

SERMON: WHEN IT GETS WORSE BEFORE IT GETS BETTER

Mark 9:21-27

(21) And He asked his father, How long is it ago since this came upon him? And he said, Of a child. (22) And oftimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us. (23) Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. (24) And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief. (25) When Jesus saw that the people came running together; He rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. (26) And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead. (27) But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose.

Introduction

The miracles of Jesus served several different purposes. Of course, the miracles were performed to solve a particular problem or to help those who were in need. The miracles or signs were also wrought to teach future generations lessons on how to achieve abundant, productive living. When Jesus fed the masses with a small lad's lunch, He was teaching that even small things in the hands of the Master can make a great positive impact on others. When Jesus healed the woman with the issue of blood, He was teaching that persistence in seeking Him will definitively pay off in a big way.

The miracle of our text teaches that even when Jesus is working to solve a problem, things may get worse before they get better. Sometimes things get a lot worse before they get better. This is a point that we should never forget.

In this miracle, Jesus had just returned from the Mount of Transfiguration and encountered a father who had a demon possessed son. All three of the Synoptic Gospels record the boy's terrible symptoms. He had severe convulsions, foaming at the mouth, and grinding of his teeth. Because of the suddenness of the unexpected, long seizures, he often fell into the fire and into the water. In addition, the boy could not hear or produce articulate speech. The father petitioned Jesus for help because the nine disciples, who did not accompany Jesus to the mountain, had failed to provide deliverance for his son. After inquiring about the boy's condition, Jesus noticed that a crowd of "onlookers" was getting larger. He then took immediate action. Jesus gave the demon a "cease and desist" order. The boy began shrieking, became violent, convulsed, and then became like a corpse. The onlookers thought he was dead. It looked like Jesus had made things worse. Jesus took the unconscious boy by the hand,

raised him up, and delivered him to his father; thus, completing His work of healing grace.

Exposition

1. Jesus Has His Own Way of Bringing About Deliverance.

(“Let Him Do What He Do.”)

(“In His Own Time, He Will Get the Job Did.”)

(Slang Is Intended for Emphases.)

2. The Scribes Were Hoping Jesus Would Fail Like His Disciples.

(There Will Always Be People Rooting For You.)

(There Will Always Be People Rooting Against You.)

(It Behooves Us To Seek To Do Our Best At All Times.)

3. Things Are Not Always What They Seem To Be.

(We Live In A World Of Slogans And Sound Bits.)

(Initially, It Looked Like Jesus Was More Incompetent Than The Disciples.)

(Case-By-Case Analysis Is Necessary To Avoid Misimpressions.)

(Think On These Things-Philippians 4:8.)

4. Keep the Faith and Remember There Is No Failure in God.

(Ask for An Increase of Faith.)

(“Lord I Believe; Help My Unbelief.”)

5. Thank God For His Blessed “Buts.”

(“But Jesus Took Him By The Hand.”)

Closing Thoughts

We must trust God even when things seem to be getting worse. We must believe things will get better “afterwhile.” We must trust Him when we cannot trace him. We must bless His Name when we are burdened down. We must stand on His Word when we don’t understand His action. We must praise Him as we endure pain. Our faith must not weaken as we wait on our next miracle. Are you waiting on your next miracle? I sure am! Just remember it may get worse before it gets better, but it will get better. Give God Glory! Give God All the Glory!

Related Scriptures

Matthew 17:14-20; Mark 9:14-20; Luke 9:37-43a

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