

October 8th, 2023 – (full notes)

“Genuine Believing Faith”

Luke 9:37-45

Jesus said (**Luke 9:27**, “There are some of those standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God,” i.e., some of those present, at that time, will not die before they see (cf **Matthew 16:28**) “the Son of Man *coming in His kingdom*” [lit. *royal splendor, glory*], at the Transfiguration (cf **Luke 9:28-36**).

Matthew, Mark, and Luke record the Transfiguration of Christ taking place eight days after Jesus’ made the statement recorded in **Luke 9:27**.

Read Luke 9:37-42... Matthew and Mark tell us, when Jesus, Peter, John, and James came down from the mountain, the other nine Disciples were arguing with some scribes. We don’t know what they were arguing about; but it probably had something to do with the religious leaders’ rejection of Jesus as the Son of God.

In Luke 9:38-39, we are told that the father of a boy, being tormented by a demon, comes to Jesus, “falling on his knees,” begging Jesus to help, for this evil spirit causes the boy to scream, go into convulsions, and foam at the mouth.

In **Matthew 17:15** the father asks Jesus to have mercy on his only son, who is throwing himself into fire and bodies of water (as if trying to kill himself).

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all tell us that Jesus’ disciples could not help the boy, they were powerless against this demon. The father told Jesus (**Luke 9:40**), “I begged Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not,” (**Matthew 17:16; Mark 9:18**), “they could not cure [the boy].”

This is alarming, because these Disciples had previously been given authority by Jesus to cast out demons (**Matthew 10:1**), “Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.”

See again Luke 9:41-42... Jesus expresses His weariness with the widespread unbelief in His own disciples, the teachers of the law, and all of Israel, “‘You unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you and put up with you? Bring your son here.’ While he [the boy] was still approaching, the demon slammed him to the ground and threw him into a convulsion. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the boy and gave him back to his father.”

The man pleads with Jesus (**Mark 9:22**), “if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us.” Jesus exclaims (**verses 23-24**), “‘If You can?’ All things are possible to him who believes.” Immediately the boy’s father cried out and said, ‘I do believe; help my unbelief.’”

This is not about Christ’s lack of power to heal, it is about man’s lack of faith and belief in Jesus as the Messiah. Jesus healed multitudes of people, but very few expressed saving faith i.e., genuine belief that Jesus was both Lord and Savior!.

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According to Mark’s narrative, the father of the boy declares his own lack of understanding, calling out for Jesus to help him overcome his unbelief! Have you ever felt that way? “Please God, help me to trust You completely in this situation!” **Romans 10:17**, “Faith comes by hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.”

Hebrews 11:1, “Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.” **6**, “And without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.”

After healing the boy (cf. **Mark 9:28**) Jesus takes His disciples into a house where they ask Him, why couldn't we drive out the demon, i.e. “Why couldn't we do what we've done before?” They had been commissioned (**Mark 3:15**), “to have authority to cast out demons,” (**Mark 6:13**), “they were casting out many demons and were anointing with oil many sick people and healing them.”

Evidently, the Disciples had forgotten that the source and object of their faith is God, apart from Whom they could do nothing; but with God, all things are possible.

When things are going well, we may find it easy to trust the Lord; but when things get tough or uncertain, our faith can waver. Repeatedly Jesus rebuked His disciples: “Don't you understand?” “Don't you see?” “Are you still so dull?”

Their faith, like that of most Christians, fluctuated, i.e., when we are healthy and our needs are being met, our faith is strong; but when we are in need and must trust in God alone to provide, our faith can become weak, giving way to doubt and confusion, disabling our ability to be a living witness of Christ!

Christ-like, genuine believing faith, trusts God when there is nothing to eat and no money to buy bread; it trusts God when our health, income, reputation, or loved one is taken from us; when things are bad, getting worse, and there is no end in sight: That is God-given, God-powered, Faith!

The first thing we should do when suffering and/or trouble comes upon us or those we love, is to go directly to God in prayer.

