

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Road Map

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Mark 9:14-27

September 16 & 17, 2017

Jesus, I do trust you. Help me overcome my unbelief.

- **Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"**
- Can you identify? From experience?
 - ♦ Illness, disaster, family problems, employment challenges
 - ♦ Faith challenges and doubts don't only exist under trials & temptations.
 - ♦ Tempting to think: *What doubts and unbelief, when believing is easy?*
 - ♦ This is not just a crisis prayer! Let's make it a constant prayer.

Jesus, I do trust you. Help me overcome my unbelief.

- ❖ **"Everything is possible for one who believes."** What does this mean?
 - This passage/idea is quoted (misquoted) more frequently than our theme.
 - It is grossly misused and twisted. 2 main ways:
 - ♦ Believing requires an object, something to trust in.
 - It is popular to **believe in believing**: As if *believing makes it happen*.
 - Putting out positive energy. Believing in the *power of prayer*.
 - Wishing makes it so. As if our believing shapes history. We're god?
 - ♦ Believing is **my work**. It is *only possible* if I *truly genuinely believe*.
 - See the **power in the believing**. Doubt, any doubt, limits the power.
 - If it doesn't happen, it's your fault for doubting.
 - This is the theology of the *faith healer*. **Jesus is a healer of faith**.
- ❖ Jesus points out the sin of unbelief so he can help and heal us.
 - **"You unbelieving generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you?"**
 - ♦ Sounds very harsh. Recall all Jesus did and said for 2+ years
 - ♦ Time is running out. **Unbelief is serious**. It has negative consequences.
 - ♦ **Unbelief is sin**. Faith trusts God. Unbelief doubts, questions, challenges.
 - Faith/belief requires an object.
 - ♦ The object of living faith is the Living God.
 - ♦ God's believers trust **God**, his **reputation**, his **word**.
 - Observe the unbelief of the First Sin
 - ♦ Eve did not trust God's reputation: love, faithful, friendship
 - ♦ Eve didn't trust God's word, wisdom, and warning for her good.
 - ♦ Eve trusted the Serpent's insights and her ability to know good.
 - ♦ Every sin doubts God's love, faithfulness, wisdom and word - visa versa

- ❖ Faith trusts the **"all things are possible with God"** God - Mark 10:27
 - Fools trust gods of myths. Trust St. Anthony to find the lost things. St. Joseph to sell my house. Superstition to bring good luck and bring curses. Karma to bring the kindness I give back to me.
 - ♦ None of these are God. They don't rule the universe. False faith = fool
 - The Living God - Yahweh - The Triune God - Jesus - proven
 - ♦ Our God, the only real God, has a long history/track record
 - ♦ 1st Lesson: **Yahweh, he is God**. *Like Ba'al all other gods are nothing*.
 - ♦ Jesus cares for us, is forgiving, merciful, is able & does act for good
 - ♦ Jesus is headed to the ultimate proof: die for us and rise to give us life.
 - ♦ Trust this God. He is God. He is trustworthy. Wise. Always good.
 - ♦ Faith wisely trusts **"all things are possible with God"** **God alone**
 - Faith turns away from doubt, *thinking I know better what's real/good*
- ❖ Jesus came to rescue us from unbelief and doubt
 - The Savior from sin seeks to save us from unbelief and doubt.
 - Unbelief & doubt separates us from God. I deny him lordship there.
 - ♦ Where unbelief resides - faith, God's Word, new life can't live.
 - How can a believer also be a doubter?
 - ♦ Many falsely assume you are one or the other.
 - ♦ They forget about the reality: *At the same time both saint and sinner*.
 - All are born with an Old Self. Born of God we get a New Self also.
 - In this life we never totally get rid of the Old Self.
 - Old Self = unbelief/doubt/hostility to God, death, *sin living in me*
 - New Self = trust, new life, a living faith, heart in harmony with God
 - ♦ That's why: *Jesus, I do trust you. Help me overcome my unbelief*.
 - Jesus alone can save me from my joy & peace robbing doubt
 - What do we do when we doubt - I wonder if I am really a believer?
 - Do I know Jesus is true God, who saved me? *Yes*
 - Do I want to be saved from sin and death to be God's child? *Yes*
 - Rejoice! God worked faith in you! Trust him - **not your faith!**
 - We are not saved **because** of our faith.
 - We are saved **through God's gift of faith** - reliance of Jesus as our God, our Savior, our protector, providers - giver of all good.
 - Trust this promise: God works everything for your good: now - heaven - the resurrection and New Heaven and Earth. No other God offers that. None could offer it.
 - Doubt evaporates in the presence of Jesus' promises & faithful love

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