**EYES ON JESUS - Authority over Evil**

*Last Week: The Mountain of Transfiguration*

**MARK 9:14-29**

**14**When they came to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and the teachers of the law arguing with them. **15**As soon as all the people saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with wonder and ran to greet him.

**16**“What are you arguing with them about?” he asked.

**17**A man in the crowd answered, “Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. **18**Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not.”

**19**“You *unbelieving* generation,” Jesus replied, “how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me.”

**20**So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth.

**21**Jesus asked the boy’s father, “How long has he been like this?”

“From childhood,” he answered. **22**“It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us.”

**23**“‘If you can’?” said Jesus. “*Everything is possible for one who believes.”*

**24**Immediately the boy’s father exclaimed, “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!”

**25**When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the impure spirit. “You deaf and mute spirit,” he said, “I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.”

**26**The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, “He’s dead.” **27**But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up.

**28**After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, “Why couldn’t we drive it out?”

**29**He replied, “This kind can come out only by prayer.

The apostles apparently were stumped on what to do with this poor boy who was possessed by an unclean spirit.

*The scene:*

* A man brought his son who had an unclean spirit trying to destroy the boy’s life.
* Jesus was up on the mountain of transfiguration with Peter, James and John so the dad asked the other nine disciples to help
* They were baffled by the unclean spirit and could do nothing about it.
* To make matters worse, the teachers of the law came around, likely judging the apostles for their attempts, but all the apostles could do was argue with them.

That’s when Jesus arrived…

He immediately shows his disappointment in the Apostle for not taking care of this situation, and notes that it was because of their *unbelief.*

At first it seems a bit unfair.

After all, Jesus went away with his “favorite” disciples and left them behind While they were away a serious issue arose A boy with a demon was brought to them.

They needed *Jesus* to deal with this right? Didn’t they?

*Apparently not.*

Remember, much of the reason that Jesus was spending the years with these men in the time of His life leading up to the cross was to *train them and prepare them* to do the things he showed them how to do.

Back in Chapter 6, Jesus sent them on a mission, two by two. He sent them with no provisions, (no food, no bag, no extra clothes) all they had was a staff.

He did however *give them one thing* before he sent them

Do you remember what it was?

**Mark 6:7** “Jesus sent them out two by two, and *gave them authority over unclean spirits*.”

They had already been trained, prepared and had already been successful in casting out demons.

We read that by the time they were done with their trip,

**Mark 6:13** “*They drove out many demons*, and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them”

“He gave them authority over unclean spirits” (He never took that authority away from them)

They *had* authority from Jesus to cast out the demon, but they *didn’t believe* it.

Here in chapter 9, they were rendered ineffective, simply because of their *lack of belief.*

They apparently did not “believe” that Jesus gave them authority over unclean spirits.

Once Jesus was back on the scene he took control of the situation, rebuked the spirit, and commanded it to leave.

He was not afraid of it, he was not intimidated by it, he did not put up with it, he just *took authority over it* and it immediately left him, and the boy was at peace.

Jesus wanted them to know that they too had this authority over evil spirits..

Regarding Demons and/or evil spirits.

Demonic possession was very prevalent during those days for many reasons, mainly because darkness and deception had ruled on the earth for so long.

When Jesus was born, He came forth at a time where He was the *only light* in a very dark world. (see: *John 1, Isa. 9*)

In that environment of spiritual darkness, demonic possession was very common.

What about today?

There are definitely demon *possessions* that take place today, but they are not as common. What’s more common is *demonic oppression* and most common is demonic *deception*.

The devil is just as present in our times as he was back then, but his primary tactics now are to *deceive*, *discourage* and *divide* because that is so much more effective for his evil purposes and strategies, particularly against the church.

*(Read: “Screwtape Letters” by CS Lewis)*

An important truth in this text that we need to remember is that *Jesus has authority over everything, including demons and the kingdom of darkness.*

As we tap into the power of Jesus within us, they have to yield and flee. They should *fear us* more than we *fear them*. We should never be afraid of the demonic, especially when we act in love for those who the evil one has victimized (like this poor young boy whom Jesus delivered from this demon).

