

Explore the Bible: October 15

Strengthens • Mark 9:17-29

By Rick Henson



Henson

*Lo
rd
,
I
be
li
ev
e;
he
lp
th
ou
mi
ne
un
be
li
ef
,
th
e
di
st
ra
ug
ht
fa
th
er
ex*

cl
ai
me
d
in
Ma
rk
9:
24
(K
JV
).
Li
ke
th
e
Sy
ro
ph
oe
ni
ci
an
wo
ma
n
in
Ma
rk
ch
ap
te
r
se
ve
n
fr

om
ou
r
le
ss
on
on
Oc
to
be
r
1,
th
is
fa
th
er
lo
ve
d
hi
s
ch
il
d
an
d
kn
ew
no
ot
he
r
so
lu
ti
on

th
an
Je
su
s.
Hi
s
di
sc
ip
le
s
at
te
mp
te
d
to
ca
st
th
e
de
mo
n
ou
t
of
hi
s
so
n
bu
t
co
ul
d

Jesus took the three inner-circle disciples up a high mountain and, *He was transfigured before them (Mark 9:2 KJV)*. The word in the original language translated, "transfigured," is *metamorphou*, which means to change in form.

Jesus was changed in front of the three open-mouthed disciples. His clothes shown bright and He glowed with heavenly light. We know not how, but Jesus showed a sliver of His divine glory to the three men.

Jesus insisted the three tell no one about this event until after His resurrection. They questioned Jesus about Malachi 4:5 which reads, *Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD (KJV)*. Jesus had earlier answered that John the Baptist fulfilled that prophecy. John came in the spirit of Elijah preaching repentance.

As the four came down from the unnamed mountain, they heard a commotion. A father had brought his son to the disciples and begged them to cast out a demon from the boy. They could not and were surprised, since we see in Mark 3:15 and 6:13 (KJV) they cast out other demons and healed the sick, just as Jesus had commanded them.

Yet they were powerless against the demon in the boy. Jesus questioned the father about the boy (probably a young teenager) since the father told Jesus the demon had attempted to destroy him since he was a child.

The man described in sickening details how the demon tormented the young boy. Surely the man was exhausted from watching his son, as the demon tried to throw him into water and fire. The man exclaimed, *...if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us (Mark 9:22 KJV)*.

Jesus turned that around on the man: *If you canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth (Mark 9:23 KJV)*. The question was not the ability of Jesus but the faith of the father. Jesus did not want him to believe for the sake of believing, as if faith alone were sufficient. Jesus wanted this man to trust in Him and believe that Jesus was the Lord of all.

Jesus had no shortage of power, though He did expect faith from those He helped. Just as the Syrophenician woman did in Mark chapter seven, this man expressed faith. *Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief (Mark 9:24 KJV)* is this week's memory verse.

The father expressed his faith and confessed his doubt at the same time. This was enough for Jesus. In Matthew's account of this story, Jesus stated a little faith is enough, like the seed of a mustard tree which grows large from a tiny seed.

The quantity of our faith matters less than where our faith is placed. A little faith in Jesus accomplishes much, while faith in us does not.

The father's expression was a prayer that Jesus heard. As a crowd was gathering, he cast the foul demon from the boy with orders to never return. When the evil spirit left, the boy laid still as if he were dead until Jesus took his hand and lifted him up.

In vanquishing the demon from this boy, Jesus showed His power and dominance over Satan and the evil one's powers so, *that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:10-11 KJV)*.

Later the disciples asked Jesus why they were powerless over this demon, since they had cast out other demons. Jesus told them, *This kind can come forth by nothing, but prayer and*

fasting (Mark 9:29 KJV). Just as an evil angel opposed Gabriel from ministering to Daniel while Daniel prayed for three weeks (Daniel 10 KJV), this demon only left after spiritual warfare.

Thanks be to God for, ...greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world (1 John 4:4 KJV).

Henson is minister of outreach and evangelism at Bethel Church, Brandon.