

Our Little Faith and God's Mercy

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[Mark 9:17-27] Then one of the crowd answered and said, "Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit. 18 And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. So I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not." 19 He answered him and said, "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me." 20 Then they brought him to Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth. 21 So He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. 22 And often he has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." 23 Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes." 24 Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" 25 When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!" 26 Then the spirit cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead, so that many said, "He is dead." 27 But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.

This healing event occurred immediately after the so-called 'mount of transformation' visit to a high mountain in northern Israel where Lord Jesus was changed to His glorified appearance before three of the disciples. When they came down from the mountain, there came a man who brought his demon-possessed son and asked Jesus to drive out the demon. Here, when the man made his request to Lord Jesus, he said, "*If you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us [v. 22].*" He must have considered Lord Jesus as a prophet who had some healing power. Although this man had a strong love for his son and very much longed to have the son's problem removed, he did not believe Jesus was the Almighty Son of God who came to the world as the Savior of mankind.

In this world even today, many parents have children with various incurable ailments, particularly mental problems that torment the children. Perhaps some of you have such children. You have done all you can to help cure the child – taken him to famous doctors, had him undergo psychiatric treatments, therapies including acupuncture and herbal medicines. Some of your children continue suffering even after they have grown as adults, holding jobs as professionals, and yet the evil spirits continue to torment them. You as parents watch them suffer but find yourselves helpless and incapable of helping them, just like this father of the demon-possessed young man. And you come to God and plead Him to remove the evil spirit from your child.

But, when we come to God, we come with limited faith with a certain amount of doubt and reservation about whether God will heal my child with His power, although we might fully believe that He certainly has the power to do so as the Almighty God. So, we plead to God with limited faith, yet with a yearning to receive help, just as this man in Israel did, "Have mercy on us and help us." And we ask in a grudge-filled manner, "I have done many things seeking help for my child – I have taken him to a psychiatrist, acupuncturist, counselor, therapist, and even to our church pastor. Yet, none of them could heal his problem. Heavenly Father, please have mercy on us and remove this age-old problem of my child!"

Hearing this man's pleading made with limited faith, Lord Jesus scolds him, "*If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes [v. 23].*" What was at issue here was not whether Lord Jesus had the power to heal the boy but whether the man as the boy's father had the faith to believe that Jesus has the power to heal his son. We tend to come to God as a last resort upon having done what we can. When we come, we think of all that we have done and are sorry that God has not helped our efforts. The truth is that we do this and that with our plans, intents, and confidence in our ability to solve the problem or issue. We do not entrust the problem before God at first and ask Him to help us and teach us how to solve the problem.

This man, upon hearing the Lord's scolding, repented immediately and realized that he had come to the Messiah with doubt and little faith. He sought forgiveness for his unbelief. When we come to God with our

problems but with doubt and limited faith, God is not pleased with our attitude. And He wants to correct our spiritual problem first before dealing with the problem we present to Him. Lord Jesus had compassion on this repentant man and his son, and He drove out the evil spirit from the boy and made him whole. The divine mercy has been fully exhibited on this day to this father and son. He will show His mercy to us also when we come to Him with our problems in complete faith in His power and compassion.

[Psalm 103: 11-14] For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him.

12 As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.

13 As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear Him.

14 For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.

God's mercy reaches all mankind, particularly His children. Just as parents have special love and mercy toward their children, God shows special care, love, and compassion toward His own people. Nevertheless, whether we are Christians or not, when we call on God's name and plead before Him with our problems having to do with our loving children and ask Him to help us in sincere spirit and full faith in His power over all affairs of this world, He will draw near and listen. Then, He will help us in His divinely wise ways. This man in northern Israel not only received help for his demon-possessed son but also came to receive a special spiritual vision of knowing Jesus as the Savior of mankind. A true blessing came to this man and his family on this day.

24 Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!"

We can also come before God and plead for His help. Then, He will help us with our children just as Lord Jesus healed this man's demon-possessed son.

Our Father and God, I ask that you remove the evil spirit from my child, who has been possessed by an evil spirit that has been tormenting him. He is obsessed with bad memories of the past, holding onto grudges on some wrongs that others might have inflicted unknowingly. He has forgotten what blessings he has been bestowed from God and the many sacrifices her parents made in love for him, and has lost the joy and vision of salvation. His heart is filled with grudges and hates only, and this is bringing sadness and grief to her family. Lord God, please save him from this evil pit he has fallen into. Just as Lord Jesus helped this man with a demon-possessed son in Israel long ago, I plead that you help our family and heal my son of the evil spirit. I believe that You have the power to help and will help us. Amen.

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