

## Mark 9:14–29 — Too Proud To Pray

**October 6, 2019**

Good morning CrossWinds. Today, we are studying a passage in the Gospel of Mark that I love. One of the reasons I love this story is because it is the story of a father that deeply loved his son. It is the story of a good father that spent most of his life caring, helping, and protecting his sick son that was helpless, scared, and disfigured. This is the story of a father that saved his son's life more than once. This father loved his son so much that no matter how hopeless things became, this father never gave up on his boy. He never stopped loving his son. He never stopped caring for his son. This is a good dad. I love that about this story.

You see, too often we hear about absent fathers. We hear about abusive fathers. We hear about fathers that use their families. It is rare to hear about a good father willing to make his entire life about caring and protecting for his child. That was the father in this story. This was a good dad. I love that about him.

Before we meet this great father and his helpless son, I want to take a moment to give you an overview on how this true story fits in the Gospel of Mark and what Jesus was trying to teach his disciples. At this point in the Gospel of Mark, Jesus was less than six months away from the cross. For almost two and a half years, Jesus and his apostles were together. The apostles watched Jesus perform miracles. They heard Jesus teach. They knew Jesus intimately. They followed Jesus by sight. But in the next few months, Jesus would die. They would need to learn to follow Jesus by faith instead of sight. They would need to learn how to access the power of Jesus when he was absent, not just when he was

present. How were they to do that? How could Jesus' disciples then, and you and me as Jesus' disciples now, access the power of God when Jesus is not with us, when we are living by faith in Jesus, not by the sight of Jesus? This story gives us the answer. It teaches how the original disciples learned how to access the power of Christ when they didn't have the presence of Christ.

This story also begins a new section in the Gospel of Mark. While the first half of this Gospel focused on Jesus' miracles, the next two chapters of Mark will focus on Jesus' teachings. This section on Jesus' teaching is bracketed by two stories teaching us what it means to live by faith, the first one we are covering this morning. The last one we will cover in a few weeks. That is the story of blind Bartimaeus.

In this new section on Jesus' teaching, which starts next week, Jesus gives us many good lessons. In the first week, it will be Jesus teaching on humility. The following week will be Jesus teaching on the seriousness of sin. After that, it will be Jesus teaching on divorce and remarriage. The following week will be Jesus teaching on the importance of children. The week after that will be Jesus teaching on money compared to true wealth. Last, Jesus will teach on leadership and servanthood. That will bring us to the second story on how to live by faith with blind Bartimaeus. After that we will be in Mark 11 when Jesus will enter Jerusalem to die on the cross. So today we have a lesson on living by faith, but next week, we begin a study on the teachings of Jesus.

Incidentally, the story we are studying this morning is also told in Matthew 17 and Luke 9. We will reference those parallel accounts in our study. Even

though Mark's Gospel is much shorter than Matthew and Luke, Mark's version of this story is two times longer than Matthew's and Luke's. Why is Mark's longer? That is most likely because Mark was getting his information directly from the apostle Peter who was an eyewitness of everything that unfolded. This is why Mark's version feels like an eyewitness account. That is because Mark was writing Peter's eyewitness account of these event as they happened. Peter was there.

Last week, in the verses just prior to this, Jesus took Peter, James, and John to the top of a mountain where Jesus was transfigured before them. That literally means that for a brief period of time, God the Father let Jesus transcend his human form. Instead of just seeing Jesus as a human being, Jesus appeared as he actually looks, a human being that is fully God, that is complete divinity and humanity joined as one. How did Jesus look in that moment? Jesus' face shown with a glory and brightness more brilliant than the sun. Jesus' clothes became as white as light and constantly flashed with the brightness of lightning. This was an amazing experience for Peter, James, and John, although it was very brief.

As Jesus and the three apostle returned to the world below them, they immediately descended into a scene of complete chaos. Just like when Moses came down from Mount Sinai, he found the Israelites failing in their faith and in complete chaos in the valley below, when Jesus and his three apostles returned from the mountain, they found the remaining nine apostles also failing in their faith in complete chaos in the valley below. The story begins with the chaos of the nine disciples who stayed in the valley.

As we work through the text, to give some form to this story, we will group our study under three problems: The problem of demons, the problem of unbelief, the problem of prayerlessness.