Philippians 4:6-7, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

1Peter 5:10-11, “After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen *and* establish you. To Him *be* dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

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Read Luke 9:43-45... All the people were astonished at the greatness of God revealed and exemplified in and through Jesus Christ, God’s Son. The same word translated “greatness” here, is translated “majesty” in **2Peter 1:16**, “For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty.”

Peter is recalling his experience with John and James on the mountain, when the radiant Glory of God shone through Christ in the presence of Moses and Elijah.

A similar greatness had now been displayed by Christ’s removal of this powerful and obstinate demon from a young boy. The people marveled at this miracle, yet, Jesus had done many other miracles (cf. **Luke 6:17-19; 7:21; 9:11**): He healed all diseases, cast out demons, gave sight to the blind and speech to the mute, curing all who came to His for healing, as He proclaimed the kingdom of God.

Jesus displayed power over sin, death, disease, demons, and nature; even though His authority was somewhat limited during His incarnation, to the area of Israel. However, after His resurrection and ascension, He had unlimited authority over all that had been created (**Matthew 28:18**), “And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.”

See again Luke 9:43-44... Jesus told His Disciples to pay attention and understand what He was about to say, for even though the people were praising Him, marveling at what He was doing; they would soon reject Him, mock Him, and cry out for His crucifixion (it was about 6 months until the Cross).

It is hard for us to comprehend the sovereign plan of God to send His own Son to die on our behalf; as Peter would proclaim in the streets of Jerusalem (**Acts 2:22-24**), “Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know— this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.” And later (**Acts 3:13**), “The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His servant Jesus, the one whom you delivered and disowned in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him,” (**Romans 8:32**), “[God] did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all.”

Read Luke 9:45... It was absolutely necessary for the Messiah to go to Jerusalem, suffer death on a cross, be buried, and be raised up on the third day. Jesus had repeatedly told His Disciples this, but they had not understood.

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Prior to entering Jerusalem for the last time, when He would be arrested, condemned, and then put to death, Jesus told the Twelve (**Luke 18:31-34**), “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things which are written through the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished. For He will be handed over to the Gentiles, and will be mocked and mistreated and spit upon, and after they have scourged Him, they will kill Him; and the third day He will rise again.’ But the disciples understood none of these things, and the meaning of this statement was hidden from them, and they did not comprehend the things that were said.”

Jesus loved these guys, He knew the truth of what was coming would devastate them; and to some degree, it would seem they didn’t really want to know (**Luke 9:45c**), “they were afraid to ask Him about this statement.”

I believe all of them (except for Judas) had faith in Jesus to accomplish the will of God the Father, even though they didn’t really understand how or when that was going to happen.

The Disciples had communion with God the Father through God the Son, who was now with them, but would soon be taken away. For them to be alone in this world without God’s presence and power was more than they could handle.

Jesus would encourage them, before His departure (**John 14:16-20**), “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you will see Me; because I live, you will live also. In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.” **John 15:14-16**, “You are My friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.”

In **John 16** Jesus tells them, on that last night before His arrest, that He is going back to the Father, but they will not be alone, for He (through the presence of the Holy Spirit) will be with them and in them.

John 16:31-33, “Do you now believe? Behold, an hour is coming, and has *already* come, for you to be scattered, each to his own *home*, and to leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”

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Our faith, belief, trust, and assurance must rest upon Who the God of the Bible is and what the Bible teaches about Him. In fact, the Great Commission reinforces that truth (**Matthew 28:18-20**), “Jesus spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples [believers and followers] of all the nations, baptizing [immersing] them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit [i.e., everything the Bible teaches about God the Father, God the Son, and God the holy Spirit], teaching them to observe all that I commanded you [read, understand, and obey, all that has been revealed to in the 66 Books of Scripture]; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. [be of courage, for My presence and power will be with you until I came back to take you to be with Me forever]!”

Hebrews 4:12-16, “For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

1John 5:14-15, “This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.”

Pastor Mike
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