

Sermon Outlines

Victory Through Faith

Reading:

Mark 9

This history of our Lord's dealing with a demon-possessed boy teaches us about the need for much prayer. The conclusion of the matter was well stated, "This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting" (v.29).

These words are a timeless rebuke to the powerless disciples showing that without the Lord they could do nothing. This is also the message to us in our times of defeat. We shall all look back over our years of Christian service and lament that we did not learn this lesson sooner and do something about it.

What a contrast we have from the heaven-like event on the Mount Transfiguration where the disciples said, "it is good for us to be here," with the misery and tears of this horrid case of demon possession. Oh to be in a world where there is no devil and no suffering.

This case of the Lord casting out a demon from a young boy shows the Lord's complete dominion over Satan. The devil has never won a battle when facing up to the Son of God. Victory is always sure when the battle is the Lord's.

To understand the fulness of this victory over the powers of hell we need to consider the following facts:

1) The extreme difficulty of this case

- a) There was the absence of the Lord while the three disciples were in the Mount Transfiguration. (v.14)
- b) There was the atheism of the scribes (v.16) .
- c) There was the possession of Satan over this boy's life (v.20). When it says that He had "a dumb spirit" it meant much more than the loss of speech. A real devil was dwelling in this boy's body. We know that from v.25, where the Lord charged the dumb and deaf spirit to "come out of him."

The Father's description vividly portrays the possession of the boy by this evil spirit. See v.18.

- i) Satan led the boy.
- ii) Satan tore the boy.
- iii) Satan wasted the boy. He "pined away." Others times this is translated, "withered". His life was declining and certainly was not developing physically. This was a visible complaint.

Satan persisted in possessing him "from a child" (v.21). And the next verse shows that he endured repeated attacks, which cast him into the fire and into waters all with the intent to destroy him. Satan is no friend to humanity.

- d) There was the anxiety of the father. "Have compassion on us." (v.22b). The father's life was bound up in the child. The child's pain tormented the Dad as much as the child. To stand by helplessly watching his boy suffer was like a living death to him too.
- e) There was the inability of the disciples (v.18b). For the disciples, this was a lesson in their own failure. Embarrassing, humbling and defeating the case was too great for them. They were soon to learn that only by drawing power from the Lord could they meet the need of this hour.

We must not miss the application to our own hearts. We have no power of our own. We need the Lord to intervene and we need to learn the need for prayer. If we can learn that lesson this failure of the disciples will serve us well.

1) The demands of faith.

- a) Faithlessness rebuked. The Lord rebuked all in the crowd, including the scribes. He called them a "faithless generation." (v.19). The Lord spoke as if tedious of their unbelief which tested the Lord's longsuffering.
- b) The father's faith revealed. (v.23)
 - i) By his immediate cry. "And straightway the father of the child cried out."

Sermon Outlines
Victory Through Faith

- ii) By his earnest tears. "and said with tears"
- iii) By his personal trust. "I believe" - This was his unreserved confidence, no matter what others thought or said.
- iv) By his humble testimony. "Help my unbelief."

Faith is the key to knowing the power of the Lord. He will not work without our confidence in His power.

J.C. Ryle asked, "What shall we do with our faith? We must use it. Weak, trembling, doubting feeble as it may be, we must use it. We must not wait till it is great, perfect, and mighty, but like the man before us, turn it to account, and hope that one day it will be more strong.

What shall we do with our unbelief? We must resist it, and pray against it. We must not allow it to keep us back from Christ. We must take it to Christ, as we take all other sins and infirmities, and cry to Him for deliverance. Like the man before us we must cry, 'Lord help my unbelief.'"

3) The Demonstration of the Lord's power is to be seen in the devil being cast out of the boy.

- a) * Note the Lord's charge to the devil. (v.25)
- b) * Note the destructive manner of the demon's final departure. (v.26)
- c) * Note the need for prayer and fasting (v.29). This was the Lord's answer to the disciples' question, Why could we not cast him out? This is a sobering reminder that without prayer we are powerless against the powers of darkness. But we rejoice that none is too great for the Lord.

This whole event is a confidence booster in the power of our Lord and another argument to move us to wrestle in prayer till the answer is given. What a mighty blessing came to that father and son. He was given new life and new liberty.

I am compelled to give a full quote from the writings of J.C. Ryle on this deep and dark event that was turned into such glory for Christ and His church. He stated,

"There is a lesson of deep importance here which we must not overlook. We must labour to do good to our children even from their earliest years. If Satan begins so early to do them harm, we must not be behind him in diligence to lead them to God. How soon if life a child becomes responsible and accountable, is a difficult question to solve. Perhaps far sooner than many of us suppose. One thing, at all events, is very clear: it is never too soon to strive and pray for the salvation of the souls of children - never too soon to speak to them as moral beings, and tell them of God, and Christ, and right, and wrong. The devil, we may be quite sure, loses no time in endeavoring to influence the minds of young people. He begins with them even "of a child". Let us work hard to counteract him. If young hearts can be filled by Satan, they can also be filled with the Spirit of God."

. . . Ian Goligher