

When Faith Falters

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Date: 12 October 2025

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[0 : 00] You need to be dependent on Him. So you found your place there in Luke chapter 9. We're going to begin reading in verse 37. We'll read down to verse number 45 where the Bible says this, And it came to pass that on the next day when they were come down from the hill, much people met Him.

Seems like everywhere Jesus goes there's a crowd gathering. And behold, a man of the company cried out saying, Master, I beseech thee, he's begging, look upon my son, for he is mine only child. And lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out, and it teareth him, that he foameth again, and bruising him, hardly departing from him. And I besought thy disciples to cast him out, and they could not.

Verse 41, And Jesus answering and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you and suffer you? Bring thy son hither. And as he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tear him.

And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father. And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God.

[1 : 12] But while they were wondering, everyone at all the things which Jesus did, he said unto his disciples, Let these sayings sink down into your ears, for the Son of Man shall be delivered into the hands of men.

But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them that they perceived it not, and they feared to ask him of that saying. This morning I want to preach a message entitled this, When Faith Falters.

We would like to say, My faith has never faltered, and it never will. But that's not our testimony in here. We can be excited, we can agree with the songs, we can say amen, and we can open our Bibles.

But listen, we face things in our life where we know what to do, but faith is going to falter. Why does that happen? How does it happen? What do we do when it happens?

And I think that's what Jesus is going to teach us, and help us here with this morning. So let's go to the hymn of prayer, and then we're going to jump right in. Father, thank you for this day. Thank you for the time that we've gathered here, and we've already asked you to bless in certain ways, but I pray you would just now quiet our hearts and our minds.

[2 : 17] Lord, I pray you would just help me to say what needs to be said, and not what does not need to be said. Lord, I pray that there's somebody here that's just looking for answers, Lord, that they would realize very quickly that you are the answer.

You are the way, the truth, and the life. Lord, I pray you would encourage hearts, you would convict hearts, you would just challenge us where we need to. Lord, I pray that when you do, whatever area it is, that we would respond.

And I pray you would be honored and glorified, and we ask it in Christ's name, amen. Thank you so much for standing. You may be seated. The results have not come back conclusively yet, but there's a high probability that I suffer from ultra-competitiveness.

It could be. Some of you know this more than others. We've talked about this. And it really, it just doesn't matter what it is. It doesn't matter if it's a child's board game or go fish.

It doesn't matter if I'm trying to win Will of Fortune while I'm sitting on my couch. Because I, you know, I want to win on everything I do. No matter if I'm playing golf, I play golf with some of you.

This is what I, if you ever see me talking to myself, here's what I'm telling myself.

[3 : 22] Remember, you're the pastor. You know, you've got to remember things like that because we've got to have a good testimony about how we're acting out there. Sometimes if I'm leaving the

house, my wife says, remember, you're the pastor. And those kind of situations.

I mean, I'm so competitive. When I put in an address in the GPS and it says, here's the ETA, I'm like, bet. Am I the only one that's like, I'm going to beat whatever the time on this GPS is because then it makes it fun.

Then it's a game. And the kids are like, we stop. We're like, no, we're on a game right now. And we're going to win. Herm Edwards used to coach the New York Jets. And he said this, you play to win the game.

And I think that's good advice. And I like it. And I subscribe to that. And as much as I love to win, there's one thing I cannot stand to do. Lose. I mean, I want to win, but I think I hate losing more than I love winning.

Why? Because I think in our mind and kind of how we experience it, failure is never fun. You don't sit out in the morning, wake up and say, you know what? I hope I fail today. Anybody do that?

[4 : 24] No. No, you want to have a good day. You want to have success, but defeat is seldom something that we delight in. And as we kind of read this text, and we're going to get into it here this morning, why is that?

I think it's because it can be painful. It can be embarrassing. It can be humiliating. But as much as we try to avoid failure, it will come.

But how do we respond to it? How do we react to these moments in life where maybe we're trying to live for the Lord and we kind of falter there a little bit? I think Jesus wants us to learn, and we can and we should learn from our failures.

One of my favorite commentators I read, Yoda, he said this, the greatest teacher failure is. For all my Star Wars nerds out there, there you go.

