



A just weight
and balance

are the
LORD'S:

Thus saith the Lord...

- Jesus Heals a Boy with a Demon

- Matthew 17:14

As they approached the crowd, a man came up to Jesus, knelt down in front of him,

- 17:15 and said, "Sir, have mercy on my son, because he is an epileptic and suffers terribly. Often he falls into fire and often into water.
 - 17:16 I brought him to your disciples, but they couldn't heal him."

- Today's passage picks up immediately after the one from last week.
 - In last week's lesson, Peter, James, John were up a high mountain.
 - While at the top of the mountain, Jesus is transfigured...
 - He is transformed into a being brighter than the sun with clothes as white as light.

- No sooner had Jesus come down from the heavenly glory than he was confronted with an earthly problem.
- We cannot stay on mountain top experiences forever.
- He who had communed with God and His prophets now mingles in the common life of men, and concerns Himself with their troubles.

- A man had brought his epileptic boy to the disciples in the absence of Jesus.
- Matthew describes the boy by the verb “lunatic” (<G4583>), which literally means to be moonstruck.

- So serious was his condition that he was a danger to himself and to everyone else.
- We can almost hear the sigh of relief as Jesus appeared.
- With one strong, stern word he bade the demon be gone and the boy was cured.
 - This story is full of significant things.

- We cannot but be moved by the faith of the boy's father.
- Even though the disciples had been given power to cast out devils (Matthew 10:1),
 - Here was a case in which they had failed.

- And yet
in spite of
the failure
of the disciples,
the father
never doubted
the power of Jesus.

- We see in our lesson **the constant demands made upon Jesus.**
 - Straight from the glory of the mountain top, **he was met by human suffering.**
 - Straight from hearing the voice of God, **he came to hear the cry of human need.**
 - To our Lord of Glory no man or woman **was ever a nuisance.**

- We see in our lesson the [grief](#) of Jesus.
 - **"How long must I be with you before you will understand?"**
 - There is nothing more Christlike [than patience](#).
 - [Psalms_103:8](#)
The LORD *is* merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.

- We see here the need of faith.
- When Jesus spoke about removing mountains he was using a phrase which the Jews knew well.

- A great teacher,
who could really expound
and interpret scripture
and who could explain
and resolve difficulties,
was known among
the Jews
as an
uprooter of mountains.

- Jesus never meant this to be taken physically and literally.
- What he meant was:
"If you have faith enough, all difficulties can be solved, and even the hardest task can be accomplished."
- Faith in God
is the instrument
which enables men to remove the hills of difficulty which block their path.

- In today's passage, Jesus shows us that our faith, our understanding and perception are not enough.
- We need to go deeper.

- **Peter, James and John**
were witnesses to
an amazing event
while the other nine
were at the bottom
of the mountain.
- Let us think for a moment
about the other nine apostles
whom Jesus left
at the bottom of the mountain.

- Jesus had just taken three of their group by themselves up the mountain.
 - They had no idea what Jesus was up to, but I can imagine that they might have felt a little left out.

- We tend to forget that the apostles were normal men with all the emotions that you and I possess.
 - Their thoughts might have been:
 - *“Where was Jesus going?”*
 - *What about us?*
- *What is so special about them?*
 - I’m pretty sure that most of us would have felt a sense of being left out.

- Is it possible that this event might have played into **the hands of the devil?**
- I am not saying that it did **but something got in the way** of their faith.
- After all they are human and there was **occasional jealousy among the apostles.**

- Remember when the mother of James and John asked that they be granted special favor when the new kingdom materialized.

- Matthew 20:24

And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren.

- **The disciple's failure** was the reason for their argument with the **Scribes**,
 - Who were no doubt **trying to take advantage** of the situation to try and discredit both them and Jesus.
 - The nine apostles **did not fail because they did not know what to do** or had never done it before.

- Remember, back in Matthew 10:8 they had been sent out to preach the gospel saying,
 - **“The kingdom of heaven is at hand,”** and were given the power to **“heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, and cast out demons.”**

- When they returned, they reported that they had done those things.

- Luke 10:17

The seventy disciples came back and joyously reported,

"Lord, even the demons are submitting to us in your name!"

- Dealing with demons was not new to them, but they still failed.
 - Our question is “Why did they fail?”
 - The problem, as we shall see, was their lack of faith.

Matthew 17:20

And Jesus said unto them,

Because of your unbelief:

for verily I say unto you,

If ye have faith as

a grain of mustard seed,

ye shall say unto this mountain,

Remove hence to yonder place;

and it shall remove;

and nothing shall be

impossible unto you.

- This tiny seed **unlocks the door** to greater things.
- As the root shoots **downward** the stalk shoots **upward**.
- The deeper the faith **the higher the heights** we attain.

- That the tiny
“mustard seed”
is able to move mountains.

(Matthew 17:20)

- Let faith in:
 - Water it,
 - Prune it,
 - Nurture it.
- There is no limit to
what heights it will climb.

- Jesus had warned:

- Mark 12:38

- “Beware of the scribes”

- The scribes had taken advantage of Christ's absence.

- Their goal being to undermine His influence with the multitude.

- And might not that poison have effected the other nine apostles.
- As they had not shared the mountain top experience of Peter, James, John.

- We have in this picture an excellent example of the destructive influence of Satan upon those who are under his influence.

- This young man was possessed of a devil.
- During the days of our Lord's earthly ministry, demon possession was a very common thing.

- One reason it was allowed was to give clear evidence of Christ's power over hell.
 - Another reason why God allowed that horrible evil was to teach us that Satan's influence is always destructive.

