

Intro:

The desire for more...

I believe we all have desire to see more of God, more of His work, in our lives. We have certain ideals... and we wonder why the gap between our present situation and the ideal is there.

We want to think through this today, and take a look at a story about a few people in the time of Jesus that, I believe, felt the same way too. What they learn in that moment from Jesus points a way forward in experiencing more. Let's look at our text today, draw a few points for thought, discuss together, and then close our time giving ourselves to God.

Read Text: Mark 9:14-29

We live in the reality of both glory and frailty

We are reminded of two things as the story gets started. First, the disciples have been given authority to cast out demons already, in 6:7. And yet they are unable to do so here. Second, Jesus and a few of the disciples are coming back from an experience known as the Transfiguration. This is when Jesus gives a few of the disciples a glimpse of his divinity and wonder in the most breathtaking of ways. It is a crazy, mountaintop experience. And yet they come back to this situation—one where there's squabbling, a lack of faith, and so on. All of this is a reminder that the journey with God and Jesus is one of both highs and lows, of glory and weakness, of clarity and confusion. Perhaps things start off well, but then things get more difficult. Or you have a glorious moment that brings spiritual joy and excitement, and then you're hit with the mundane. This is all part of the journey at the present, because God's work of transforming the world—begun in Jesus—is yet to be completed; it awaits his coming again. And so the reality of our lives.

But the story continues.

Believing God's ability and sovereignty allows us to experience "more"

Back to the story:

There is arguing. The problem is revealed. Jesus is burdened by a lack of belief.

And then the crux of the conversation: What does it mean that "all things are possible for one who believes?"

Not just healing and deliverance, but the also the ability to love God when things don't go our way. The issue is not just belief in God's ability, but his sovereignty as well.

Two examples:

a) Phil. 4:12-13

b) "Our cause is never more in danger than when a human, no longer desiring, but still intending, to do our Enemy's will, looks round upon a universe from which every trace of Him seems to have vanished, and asks why he has been forsaken, and still obeys."

Screwtape Letters

This of course requires his help. Our need for God's help with belief. But this allows us to experience more.

Developing an intimate, ever-dependent relationship with God allows us to experience "more"

Why can't the disciple cast this demon out? What does it mean to pray?

Two things to note to understand what's going on.

1. Exorcism back then was understood in the general culture as involving certain formulas and techniques. For example: *He put to the nose of the possessed man a ring which had under its seal one of the roots prescribed by Solomon, and then as he smelled it, drew out the demon through his nostrils, and, when the man at once fell down, adjured the demon never to come back into him, speaking Solomon's name and reciting the incantations which he had composed.*

Josephus on a exorcism performed by Eleazar. *Antiquities* 8.2.5.

2. Jesus himself does not pray in this instance.

It's not that he doesn't have to. No, in fact he does. Often. Mark 1:35, 6:46.

The point? We're talking about not prayer at the moment, or some sort of technique, but the development of an ever-dependent relationship on God. Engaging in the hidden, daily, even mundane acts of setting aside time for prayer and the Bible may not seem like a whole lot of fun, but it taps us into the more.

Questions and Comments**Challenge:**

1) Believe God's ability and sovereignty 2) Develop the Relationship