That's a great statement though. It is a great teacher. And when it comes to our walk with the Lord and as we're trying to live the Christian life, as we're trying to follow Jesus and trying to live on mission, when failure comes, it can teach us.

[5 : 28] It can correct us. It can drive us back where we should have been all along, leaning on the everlasting arms. That's what it teaches and it's what it does.

And sometimes in our life, sometimes failure reveals that we didn't put the effort that we should have in there. Anybody been there? You been to school?

You know, it's like, but my teacher's just failing me. Well, did you study? Well, no, but sometimes we've got to put the effort in. Sometimes failure comes because we're not prepared for the situation. But other times in our life, and especially when it comes to our walk with the Lord, failure reveals and it reminds us that we're not called to do it on our own. Jesus told his disciples there in the upper room in John chapter 15, he said, without me, ye can do nothing.

But we are self-starting kind of people. We are, we're going to do it our way. And even when it comes to living the Christian life and failure many times reveals, who are you leaning on?

[6 : 35] Where are you seeking your help from? And the latter is exactly what is happening here in our text. Last week we saw that Jesus took Peter, James, and John up on the mountain and they were there and Jesus was transfigured.

He was there on the mountain, but kind of his humanity was pulled back a little bit and they really saw who Jesus was. That he is the son of God, that he is God in the flesh.

And I mean, Peter and James, John are having a grand old time up there. In fact, Peter says, you know what, Jesus? I'd rather just stay up here. I don't like all those people down there. Let's just live on this mountain. Let's just build some tabernacles up here.

But as we all know, we can't stay on the mountaintops of life forever. You ever have a great day? You think, man, I never want this day to end. Because you know, you know why we don't want to end? Because we know it's coming tomorrow.

We know it can't always be this good. It can't always be this great. Because eventually we have to come back down to the valley. We have to come back to reality, to real life. Maybe that's tomorrow.

[7 : 34] It's Monday. I'm sorry. That's usually what comes after Sunday. And you're already kind of maybe dreading it. And going back into the real world, so to speak, where pain and problems and people await.

And that's where we find the other nine disciples. As Peter and James and John are on the mountain, they come back down and we see that they're struggling. We see that they've failed.

This father came and he had a great need. His son was possessed by a demon. And he said, listen, I tried to talk to your disciples, but they messed up. They couldn't do it. And they had failed this situation. And really, they were kind of humiliated by it.

In Mark's account, the publicans and the lawyers, they kind of had surrounded them. I mean, they were letting the disciples have it. Why did they fail? I think they came to the place where they realized they were trying to do ministry.

They were trying to follow Christ without really depending on him. Because we saw just a couple chapters back that Jesus sent them out and they did all these things. And they thought, you know what? We did this before.

[8 : 37] We can just do it ourselves this time. We don't really need Jesus in this situation. You think, come on, disciples. How would you ever think that? You ever look in a mirror?

You ever have something come up in your life and say, oh, I can handle this? No? Y'all are super spiritual today. I'm very proud. I'm very proud of you. I know in my life that sometimes I get a little too big for my britches.

Okay, now we're there. Here's the truth I want us to take away as we walk through this text today. That we never advance beyond our need for Jesus. Without him, we will falter.

Without him, we will fail. And that's kind of where these disciples had found themselves. So the first thing I want us to see is this, is that we need Jesus in our struggles.

That's where we have to live there. And here's what it means for us today, that in every challenge and in every criticism, in every battle we face, we have to be dependent on him.

[9 : 41] We must be. Sometimes we only are dependent when we really think we need him. No, we already sang the song, I need thee every hour. We should really change it to seconds.

I mean, that's really where we need to live. We need to be dependent on him. And we need Jesus in our struggles when the critics surround us. That's what we see there in verse number 37, that as Jesus and the three are coming down from the mountain, that there's much people there.

And behold, a man out of the company cried, saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son. See, as they come down, the scribes are kind of causing problems.

The disciples are embarrassed, and they see, you ever do something, and then your mom and dad walk in? You're like, great. Don't parents just have impeccable timing? Every time you fail and you messed up, like, what's my dad doing here?

I can't just see the disciples. They're trying to maybe kind of do some damage control, and here comes Jesus. They're like, you've got to be kidding me. And they're kind of embarrassed about it. And there's this father that's desperate for help.