### **The problem of demons.**

And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and scribes arguing with them. Mark 9:14 (ESV)

Jesus and the other three apostles were gone approximately five days. When they arrived at the bottom of the mountain, the remaining nine apostles had drawn a crowd. There were scribes gathered around them arguing with them. Why was the crowd there? Probably because everybody loves to see a good fight. It is like junior high. When you hear there will be a fight at the bike racks after school, half the school wants to be at the bike racks to see what happens. There was nothing different here. It was the remaining nine disciples versus the scribes in a cage fight. Winner take all. Everybody came to see who won.

How did the scribes get here? We know Jesus intentionally left Galilee to avoid the constant conflicts with religious leaders. He traveled 25 miles north to the predominantly Gentile region of Caesarea Philippi. Apparently the scribes tracked Jesus down. These were bounty hunter scribes. They didn't find Jesus, but they found the remaining nine apostles, so they were happy to harass them. This is just like American politics where everyone enjoys spitting on one another.

When the scribes learned that Jesus and three of the key disciples were out of town on a mountain climbing trip, they were thrilled because it tipped the odds in their favor when it came to harassment.

At this point, it was not going well for the nine apostles. They were losing the fight in front of the scribes with the crowd watching.

As a kid, if I was in a fight that I was losing, it was always nice when I could tag in one of my friends to take my place. I always liked a tag-team fight for that reason. Right now, with the nine apostles losing badly, it would have been a great time to tag in some help in this fight with the scribes. That is exactly what happened. Jesus showed up, tagged in on the fight, and took the heat off the nine apostles. Let's see that happen.

And immediately all the crowd, when they saw him, were greatly amazed and ran up to him and greeted him. Mark 9:15 (ESV)

Jesus returned from the mountain. As soon as the crowd saw him the people immediately left the disciples who are getting destroyed by the scribes and moved to Jesus. I picture the nine disciples as totally relieved at this point. "Go get 'em Jesus." The tables were about to turn. Jesus never loses a debate.

It says the crowd was greatly amazed when the people saw Jesus. Amazed is a very strong word in Greek. It means to be awestruck. It means to be speechless. It is acting like a junior high student at a rock concert. Celebrity Jesus had arrived. The crowd went crazy. Everybody wanted to see Jesus. Everybody ran to him, hoping to be in the front row.

Some of you who study these verses on your own will run across commentators that claim the reason the crowd was so amazed at Jesus is because Jesus was still glowing with glory from the transfiguration on the mountain. They claim that just like Moses glowed with glory when he came down from Mount Sinai, Jesus was still glowing with glory when he came down the

Mount of Transfiguration. For what it's worth, I don't agree with that. First, there is nothing in the text that tells us Jesus was glowing. It just isn't there. Let's not add to our Bible. Second, remember Jesus just told his disciples to keep the transfiguration a secret until he rose from the dead. Jesus wouldn't be doing a good job of keeping the transfiguration a secret if he was walking around glowing. I mean, if every time people turned the lights out and the room with Jesus in it never went dark, people would figure out something freaky happened to Jesus. Instead of celebrity Jesus in this passage, Jesus would be more like a lighting bug. The people were amazed at Jesus because he was a famous celebrity, not because he was a lightning bug.

And he asked them, "What are you arguing about with them?" Mark 9:16 (ESV)

Interestingly, the scribes didn't answer Jesus' question. Personally, I think the reason they didn't answer is because they didn't want to get in a debate with Jesus. Every time they did, they lost. The other nine disciples also didn't answer Jesus, probably because they were too ashamed of themselves because they were losing the fight. Thankfully someone came forward and explained the argument.

And someone from the crowd answered him, "Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a spirit that makes him mute. And whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able." Mark 9:17–18 (ESV)

Now we get the details. We have a man with a demon-possessed son that brought his son to Jesus' apostles to cast out the demon, but they failed. This is the disciple's fail blog. You can imagine each apostle trying to cast out this demon, one after the other and each of them failing. You can picture disciples

trying multiple times to cast out the demon, but nothing happened. They looked like powerless fools in public. Since they couldn't cast the demon out of the boy, you can imagine the verbal beating the scribes unleashed on them. I am sure the scribes were calling them fakes, phonies, failures. Never mind that the scribes couldn't cast any demons out on their own. They were thrilled to take this opportunity to publicly shame the nine disciples of Jesus who turned their attempts at an exorcism into a complete failure. The scribes were happier about the failure of the disciples in this exorcism than Nancy Pelosi was with a whistleblower.

