



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.**

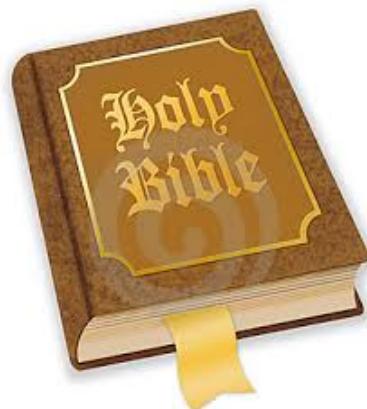
- **Every** seed watered and nurtured will grow.
- Some **sixtyfold**,
some **thirtyfold**
and some
a **hundredfold**.
(Matthew 13:8)

• 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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