[10 : 43] And we see all this commotion that as Jesus is coming down, and while he was away, these disciples had failed so greatly. And Mark tells us that the scribes just kind of jumped at the opportunity to attack.

They jumped at the failure. Because here's kind of what they were saying when you read Mark's account. If your master was really who you say he is, then you should be who you say you are. Because they were kind of putting a bad light on Jesus, so to speak.

The Pharisees were always looking for opportunities to kind of smear Jesus' name, to kind of get him off track just a little bit. And have you ever noticed how critics always seem the loudest when we're at our weakest?

It seems like it's just a little bit louder. The volume's turned up. The fire's turned up. And I think that's kind of what's happening here is you study this text and the other parallel text that the messengers, they represent the master.

And when the messenger fails, the critics use it to question the credibility of Jesus. That's kind of what's taking place. And here's the reality.

[11 : 45] Sometimes that happens in our life. Sometimes we try to be a witness at school and at work and just in our daily life. And we do a pretty good job. But every once in a while, you have a bad day.

Anybody ever have a bad day? And you've been inviting them to church and doing all this. And then you're just tired of them. And you just want to let them know how you feel. And your spiritual gift has changed from encouragement to bluntness.

And you pop off and say something. And they're thinking, well, yeah, and you want me to go to your church. Oh, and you think you're better than I am. Nobody? That's kind of what's taking place.

And they're thinking, well, you're not even different than me. You act the same way that I do. Listen, the reality is we are going to fail. And the disciples, they're kind of failing. They're kind of trying to figure out what's going on.

Here's the issue. They're looking inward for strength. You're not going to find it there. You know what we find when we look inward? Weakness. We find problems.

[12 : 45] Here's what we have to do. We have to look at Jesus. We must look outward. We must look upward. Because Jesus never fails. Everything we've seen as we've walked through the gospel, every time there was an issue, every time there was a need, Jesus met the need.

The disciples forgot that. Listen, there's going to be times maybe where people mock your faith. There may be times when your weakness becomes public. And remember, you're not called to defend yourself.

We're just called to point others to Jesus. Sometimes we have to go and we have to say, listen, I'm sorry. I shouldn't have said that. I shouldn't have acted that way. I didn't respond how I should have. And that's not how I want to live my life. You know what that does when we do that? It points back to Jesus. That we're not the ones responsible. Jesus is always and constantly reminding his disciples, point them to me.

Because Jesus never fails. See, we need Jesus in our struggles when the critics surround. But we need Jesus when this spiritual battle confronts us. Because I don't know if you've found this out. We're in a battle.

[13 : 53] We wrestle not against flesh and blood. We live in a world and I think we're seeing it more and more. I think the Bible makes that very clear. As we see the day approaching, we can feel it. We don't know when.

I'm just going to throw this out there. All these people saying, well, Jesus is coming back then. If you meet somebody, run away from them. Nobody knows that. But we do know the seasons and the times.

And they're all around us. And there's a battle around us. And we see here in verse 39, this battle the disciples were engaged in. And this father is saying, listen, my son is possessed by this demon. And this spirit taketh him. And he suddenly crieth out. And he tears at him. And he's foaming at the mouth. And he's throwing himself down. It's real easy to see this is not some ordinary sickness. He doesn't got a cough. He doesn't got the flu. He doesn't have something like that. No, this is spiritual warfare. The devil is fighting. And he is trying everything. And once again, as we've seen throughout Luke's gospel, it's a vivid picture of what Satan intends to do.

[14 : 54] To steal and to kill and destroy. He's a young man. A young boy. Satan doesn't care. He didn't say, oh, it's just a little child.

In fact, I think we look at our world and our culture. That's exactly who Satan's going after. That he's getting that next generation. He's tearing them down. He wants to kill and destroy.

And we see the disciples attempted to cast this demon out. And they fail. I think it's a great, great, great reminder to us that past victories, past victories don't guarantee future power.

They were kind of leaning on, well, we've handled this before. Hey, bring your son to me. I can handle this. I don't know if that's how they were. But maybe in their heart they were.

They had seen this. I mean, we've seen multiple times Jesus sends them out. And they did this very thing. And they came back and they said, Jesus, you wouldn't believe it. We went out there and just like you said, we prayed and we asked and it happened.

