

**In the Name of the Father, and of the + Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen**

[Mark 9:14-29](#) *28And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" 29And he said to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer."*

Sooooo.....How many times have you asked just such a question?

- Why could I not have that job?
- Why could I not be healed?
- Why could my loved one not have died?
- Why could we not save our church?

You've prayed and you've prayed and it has done no good. Have you not prayed enough? Have you not prayed correctly? Do you not have enough faith? Is God a liar?

The danger here is in measuring faithfulness by earthly results and human expectations.

Prayer is more than just talking with God and asking Him for whatever it is you want at the moment. True prayer is all about the life of faith—calling upon the name of the Lord to fulfill His promises and accomplish His will for the world and for you.

And what is that promise and will of God? To forgive your sins and give you a life with Him that never ends. Part of that promise of a forever life is indeed to be healed of all your infirmities. But remember, even for the boy who was delivered from the unclean spirit that caused him so much physical grief, there was more pain and suffering to come.

The Lord's Prayer: Third Petition

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

What does this mean?--Answer.

The good and gracious will of God's done indeed without our prayer; but we pray in this petition that it may be done among us also.

How is this done?--Answer.

When God breaks and hinders every evil counsel and will which would not let us hallow the name of God nor let His kingdom come, such as the will of the devil, the world, and our flesh; but strengthens and keeps us steadfast in His Word and in faith unto our end. This is His gracious and good will.

So the prayer of faith lays its concerns and desires before the Lord and trusts in God to answer it according to His will and promises.

Matthew's account of this same event gives us some help in understanding Jesus' exhortation to prayer.

Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" 20He said to them, "Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you."

[Matthew18:17-20](#)

The point is that faith, exercised in prayer, calls upon God to do what we cannot. It admits our helplessness in the face of worldly troubles, devilish spirits, and even our own sinful flesh. So what is faith?

Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. 2For by it the people of old received their commendation. 3By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible. [Hebrews 11:1-3](#)

Like Sarah, who by faith, herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. [Hebrews 11:11](#)

The angel proclaimed that Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. *37For nothing will be impossible with God.* [Luke 1:36-37](#)

And after the rich young man left Jesus because of his lack of faith, we are reminded by our Lord, *"how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God! 25It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God." 26And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, "Then who can be saved?" 27Jesus looked at them and said, "With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God."* [Mark 10:24-27](#)

This saving is the greatest of all miracles and the ultimate promise of God for all who believe in His Son, The Savior of the world, Jesus Christ. And with this saving comes not only healing of every disease, but the resurrection of the flesh to a life that never ends and will never be beset with evil spirits or any cursed disease again.

So let us now look at our Gospel lesson to see what it has to tell us about God's promise of salvation. For like all His miraculous healings, this one was to point to the glory of God in His Son, Jesus Christ, so all might be *"saved and come to a knowledge of the truth."* [1 Timothy 2:4](#)

What does this lesson have to say to every sinner that he too might believe and have eternal life?

17And someone from the crowd answered him, "Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a spirit that makes him mute. 18And whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able." 19And he answered them, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me." 20And they brought the boy to him. And when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. 21And Jesus asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. 22And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." 23And Jesus said to him, "If you can! All things are possible for one who believes." 24Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!" 25And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again." 26And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, "He is dead." 27But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.

Dear people of God, this is a remarkable description of what happens in Holy Baptism:

- A sinner, who by definition is a child of the devil, is brought to the Lord [LSB p. 270, "Do you renounce (i.e. give up, disown) the devil?"]
- God commands the evil one to release the sinner [LSB Agenda p. 13 Luther's rite, "Therefore, depart, you unclean spirit, and make room for the Holy Spirit"]
- the sinner is killed (drowned-buried into His death)
- the sinner is raised to new life in, with, and by Christ Jesus

What does such baptizing with water signify?--Answer. *It signifies that the old Adam in us should, by daily contrition and repentance, be drowned and die with all sins and evil lusts, and, again, a new man daily come forth and arise; who shall live before God in righteousness and purity forever.*

Where is this written?--Answer. *St. Paul says Romans, chapter 6: We are buried with Christ by Baptism into death, that, like as He was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

The father's confession, *"I believe, help my unbelief"* is the daily life and struggle of the Baptized. It was the struggle of the disciples. It is your struggle and mine.

Dear baptized, you are no different than the boy, or his father, or Jesus' disciples for that matter. You have been purged of the evil one. The sinner in you has been and continues to be killed daily as you confess your sin and receive the forgiveness of the very Son of God. And you have been lifted up to a new life—now as you are united to Christ in His Word and Sacrament, and on the last day at the resurrection of your own flesh.

God grant you belief in the face of the daily spiritual battles by which the devil would tear you away from God to cast you into the fires of hell, and help you in your unbelief that you may always look to His promise of salvation and pray for your deliverance--and know your have been forgiven of all your sins.....

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The Peace of God which passes all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

† † † **SOLI DEO GLORIA** † † †

Preached to the Glory of God

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**St. Mark 9:16-31
September 15, 2010**