While the scribes were busy shaming the disciples, what should have pulled their heart strings was the gripping story the Bible gives us about this boy and his father. Mark tells us this father brought his mute son to be healed. The boy couldn't speak not because there was something wrong with him physically, but it was because there was something wrong spiritually. A demon possessed him and made him mute. Later in this story, we see this demon didn't just make this little boy mute but also made him deaf. The demon caged this little boy in a virtual aquarium of a body. He could see his father and others around him, but he couldn't hear them or speak to them. The demon imprisoned him in his body and forced him to just watch life. He couldn't communicate to others. He couldn't hear from others. He was completely alone in his own world. Later, we will see this demon also gave this boy terrifying seizures.

We don't usually think of muteness, deafness, and seizures as something associated with demonic possession. We think of demonic possession like the

Gadarene demoniac in Mark 5 where people run around like crazy people, howling at the moon and cutting themselves. Sometimes that is what demon possession looks like. However, if we look around the Bible, we find that demon possession or oppression occasionally manifests itself in a debilitating physical condition.

Let me show you what I mean. We have already seen that while there was nothing wrong with this boy physically, the demon made him mute and deaf. In Matthew 12:22, we see a demon made a man blind. There was nothing wrong with the man physically. The blindness came from the oppression of a demon in his life. In Luke 13:11, we see a demon that left a woman crippled. That woman was not crippled physically. She was crippled by the work of a demon in her life. So, we see that demonic possession and oppression can occasionally manifest itself not in making someone a howling crazy man but in physical conditions that produce suffering.

Some people have tried to claim the boy in this story simply suffered from a case of epilepsy. The problem is the Bible clearly distinguishes between physical sickness and demonically-originated sickness. If this boy did have a severe case of epilepsy, this epilepsy didn't come from a physical problem. Its origin was the presence of a demon in this little boy's life.

So we need to remember that sometimes physical sickness and suffering is caused by a physical problem. Other times physical sickness and suffering can be caused by demonic oppression or possession, like we see in this little boy. The root cause of a physical problem can be a demonic problem.



Let's see what else this demon did to this precious boy. When the demon took control of him in a seizure, it threw him to the ground where he foamed at the mouth and ground his teeth. He became rigid. It would be terrible to watch your child having these demonic seizures. Can you imagine watching your child bite his tongue as he grinds his teeth and seeing the blood run from his mouth? Can you imagine watching him throw himself on the ground, his head striking the edges of tables and counters, and he fell to the floor so he was cut and bruised. Then he foamed at the mouth and rolled uncontrollably on the floor banging around smashing into sharp or hard objects? Luke, who was a doctor, in his parallel account of this story gives us an even more vivid medical description of what this demon was doing to this boy.

And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out. It convulses him so that he foams at the mouth, and shatters him, and will hardly leave him. Luke 9:39 (ESV)

Luke says this demon shattered him. Shattered is a very strong word in the Greek. It means to crush something, breaking it into tiny pieces. This is what happens to a football player in the NFL that is tackled from multiple sides at once. We have all seen those tackles where someone is hit so hard his helmet flies off his head and he spins in the air like a rag doll. He lands on the ground and the huge football player can barely move because he was tackled so hard he was completely crushed to pieces. That is this little boy. The demon convulsed him in these seizures so hard that he shook uncontrollably smashing himself into things so hard that he is left battered, bruised, beaten, and bloodied. When the seizure was over, like the tackled football player, he could barely get off the ground.

Luke also tells us this demon hardly ever left him. These demonic seizures didn't happen once every six months or even once a week. They were happening constantly. This little boy got no rest. He hadn't even caught his breath from one demonic seizure, then another started. His cuts and bruises had no time to heal. It was bruise on bruise. Cuts started to heal and were torn open again. The swelling from the bumps on his head when he banged around on the floor from his last seizure had no time to go down before the demon forced him to hit himself in the same place on the head again. This was heartbreaking to watch, especially for this boy's father.

Matthew tells us how this father felt about his son when he approached Jesus. He was a desperate dad.