[15 : 55] We don't see that taking place here. We don't see that they prayed and they asked and they trusted God. Why couldn't they do it this time? Because they were just depending on yesterday's experience instead of today's dependence.

We can't live on just the good Sunday vibes that we have here at church for tomorrow. Now, when you wake up tomorrow, here's what you need. You need the Lord. You need his grace.

You need his spirit. You need his power. Because without it, here's what's going to happen. You're going to falter and you're going to fail every single day this upcoming week. And you may come back into church next Sunday and say, man, this week, I don't know what happened.

Here's what happened. We were dependent on us and not him. And that's what Jesus is teaching us here. That you're in a battle. That we can't live on spiritual autopilot.

We're like, hey, man, I'm doing pretty good. I'm just going to cruise right here. This is a good little place for me to hang out. Listen, yesterday's faith doesn't win today's battle. And that's where

they're struggling.

[16:56] And they're thinking, look, why can't we do this? What's happening? Every new challenge. Every battle. Maybe you're in a battle right now and you keep fighting and fighting it.

Here's what you need. You need dependence on him. You just keep trying to do the same thing over and over and over. The Lord's like, hey, I'm right here. Cast that care on me. I mean, let's just bring it where we live.

Maybe you're facing something right now. When's the last time you asked the Lord to help you about it? I can do it myself. We're that little kid. You know, and your parents are like, hey, why don't you? Nope. Nope.

I know what I'm doing. I feel like that's how the Lord is with me sometimes. Hey, no, I got this. He's like, go ahead. I'll keep watching you run into the door. And sometimes that's how our life is.

Listen, we need Jesus when critics surround us. We need it when this battle is raging. And we need him when failure humbles us. Verse 41, verse 40, and I besought thy disciples to cast him out, and they could not.

[17:58] Jesus answered them, the crowd, and all those around him, and the disciples especially. Oh, faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? And suffer you. So I don't think Jesus, sometimes we read into these kind of the wrong way, I believe.

I don't think he was scolding them. I don't think he was mad. I don't think he was trying to shame them. No, he chastens who he loves. Here's what I think he's doing. He's reminding them where they're supposed to be.

That they're supposed to be with him. They're supposed to be seeking him. Here's what Jesus is doing. He's calling them back to faith in him, not themselves. They had zeal.

I mean, they were excited. I'm sure when that father came, they said, oh yeah, bring him here.

We're the disciples. You know, they had done these things. I mean, they're one of the 12 chosen ones.

They had zeal, but they didn't have power. Because power is not in us. God didn't say, hey, show them who you are. I'm pretty sure where in the Bible it says, show them who I am.

[18:59] Let your light shine so they may see your good works and glorify your Father, which is in heaven. That it's always pointing back to him. They had zeal, but no power. They had a lot of effort, but no dependence.

And they were working themselves to the bone. And it kind of reminds me of this in my own life. And maybe you've thought it. Have you ever worked so hard for God and seen nothing accomplished? Like, Lord, I'm doing all these things. Lord, I'm giving. And I'm going to church. And I'm doing all this stuff. Lord, I'm doing this.

Yeah. I'm. I'm. I'm. I'm. Maybe the Lord is just gently reminding you like he was here to them.

You're trying in your own strength. It's not going to work. You're going to be frustrated. But how we respond to failure is going to change the course.

[19:57] We can't let failure drive us away from God. See, God calls us to follow him. He calls us to trust him. He calls us to be dependent on him. And then we don't do any of those things, and then we blame him.

Well, God, I did all these things, and you just left me out to dry. I don't think God's ever left any of us out to dry. No, I don't think that's the case. We got to look at our own life, and even here this morning, are we letting the failures and the times we falter drive us away to God or drive us to him? Because that's really what God wants to do. See, when you reach the end of your ability, that's exactly where you need to be. That's where true strength begins.

He told Paul that my grace is sufficient, that in your weakness you'll be made strong. Jesus tells his disciples at the very beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, here's where it all begins. Blessed are the poor in spirit.

Those that realize that they are spiritually bankrupt, that they have nothing to offer to God. That's where true strength, that's where true power will be evident in your life. And so they come, and Jesus says, bring thy son hither.

