

Text: Mark 9:14-30

Theme: I Believe, Help my Unbelief!

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father, and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

My dear beloved flock, the text for our meditation this morning is the Holy Gospel according to St. Mark the ninth chapter verses fourteen through thirty.

Good Morning Boys and girls, how are you doing this morning? Good to hear! How strong are you? Can you lift this book? Could you lift up a building? The world's strongest man to date is a man by the name of Louis Cyr. He lived from 1863-1912. He once back lifted (lifting a load off of raised supports using the back)) a large platform holding eighteen (18) large men, weighing in total 4,337 pounds. Do you think you are that strong? What about Jesus? How strong is Jesus? Ponder that as we hear the rest of the sermon. You may go back to your seats and those who love you.

Does Jesus have Power?

Can Jesus do anything? Does He have any power at all? His disciples, those who were given power and authority over demons could not do anything in the face of this deaf and mute demon who was terrorizing this poor boy. Are they representations of Jesus' own power? Can He actually help?

These questions are at the core of our text for today. Jesus has come down from the Mount of Transfiguration. He has shown to Peter, James, and John His brightly shining divinity. Only to be confronted with the problem of this poor, demon possessed boy. His disciples are powerless to do anything, so the boy's father turns to Jesus. He begs Jesus to do something, anything, to heal his boy, if He can.

Yes He does!

If, such a large word, if He can. Of course, Jesus can. He is God in the flesh. By His very word, He formed the heavens and the earth. By His power, He upholds creations and keeps it together. He walks upon the waters, feeds the hungry with a small five loaves and two fish. Jesus cures the deaf, heals the lame, gives sight to the blind, raises the dead. Of course, Jesus can do it.

This leads to the father's great plead, "I believe. Help my unbelief." He believes Jesus can heal his son but his faith is weak. He still has doubts. He still wonders and ponders. In his poignant response, the father was not praying that his faith be helped until it was "strong enough" for Jesus to do something. Rather, he was confessing his weakness and asking that his son would be healed anyway. And Jesus demonstrated that the man's faith or lack thereof, was no obstacle to him. He commanded the unclean spirit to get out and never come back! And the spirit obeyed because the spirit had no choice

We sometimes doubt, seems like bad is in control.

How many times have you been like this poor father? We are a long way in time from Jesus walking upon the earth. Jesus no longer physically walks among us now. You believe yet still, you wonder and question. It seems as though evil and the devil is winning, are they? Can Jesus help us now? Does He have any authority at all over your sickness and disease? Can He do anything about the death of your loved one? Will He use His authority to help you or no? Does He even care? The temptation is very easy for us to give into doubt. We do not see God's mighty power actively physically. People still get sick, people still die, and do not rise again from the dead. Wars and fighting still happen, earthquakes, famine, drought. We still wrestle with

our sinful flesh and our own horrible sins. We struggle seeing evil supposedly triumph while good dies. The cry of the father is personally familiar: *“Lord, I believe! Help my unbelief!”* That is: “Demonstrate your authority! Show us your power!”

Jesus shows us His power and love.

Jesus does show His power. He does so in a way that we do not expect. He answers the father’s plead and shows His power by casting out the spirit from this boy. He ultimately shows that He loves and cares for you by using His power for your good. Jesus goes to the cross, suffers, bleeds, and dies in your place. Jesus takes upon Himself all of your sins, and mine, bears the punishment for them, and raises again from the dead as proof that His sacrifice is acceptable in the sight of God the Father. Jesus has all authority and power, having ascended to the right hand of God, He rules and reigns over the earth and church for you and your ultimate good.

Jesus cares about you and loves you. That is why He died and rose from the dead for you. Jesus has forgiven you of all of your sins, and in the midst of trouble does not abandon you to doubt. Rather, He is with you, giving you His strength and peace that surpasses all understanding. How do you know all of this? Because Jesus still sends to you in your midst Pastors and preachers to continually declare these great facts. Remember that I am here on the authority of the resurrected Jesus, the Jesus who now lives and reigns from heaven, in whose name and in whose stead I speak. And so it is his authoritative word I bring when I tell you that he has forgiven your sins! He has the authority to forgive you and he has! You were given that promise in your Baptism, you receive it as from our Lord himself in Holy Communion, and here and now you hear his decision again.

“I believe, Help my unbelief!” Your crucified, risen, and ascended Lord does indeed help you. He is with you in your weakness, giving you His strength and the forgiveness of every single one of your sins. He washes you clean in Holy Baptism, and feeds and strengthens you with His blessed meal, body and soul unto life everlasting.

May the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard and keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.