anybody what happened. If we had just asked for help though it probably wouldn't have been as bad. In Mark 9 we see the disciples unable to heal someone without the help of Jesus. *In Mark 9 we discover three ways Jesus helps us.*

Jesus helps by healing:

A little context for where we are in Mark. The first few verses of Mark 9 are the transfiguration of Jesus where He is with Moses and Elijah. It's a cool but weird story. We pick up as Jesus is coming down the mountain from the transfiguration. Mark 9:14 then starts where we are at. Read Mark 9:14-19. Here there is a boy who has an unclean spirit. He foams at the mouth and grinds his teeth. We'd probably think he got bit by a possum but Palestine I don't think has possums, so Mark tells us it's an unclean spirit. The father asks the disciples to cast it out maybe because Jesus wasn't there. We don't know but we know the disciples fail. Next in Mark 9:19-27 we see Jesus heal the boy vs.25-27. It shouldn't be any surprise to us because Jesus has literally healed someone in every single chapter before this. My teacher back at Ozark once said, "You can't swing a cat in Mark without hitting a healing story." Chapter 9 is no different. This brings us to

our first point in that Jesus helps by healing. Jesus healed so many people like this boy, and I think Jesus is giving us a preview of heaven. No more demons or sickness. Something we need to remember though is that every single person that Jesus healed still died. I'm not saying Jesus can't and won't heal us physically like He did back then today. But we need to remember that all of these people still died. But we have hope because Jesus also heals us spiritually when we believe in Him. So yes all these people still died but they also get to be with Jesus forever. The same is for you and for me when we believe in Jesus. So that is one way Jesus is our help.

Jesus helps by teaching:

Another way that Jesus helps is by teaching. As we see in the text Mark 9:21-24 Jesus' interaction with the father is a teaching moment. The father has doubts by saying "if you can..." Instead of ripping the father up for saying this Jesus instead teaches him that anything is possible for one who believes. When I hear this verse I think of the scene from the Lego movie where Morgan Freeman is talking to the main character Chris Pratt and tells him to believe. Then the camera zooms out and there is a cat poster with those words hanging on the wall. I don't think there is any cat poster here, but the message is still the same. Believe. Jesus also says similar words in Mark 10:27. Here Jesus is telling how with God all things are possible. Mark 14:36 also talks about what is possible when He is praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. All things are possible for Jesus and God. What I don't think Jesus is saying is that if I believe I can run on water or fly. I think what Jesus is saying is that if we believe in Him then all things are possible. Here Jesus is teaching the dad that all things are possible through Him. Jesus helps by teaching is not a hard one to see. How many of us have learned something at church, or small group, or church camp, or something related to God? Probably most of us have and if you haven't then you probably weren't paying attention. Jesus is constantly teaching us through His Word, through sermons, small groups, prayers, etc. That is another way that Jesus is our help.

Jesus helps by leading:

The last way that Jesus helps is by leading. Mark 9:28-29 Jesus is having a conversation with His disciples. The disciples ask why they couldn't drive the demon out and Jesus tells them that it only comes out by prayer. Earlier in Mark 6:7-8 we see Jesus sending out the disciples to preach and heal. Jesus tells them not to take anything except a staff and a pair of flip flops. The last part of this section in Mark 6:12-13 says that the disciples preached the word, cast out demons, and healed people. Why couldn't the disciples heal the boy if they had

cast out demons and healed people just three chapters earlier? I think it's because of the disciples' success. The disciples were healing people and preaching the word but at some point I think the disciples thought that they could do it by themselves. Why would Jesus just say pray? When we pray we are asking Him to do something that we can't. The disciples lost their close connection with God. They thought that since they were successful three chapters ago they could do the work by themselves. Jesus helps by leading because He shows us how to pray. Mark 14 is the night that Jesus gets betrayed. But before He does, Jesus goes into a garden to pray. Why would Jesus pray if He already knows what the outcome is going to be? I think it's to show that Jesus desperately depended on His father and we should, too. This reminds me of when I was in junior high and as a youth group we went to a conference called Christ in Youth or CIY. I only remember two things about this trip. One was that Michael had to take me out in the hallway of the church because I was making fart noises while everyone was trying to sleep and we sat out there in silence for like 30-40 minutes. The other thing I remember from that trip was the main theme. The weekend was talking about how we need to be Kingdom Workers. I don't remember who the speaker was, but I remember what he said and I'll never forget it. He said, "without the King you're just a dumb worker." Jesus doesn't say that to His disciples, but I think the point is there. Jesus helps by leading, but He can only lead us if we follow Him. We aren't in charge, Jesus is. Without the King we're just dumb workers. So, Jesus leads us by being the priority in our life above work, friendships, family, sports, etc.

Conclusion:

As we go throughout our week, there are going to be hard things. But Jesus is our help. Mark 9 reminds us of that. Jesus helps us by healing, whether physical or spiritual, He helps. Jesus helps by teaching; if we need to learn a lesson this week I'm sure Jesus will make it clear. Jesus helps by leading. Jesus is the perfect example of what we should model our lives like and how we should live them. Jesus is our help. Finish by reading Psalm 121 (ESV).