God wants to use us to go to, and deliver those whom the devil has deceived and has perhaps gained control over. Not run away in fear.

*(The bunny and the box…)*

*[quiet little bunnies, cute little box covered in cloth,*

*Terrible screeching and thrashing around the pen..*

*Her leg was caught in the cloth, she was deceived into thinking it was a wild animal, a predator or something. It was only a cardboard box…]*

*We were not afraid of the box any more than Jesus was afraid of the demon.*

*We know that WE have authority over the box, the bunnies, our kids and everything in our house.*

That’s how God wants us to act;

***In Power as we face evil***

***Not Cower in the face of evil***

 *{repeat}*

**1st John 4:4** “…greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.”

Remember however, that the power comes from *Jesus* in you, and not *you* yourselves.

Don’t arrogantly try to overcome evil by your own power, do it humbly but authoritatively though the power of the Holy Spirit.

*Remember the Sons of Sceva?*

**Acts 19:11-16**

**11**God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, **12**so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.

**13**Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, “In the name of the Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out.” **14**Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this.

**15**One day the evil spirit answered them, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?” **16**Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding. : }

In the name of Jesus – means under His authority and according to His will.

NOT just invoking His name for *your own purposes*.

That is actually what it means to “*take the Lord’s name in vain.”*

What about **prayer** and **fasting**?

**Mark 9:29 “**He replied, “This kind can come out only by prayer (later manuscripts add “*and fasting*).”

The versions of the Bible with extra verses, particularly in Mark draw from the later codices mostly because they were translated before the discovery or verification of earlier texts.

(A codex is a huge hand-written book that contains copies of scriptures.)

Earlier codices did not certain words and verses so some scholars believe that they were added later but unverifiable writers. Others believe that it’s possible that all the verses could have been included in the original autographs (handwritten originals), but it’s unproven.

*(I’ve learned to greatly respect the work of Bible translators the more I study. They are among the most knowledgeable and experienced Bible scholars in the world)*

But let’s look at both words that are written in verse 29.

“…This kind can come out only by prayer ( “*and fasting*).”

Jesus did not usually *pray* during healing and casting our demons but he said this type requires it.

Most of the time he just healed people by touching them or other unique methods. Casting out demons usually was simply just commanding them to go.

His instructions here, particularly to pray, make it clear that we are asking *God* to do the deliverance, the healing or whatever it is we are seeking. T

his focuses the attention on Jesus and not us.

Remember Jesus is our healer, we simply are the askers.

What about Fasting? Why do we fast?

Some say to focus the attention on God and not us .I find when I fast, the first half of the day I have a hard time thinking about anything except for my next meal. (Eventually I am able to settle in and pray) .

What about if it’s something other than food?

Try fasting from your technology, your phone or screens altogether. Get it?

Now you are forcing yourself to give space to speak to and hear from God.\

That’s the spiritual posture you need to be in as you engage in spiritual warfare.

Focused and prepared, not distracted.

Lastly, we must *believe.*

It’s so important that we believe Jesus is who He said he is, and that all authority on heaven and earth is His.

If we falter in our belief in that truth, we are vulnerable to the devil’s tricks and deception.

It’s so important that we believe, and not doubt.

Whether we like it or not, we are called into spiritual warfare.

The good news is that “The LORD is your strength and your shield”

And we are “we are more than conquerors through him”.

So don’t be afraid of evil, God wants us to stand strong in His power not our own.

**Eph 6:10-13**

**10**Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. **11**Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. **12**For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. **13**Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that *when* the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, “

So let’s be strong in the Lord and in the strength of HIS might, as we bring light to a dark world, overcome evil with the power of the Lord inside of us.

* “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

(James 4:7)

* “Do not be afraid or discouraged … For the battle is not yours, but God’s.

(2 Chron 20:15)

**Don’t be afraid, be strong and courageous.**

**Remember: We can do all things through Christ Jesus who strengthens us!**