[And when they came to the crowd, a man came up to him and, kneeling before him... Matthew 17:14 \(ESV\)](#)

This father was on his knees begging Jesus to heal his son. I don't know how long this father was begging the nine disciples to heal his son. We do know this man was now desperately begging Jesus to heal his son and give his boy some relief. Luke makes this situation even more desperate. Luke 9:38 tells us this boy was the man's only child. This father had dedicated his entire life to caring for his demon-possessed little boy.

Later we will see this demon's purpose was not just to torment this boy, but the demon intended to kill this boy. The demon would put him into a seizure so he lost control of his body. When the demon was controlling his body in the seizure, the demon would force this boy to throw himself into fire or water to kill him. This young boy was repeatedly burned in campfires. He was no doubt as a

child covered by scars and disfiguring burns. You can imagine the terror this boy experienced in these seizures. He felt the demon taking control of his body forcing him to do things he didn't want to do. He saw the campfire feet away and he felt his feet walking that direction. He wanted to scream in horror but he couldn't because the demon had him gagged, making him mute. Imagine the terror as this little boy watched the demon throw him into a burning fire to end his life.

Each time the demon threw this boy in the fire to kill him, guess who came to the rescue? His dad. His father reached his bare hands in the fire grabbing his son to save his life. Dad did this repeatedly, burning his own hands to save his little boy's life.

This demon also made this boy throw himself into bodies of water when in this convulsing state in order to kill him. Each time the demon threw this boy into a body of water to drown him, there was always a second splash. It was this boy's father jumping in the water to save his life. It didn't matter what time of the day or the night, this dad was there to save his boy. He was there to protect and care for his boy as he experienced these horrifying seizures. I suspect this father held his son every night trying to calm him and protect him in the next demonic attack.

So we have a desperate father, who traveled miles with his son to have the demon cast out. The father begged the disciples to cast out the demon, but they couldn't. Each of them failed miserably.

What makes this strange is the disciples were accustomed to casting out demons before this happened. Jesus gave them the power to cast out demons in Mark 6, and after that, they were always successful. Look what it says about the disciples in Mark 6 after Jesus gave them the ability to cast out demons.

And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them. Mark 6:13 (ESV)

It always worked for them to cast out demons before time. What went wrong with this one? That brings us to our next problem.

### **The problem of unbelief.**

And he answered them, “O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you?” Mark 9:19 (ESV)

This is not a normal greeting. The “O” is an expression of emotional exasperation on the part of Jesus. Jesus was telling his disciples they were a faithless generation. Nobody had faith that Jesus could take care of this situation. Jesus said, “How long do I have to put up with you? How long do I have to be with you? How long will it be until you learn how to handle these situations? I don’t have much time left with you.”

Luke, in his parallel account, told us Jesus said to the disciples, “You are a perverted generation.” That doesn’t mean anything kinky or weird. It simply means, “How did you guys get so screwed up so fast? I wasn’t even gone a week and things are falling apart.” This is the same thing a mom says when she is gone for the weekend and when she comes home the house is a mess. How can you guys make such a big mess in such a short time?

Bring him to me. And they brought the boy to him. And when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. Mark 9:19–20 (ESV)

Jesus took control. “Bring the boy to me.” As the boy was brought to Jesus, the demon immediately went into action. The boy fell on the ground and began rolling around, foaming at the mouth.

One thing I saw in this part of the story that I want us to notice is this demon reacted differently to Jesus than other demons. In Mark 1, when there was a demon-possessed man in the synagogue, when that demon saw Jesus, it screamed in fear. In Mark 5, when the Gadarene demoniac saw Jesus, even though the man was filled with thousands of demons, the man fell down at the feet of Jesus and was trembling. This demon was different. He was obstinate. He was stubborn. Rather than cowering in fear in front of Jesus, this hard-nosed demon went back to attacking and destroying this boy right in front of Jesus! This demon was different than others. While all demons are under the authority of Jesus, this particular demon didn’t have any respect for the authority of Jesus. This is probably why the disciples couldn’t cast it out in the first place.