[21:10] And as he comes, the demon's fighting all the way to the very end. It just says so casually. And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the child. I love that.

That what Satan tries to destroy, Jesus, it's no match for him. He can just restore it like that. That's what Jesus wants to do. They tried and tried and tried and nothing happened.

And Jesus just speaks. And everything happens. And everything changes. See, the disciples' problem wasn't just failure. It was misplaced faith. And what Jesus is kind of calling them back to, and he's bringing them once again, is they needed to rediscover what real dependence looks like. I don't know about you, but I need to be reminded often of that. I need to be reminded daily of that. That's why Paul tells us, I die daily. You know what Paul was saying?

I've got to decide when I wake up in the morning who I'm going to be dependent on. Paul or God. And that's what we have to do. And that leads us to our second truth here this morning.

[22 : 16] That we need Jesus for stronger faith. That Jesus is the one that gives us faith. He's the one that allows us to have that. And here's what it means for us today.

When our faith falters, we have to learn to trust Jesus, even if we don't understand everything. I don't know if you're like me. I like to have all the answers. How many of you are like me?

When you're going to go somewhere, you're going to go eat somewhere, you Google it first. You want to get all the research done. You're not going to roll into a restaurant and spend money that's got two stars.

I mean, you want to read all of it, make sure the good reviews, you're going to buy something.

That's just how I operate. I want all the facts in. I want to understand everything before I make a decision. But sometimes we don't understand everything that God is doing.

And we need Jesus for stronger faith. We need him when faith falters because his power will always stand. Verse 43, And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God.

[23 : 13] But while they wondered, everyone at all the things which Jesus did, he said unto his disciples, Let these sayings sink down into your ears, for the Son of Man shall be delivered into the hands of men.

See, the crowd, the same crowd that saw the failure of all the disciples, they were there and they kept thinking, All right, are we missing something?

Is something supposed to happen right here? When Jesus shows up, they see deliverance. And that's the difference. That sometimes God allows us to fail so that we'll rediscover where the power really lies.

Jesus. The disciples had to get that in their mind again and again and again. That Jesus said, Hey, it's not you guys. It's me. That's where the power is. That's where the strength is.

And I just want to remind us here this morning, the world doesn't need to see how great a Christian has come to Central Baptist Church. They need to see Jesus. That's what the world needs to see. They need to see a people that are dependent on God.

[24 : 15] Even sometimes when life doesn't make sense. You don't have to have all the answers. You don't have to have all your ducks in a row, so to speak. They need to just see a powerful Savior working in your life.

That you live a life that is dependent upon Christ. See, because when we respond to failure with this renewed faith in Jesus, here's what it does. It testifies that God is greater than any of our weaknesses.

Because the world around us sees when we mess up. They see when we fail. They need to see us respond and say, Jesus, I'm still going to trust you. Because if you're anything like me, and I think you are because we all have these same parents, Adam and Eve.

You know when we fail? It's that woman's fault. I mean, it starts in the garden. We deflect and we blame. Here's who Adam was really blaming.

He blamed God. Hey, I was good until you gave me her. I mean, I was doing all my jobs. I'm out taking care of the garden. I'm naming all these things. Like, oh, that's a giraffe. You know, I'm getting way sidetracked.

[25 : 22] How does he know that? Anyways. Isn't that how we do? As long as we mess up and we've been trying to be this witness, we're trying to live for Christ. And then all of a sudden, without even realizing, we're kind of blaming God for the things that happen in our life.

How we reacted to the boss when we didn't like what happened. Well, it's this, and if the Lord would have just handled that, I wouldn't even have to be in this situation. Maybe God put you in that situation just to trust him. That, yes, you may not understand what's going on, but we need him.

We need to lean on him. We need Jesus for stronger faith. You're not going to find it within. I hate to tell you this. I don't want to be a bearer. There's not a champion inside of you. I don't care what some preachers say.

No. What we need inside of us is the Lord Jesus Christ. We need his spirit guiding us. See, while everybody else was amazed at the miracle, Jesus turns around and everybody's thinking, wow, man, this is, this is, what kind of man is this?

He just kind of turns around to his disciples. And I just picture it kind of just real quietly and real subtly. He just looks and says, hey, don't miss this. Let all the things you've been hearing me say, let them sink in.

