

SERMON NOTES

Preacher: Kevin Hardy

Date: February 2, 2025

Text: Mark 9:14-29

Title: Faith and Prayer

Big Idea: Disciples of Jesus must be armed with faith and prayer.



I. FAITH: THE NEED FOR DISCIPLES OF JESUS TO DEPEND ON JESUS (vv. 14-27)

And 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." (v. 19)

"The fundamental problem of the people (the opponents, the spiritually oppressed, and even the disciples) is that they are faithless." (*ESV Study Bible*)

"Jesus can expel demonic forces at a word, but the evoking of faith is a much harder matter. Disbelief of Jesus, whether from scribes, crowds, disciples, or desperate fathers, is both a greater opposition and more serious obstacle than all the hosts of pandemonium." – James Edwards

Your greatest sin, your biggest problem as a person is your unbelief!

Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!" (v. 24)

"How often we feel like that dad! So aware of the weakness of our faith, and yet so aware of how helpless we are to strengthen our faith by ourselves." – Dave Griffith-Jones

II. PRAYER: FAITH IN ACTION (vv. 28-29)

Prayer reveals dependence.

Faith, belief/trust (v. 23-24) → works itself out in... → Prayer (v. 29)

Prayer is necessary as we walk with God because it demonstrates our dependence on Him.

"By thanking him and praising him, we acknowledge his kindness and greatness, that he is good and that all good truly comes from him. By asking him for things, we exercise our belief that he really is the fountain of all good and that without him we can do nothing that is actually good." – Michael Reeves

"as you grow as a Christian, you should feel not more self-sufficient but ever more needy." – Michael Reeves

Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? (Gal. 3:3)

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

To be used for personal reflection and/or sermon-based small group discussion.

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READ Mark 9:14-29

What stood out to you most from the passage and/or the sermon from Sunday? Why? How does this passage challenge or encourage you in your faith?

The disciples were unable to cast out the demon (v. 18). What does this reveal about their faith and dependence on God?

Jesus calls the crowd a “faithless generation” (v. 19). What do you think He meant by that, and how might it apply to us today?

The father’s cry, “I believe; help my unbelief!” (v. 24), is both honest and desperate. How does this reflect the tension between faith and doubt in our own lives?

In verse 29, Jesus says, “This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.” What does this tell us about the power and importance of prayer? What does this teach us about the role of prayer in spiritual battles? What are some areas in your life where you need to pray more fervently and rely on God’s power rather than your own efforts?

How can we grow in our faith so that we trust God even when we struggle with doubt? What does this passage teach us about persistent faith and prayer? How can we grow in our dependence on God rather than on our own abilities?

What are some practical ways we can cultivate a stronger prayer life, both individually and/or as a group? How can we encourage one another when we struggle with doubt or unanswered prayers?

PRAY