And Jesus asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?” And he said, “From childhood. And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him.” Mark 9:21–22a (ESV)

Why did Jesus ask the father this question? If the demon had oppressed the boy for five years or five months, would it have made a difference to Jesus? Absolutely not! Why did Jesus ask the father this question? I think the reason Jesus asked this question is because Jesus is not a power who just heals. He is a person who genuinely cares. Jesus cared about this father as his son. Jesus wanted to hear about this father’s pain. Jesus genuinely cared about this young boy. Jesus was not just going to heal this boy, but he wanted to hear this father’s story because he cared about this father and son. He wept over their pain.

If there is one thing that comes out clearly in all of Jesus' miracles it is that Jesus doesn't just want to heal people. He cares about people. He cares so much that he wants to hear their stories. That is not just true for this father, but it is true for you and me. I don't know what pain you are facing today. Maybe concerns about your children keep you up at night. Maybe it is difficulties at work that have you filled with anxiety. Who listens? Who genuinely cares and is not bored when you cry on his shoulder? Jesus. Jesus cares about your pain and he wants to hear your story.

...But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." And Jesus said to him, " 'If you can'! All things are possible for one who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!" Mark 9:22b–24 (ESV)

The father said, "If you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us."

Jesus said, "If you can!" Notice that is not a question. That is an exclamation. Jesus was saying, "You have to be kidding. Do you think the demon that possesses your son is a problem for me to cast out? How can you be asking that question? All things are possible for one who believes." God can do anything for one who simply comes to Jesus asking for his help.

Jesus said, "The reason your son was not healed before is not because I don't have the ability to heal. It is because there was a lack of faith in me to heal." The issue was not that God doesn't have the power to heal this boy. The issue was the disciples weren't turning in faith to Jesus and asking for God to cast the demon out of the boy.

This is an especially important lesson for the disciples. The reason they couldn't cast out this demon was not because they didn't have the power available to them. The issue was they kept trying to rely on their own gifts and their own strength rather than in faith calling to Jesus, asking for his power and his strength.

Remember what Jesus was doing. He was preparing his disciples how to live when he was not around. Here he was teaching them what to do when they found themselves facing something that was greater than their gifts and abilities could handle. What should they do? Instead of constantly relying on themselves, in faith, they needed to turn to God and ask for his strength and power to handle issues that were beyond them.

So this father got it. Somebody needed to place his faith and trust in Jesus' ability to cast out this demon rather than in his own ability to cast out the demon. The father had not been able to get rid of the demon in his own strength. The disciples had not been able to get rid of the demon in their own strength, but Jesus has the power and strength. The father immediately placed all of his faith in Jesus to get rid of the demon.

Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!" Mark 9:24 (ESV)

The words cry out are interesting. It is a translation of a very strong word in the Greek. The word is the exact opposite of half-heartedness. It is a cry of desperation. It is the moment one thing becomes worth everything. This was the one thing that mattered in this father's life. This was the father crying out to Jesus in prayer, in faith asking Jesus to save his son.

I love what the father said next. He said “help my unbelief.” “Jesus, I believe in you and that you have the power to cast the demon out of my son, but I know I don’t believe perfectly. My faith and trust in you sometimes wavers. I know I don’t have perfect faith. I have struggling faith. I pray that I have enough faith to access your limitless power to cast the demon out of my boy.”

What I love is Jesus was OK with this. Jesus did not expect this man to have perfect faith. Jesus does not expect you or me to have perfect faith. All of us have faith mixed with doubt and fears, but for Jesus, that imperfect faith is sufficient faith for the power of God to heal his son.

And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.” And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, “He is dead.” Mark 9:25–26 (ESV)

At this point, the crowd was starting to gather. Everyone wanted to see what would happen. Since Jesus is past the first half of this Gospel, he was not performing miracles for crowds to see. He was performing miracles for his disciples to see, because he was training them. So before a big crowd arrived, Jesus commanded the demon to come out of the boy and to never harass him again.

We have already learned this particular demon was stubborn. Unlike other demons that cowered in fear in front of Jesus, this demon went to work tormenting the young boy in front of Jesus. The same thing took place here. When Jesus commanded this stubborn demon to come out of the boy, instead of immediately coming out, the demon kicked his torment of the boy into overdrive. It says the demon sent the boy into terrible convulsions. In Greek, the word



terrible is very descriptive language. It means convulsions that were worse than this boy has experienced ever before. Right in front of Jesus, even after Jesus told the demon to come out this boy, he shook, convulsed and tormented this boy worse than ever.