- Like a roaring lion, he seeks to devour the souls of men (1Peter 5:8).
- The old serpent appears to seek the destruction of young souls especially.
- Thousands upon thousands of young men and women seem to be wholly given over to Satan's influence, and are "taken captive at his will" to the destruction of their souls (2Ti 2:26).
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- And the devil wants our children too, from a young age.
- He wants to get into their minds, and many parents are blind to the fact that they are allowing it in their own homes!
- Movies, tv, video games, books, board games, magazines and more are penetrating little hearts and minds.
- Bob pittman, founder of MTV said,
“At MTV, we don't shoot for the 14-year olds, we own them.”

- When the disciples asked why they could not cast out the evil spirit, our Savior said plainly, **“Because of your unbelief”** (**Matthew 17:19-20**).
- This must have been **a startling statement** for them to hear.

- Sadly, there is much unbelief in the most faithful believers.

- These disciples were believers.

- Yet, they could not perform the work before them because of their unbelief.

- **The weakness
of their faith**

is often set before us,
and in many ways,
in the Scriptures.

- **Romans 15:4**

**For whatsoever things
were written aforetime
were written for our learning,**

- **“Without faith it is impossible to please Him:”**
(**Hebrews 11:6**)
 - **A drop of dew**
is as truly water
as all the rivers of the world.
 - It is of the same
nature and **quality**,
though not the same
in quantity.
 - May that
“mustard seed”
be of good quality.
 - **And may it grow in quantity.**

- But we must never blame God for our failures.
- The word of God lays the blame upon our unbelief, and nowhere else.

- **Peter sank**

because of unbelief
(**Matthew 14:31**).

- **Israel's failure**

to obtain the blessedness
that were theirs
was because of
their unbelief
(**Isaiah 48:18; Matthew 13:58**).

- Do we not marvel that the disciples failed to grasp the good news of Christ's resurrection because “they believed not” (Mark 16:11-14).

- Have you ever stopped to wonder what blessings you and I have missed,

- And what wonders you and I have failed to see because of our unbelief.

- John 11:40

Jesus saith unto her,

"Didn't I tell you that if you believe, you would see God's glory?"

- Let us not pass over this matter lightly.
- Faith is the key to success in our warfare.
- Unbelief is the path to heartache, trouble, and defeat.

- The same Israelites, who went through the Red Sea in triumph, **became cowards** on the borders of Canaan, and could not enter the land because of unbelief. (**Hebrews 3:19**).

- Our Lord's comment regarding "Moving mountains" **must not to be understood as a blanket promise** that we can do anything we want to do, or have anything we want to have, if we just believe and our faith is strong enough.

- **This promise is made to**
the smallest grain of faith,
not to strong faith.
- **If we have true faith in Christ,**
nothing shall prevent us
from glorifying our God,
doing the work
he has given us to do,
and overcoming every obstacle
that opposes us or
hinders us in this world.

- Faith in Christ is the most powerful influence in the world.

- 1 John 5:4

- For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

- The Word of God **gives constant testimony** to the power of faith in the lives of God's elect.
- It was faith in Christ that caused **Joshua** and **Caleb** to give a good report (**Numbers 13:30**).

- It was faith in Christ that sustained Job in hope (Job 13:10).

- It was faith in Christ that caused Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego to remain faithful (Daniel 3:17-18).

- God's work must never be attempted by the arm of the flesh or with careless indifference.

- “Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting”
(Matthew 17:21).

- These words were as a gentle rebuke to the disciples, who had perhaps become overly confident of their powers as the servants of Christ (Luke 10:17).

- Like Israel,
puffed up with
the fall of Jericho,
they were quick to say:

- **“The men of Ai
are but few
there is no need
for us to put forth
all our strength”
(Joshua 7:3).**

- **It is a fatal mistake**
to underrate our foes
(Ephesians 6:12).
- **For we wrestle not
against flesh and blood,
but against principalities,
against powers,
against the rulers of
the darkness of this world,
against spiritual wickedness
in high places.**

- Jesus is informing us that Satan will not be unseated without a fight.
- “**This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.**”

- We must interpret this statement in **Matthew 17:21** **in its context.**
- Our Savior words remind us of the message of Zechariah's vision in **Zechariah 4.**

- The vision was about God's work,
- The building of his house,
- The saving of his people.

- God's message
to his prophet then
is his message
to his disciples here,
and his message
to us today.
- The work is
all God's.

- He uses men to perform his work.
- But nothing depends upon, or is determined by mortal man.
- The work is all His.

- **“This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying,**
 - **Not by might,**
 - **Nor by power,**
 - **But by my spirit,**
- **saith the LORD of hosts.**
(Zechariah 4:6-7).

- **Matthew 17:21**

**This kind goeth
not out but by
prayer and fasting.**

- **Now, what of fasting?**

- **Fasting** is **not** always a religious word!
 - We are to **deny** any strength, any goodness, any power, or ability in ourselves,
 - **Seeking not our will but his**, seeking not our own gratification but his glory.

- What makes **the miracle unique** in our lesson today is Jesus' emphasis on the role of faith.

- It is the **lack of faith** that is emphasized by Jesus.

- That God is not dependent on human faith for accomplishing His work is clear from our lesson today.
- God will not be hostage to our lack of faith.

- While our Lord commended **“little faith”** we are encouraged **to grow that faith.**

- **2Peter 3:18**

**But grow in grace,
and in the knowledge of
our Lord and Savior
Jesus Christ.**

- Every seed watered and nurtured will grow.
- Some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold and some a hundredfold.
(Matthew 13:8)

• This is our
Savior's wish
for us.

**The doors of the church
are open.**

**The Spirit and the Bride
Say**

“Come”.

Revelation 22:17



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