

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

A Message of Hope and Fulfillment For Those Longing For God

"Always Be Prepared"

Luke 9: 37-45

The event in this story made a significant impression on the disciples and it is recorded in all three synoptic Gospels. It occurs immediately after the transfiguration as Jesus and the three (Peter, James, & John) are coming down from the mountain. Again, it is best to read it in all three Gospels in order to gain the full picture of the event, particularly since Luke's account is the most abbreviated of the three.

While there are many interesting and practical points that we may gain from this deliverance event, the main focus seems to be the problem with the disciples lack of success and the spiritual temperament of the crowd in general.

I. Noteworthy Observations

- A. The setting: possibly Caesarea-Philippi, possibly the market place, a very public setting
- B. The problem: a man's older and only son has a demon that causes him to be mute, deaf, and epileptic
- C. The boy's trouble, all of the physical symptoms, can occur from purely bodily disease, but in this case are caused by a demon of impurity (impure/unclean, from childhood—not from birth)
- D. The disciples are unable to cast out the wicked spirit, even though they had very recently been on a mission where they had cast out demons
- E. The general attitude of the crowd, the disciples, and the father is one of a lack of faith

II. Maintaining a State of Spiritual Preparation & Readiness

The real problem in this event is that neither the disciples, nor the crowds (including many other followers of Jesus) are able to handle the crisis because they are not prepared.

- A. You unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you and put up with you?
 1. They lack faith
 - a. faith is a necessity when coming to God (Heb 11:6)
 - b. it must be particular faith, not general faith
 - c. it comes from hearing the Word of Christ (Rom 10:17)
 2. They are perverted
 - a. perverted — *διαστρέφω diastrepho*
Meaning: to distort, twist, turn backward, *misinterpret, corrupt*
 - b. to put something to a use for which it was not intended
 - c. we were designed for constant spiritual communion with God, worldly perspective and pre-occupation is a perversion of our created purpose
- B. This kind does not come out except by prayer and fasting. (cf.: Mt & Mk)
 1. What is the point of Jesus' explanation to the disciples? He neither prayed nor fasted for this immediate situation.
 2. Practicing the presence of God: understanding the dynamics of a life lived out of deliberate cultivation of spiritual depth and communion with God. This includes:
 - a. seeking Him in and through His written Word
 - b. spending sufficient time with Him to be able to discern clearly His voice when He speaks (Heb 5:12-14)
 - c. living a life of loving obedience so that our heart does not condemn us and faith comes easily (1 Jn 3:18-22)

On the next day, when they came down from the mountain, a large crowd met Him. And a man from the crowd shouted, saying, "Teacher, I beg You to look at my son, for he is my only boy, and a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly screams, and it throws him into a convulsion with foaming at the mouth; and only with difficulty does it leave him, mauling him as it leaves. I begged Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not." And Jesus answered and said, "You unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you and put up with you? Bring your son here." While he 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. And they were all amazed at the greatness of God. But while everyone was marveling at all that He was doing, He said to His disciples, "Let these words sink into your ears; for the Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men." But they did not understand this statement, and it was concealed from them so that they would not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this statement.

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When they came to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and the teachers of the law arguing with them. As soon

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the spiritual disciplines involved in spiritual preparation?
2. What determines whether or not our spiritual disciplines are actually effective in developing spiritual depth? (In other words, is it possible to do all the right things and still be spiritually shallow, and if so, why?)
3. If faith is crucial in the demonstration of the power of God, explain the difference between miracles worked by [our] faith and miracles worked by God.
4. Why is it so important to be able to hear the voice of Christ when confronted with a spiritual crisis?
5. How do we mediate the presence of God in the world in times of spiritual need? (In other words, what is our role in God's work?)

NOTES

as all the people saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with wonder and ran to greet him. "What are you arguing with them about?" he asked. A man in the crowd answered, "Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not." "You unbelieving generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me." So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth. Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has he been like this?" "From childhood," he answered. "It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us." "If you can?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for one who believes." Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!" When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the impure spirit. "You deaf and mute spirit," he said, "I command you, come out of him and never enter him again." The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, "He's dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up. After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, "Why couldn't we drive it out?" He replied, "This kind can come out only by prayer."

Mark 9: 14-29 NIV