Then, in an instant, the demon was gone. He was forced to obey. The boy laid on the ground limp and lifeless, bloody, beaten, bruised, and broken. He was so exhausted and beaten from these demonic seizures that he looked dead.

**But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. Mark 9:27 (ESV)**

In the quiet moments after the torment was over, Jesus reached down, grabbed this boy's hand and lifted him up, like he took the hand of Jairus' dead daughter and brought her back to life. I don't know if it happened, but I suspect that when Jesus touched the bloody hand of this boy, he gave him health, life, healing and strength so this little boy could stand. I love what the Gospel of Luke tells us happened next.

**But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. Luke 9:42 (ESV)**

Picture this moment. The father pulling his son into his chest. Can you see the tears running down this dad's face? Can you see the heaving of his chest as he sobbed for joy? For the first time since childhood, the muteness and deafness of his son was gone. They could speak to one another. His little boy wasn't rigid and foaming at the mouth, he was squeezing his dad as tight as he could. I am sure this little boy said, "I love you Dad. Thank you for never giving up on me. Thank you for all the times you reached into fires and burned your hands to save my life. Thank you for all the times you dove into water to save my life. Thank you

Dad for all the times I was in demonic rage and terror, you never let me go.” If you think the gratitude and love from a son to a father in this moment is overwhelming to imagine, there was even more gratitude from both a son and a father to Jesus for saving this boy’s life.

There is only one question that remains, and it is a big one. Why couldn’t the disciples cast out this demon? That brings us to our third point.

### **The problem of prayerlessness.**

And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?” And he said to them, “This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.” Mark 9:28–29 (ESV)

We don’t know what house they went into, but in the Gospel of Mark, whenever the disciples enter a house, it was always a time for Jesus to give private instruction to his disciples. Jesus said there was a simple reason why they could not drive out this demon. It was because they never bothered to pray. Imagine that. Apostles that spent years with Jesus didn’t know that when Jesus was gone and there was a problem that was more than they could handle, all they needed to do was stop and pray. If they prayed, the presence and power of Jesus would be with them. The presence and power of Jesus through prayer would have been enough to cast out this demon.

### **Conclusion**

This brings us to the point of the story.

**When we find ourselves in situations that are more than we can handle, in prayer, turn to Jesus instead of relying on our own strength.**

The disciples had the gift of casting out demons. They used that gift quite well in Mark 6. When they ran across this particularly stubborn demon, they kept relying on their own strength rather than turning in prayer to Jesus asking for his help and his strength. In essence, the disciples were prideful. They thought they could do everything on their own. They were too proud to pray. If they had been humble and desperate like this father who was willing to offer a simple desperate prayer to Jesus, that would have been enough to more than handle this stubborn demon.

This lesson applies to each of us. At work, it is easy to try to always rely on our natural gifts to solve all problems and never ask for God's help. Maybe you are an engineer at work. As an engineer, your job is to solve problems. When you have problems that are more than you can handle, your default is to try harder. This passage tells us that as Christians, we are to first go to Jesus in prayer before we keep relying on ourselves.

Maybe you are a Life Group leader and in your Life Group a problem comes up. Your first reaction is to solve it in your wisdom and in your power. If you don't have the answer, Google will have the answer. This passage teaches us that when we find ourselves facing things that are beyond us, like the disciples, we are to go to Jesus in prayer, not just rely on ourselves.

God places us in situations beyond our ability to teach us to pray so we learn to depend on Him.

Did you ever think Jesus was gone for a reason when this went down? Did you ever think Jesus planned for his nine disciples to be alone when they met this little boy possessed by a stubborn demon that wouldn't respect their authority? I think Jesus put the nine disciples in this situation so they would learn why they needed to pray to Jesus for help in these kinds of situations instead of relying on themselves.

Nothing is different today. Jesus is still in the business of teaching us to pray and to rely on him instead of ourselves. To do that, God occasionally intentionally puts us in situations that are beyond our ability to handle so we will learn to turn to him in prayer.

All of us will face situations that are beyond our ability to handle. God puts us in those times. The question is, when we face those times what will we do? Will we be like the disciples and try to keep handling things on our own because we are too proud to pray, or will we be like this humble desperate father and cry out to Jesus for the help only he can provide? Whose path will you follow? The proud disciples' or the desperate father's?



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