[26 : 30] Because it's not just about these great miracles, you see. That's not why I came. The Son of Man is going to be delivered up. I'm going to die for this.

You think, what a party pooper. I mean, that's kind of how I think, what a change in tone. I mean, Jesus just seems to, at this point, really, from this point on in Luke chapter 9, everything, it just goes from this miracle and it goes right to the cross.

Let me remind you, because that's what it's always been. That's why he came. He didn't come to do a bunch of miracles and draw great crowds. He came for the cross. And Jesus was teaching them, and he's teaching us still today, that faith just isn't for the mountaintop.

That faith really is when you don't understand what's going on. You know what he's saying? Hey, put this in your mind. Hey, lock this down, because you're going to come to a place where you don't understand what's going on.

Because they're going to see the Messiah on the cross. They thought it was a crown coming. And they're not going to understand. And here's what he's saying. When you don't understand, you're just going to need stronger faith.

[27 : 35] And you're not going to find it within. It's not going to be deep within your heart. No, you're just going to have to trust that God is in control. See, because he, Jesus understood this. When the cross came, it would rock their world.

And it did. When you study the crucifixion, I mean, they show up and the disciples scatter. They don't know what's taking place. And he knew that they would need to remember what real faith means.

That it means believing his plan is still good, even when it's hard to see. And I'd imagine some of you in this room, in a room this size, you've got some things in your life that are real hard.

And life is difficult. And you're thinking, Lord, what is going on? You may not understand it, but here's what you can trust. God is still God. He is still good. And he is still working.

Sometimes we're in this situation because we put ourselves in this situation. Here's the great news. He still loves us and he's still good. But sometimes we're just doing everything God wants us to do and we still find ourselves there. Why?

[28 : 39] Because God is working in our life. And maybe he's allowing you to walk through a difficult thing because others around you at your school and in your life are looking and they're saying, how can they walk through that?

When it doesn't make sense. I mean, they're good people. Why do bad things happen to good people? Because it will give an opportunity to show who Christ is. And not just strengthen your faith, but others. I love verse 45.

This is when I really relate to the disciples. They had no idea what was going on. And I love this.

And they were way too afraid to ask. You ever been in those situations? Why don't you ask?

I'm not asking. You ask. They don't know what's going on. They wanted. Here's what they didn't get. They wanted the glory without the cross.

See, all this in chapter 9 is connected. They keep trying to circumvent the cross. And great mountaintops come. They say, I'm looking for that. Great miracles come. Sign me up for that.

[29 : 37] Jesus said, let me just remind you. This is about a cross. This is about a sacrifice. They wanted the power without the pain. That's not how it happens. And I think so often in our life, we want the blessing without the burden.

We want the strength that God gives without the surrender. We don't like to surrender. But that's where it's found. Maybe the reason you're having some issues in your life and it seems like you're just running into the wall, banging your head against the wall, is because you're not willing to surrender.

But that's where it's found. That's what Jesus is teaching them. See, faith grows deeper not when life is easy, but when it's hard. And I know some of your testimonies in this room.

And you walk through some of the deepest, darkest valleys possible. But you know what you found there? Jesus. Jesus. The doctor said, you got cancer. There's nothing that can happen. There's nothing we can do. Well, guess who you found there in that valley? Jesus. And you're sitting here today. Maybe it was a family situation. Maybe it was a marital situation. Maybe it was a work situation. You lost everything.

[30 : 44] You think, Lord, how did I get here? And maybe it was bad decisions. Maybe it was just how the Lord is working in your life. But what God is wanting you to see is I'm here. And you can trust me, even when it doesn't make sense, because our God can make broken things beautiful things again.

And he's going to do that on the cross of Calvary. And when the valley comes, we are still to trust him. That's when faith becomes real. It's easy to say God is good on the mountaintop. But he's still the same God in the valley. And they are literally coming off a mountaintop. And Jesus is saying, listen, you need to hang on to those things. And you need to trust me because just who I was up there, I'm going to be the same person on the cross.

That there's still hope found there. Listen, faith isn't forged on those mountaintops. It's refined in the valley. That's what Jesus is teaching his disciples.

So we see that Jesus, we need him in our struggles. And we need him in our faith. But there's one more area of dependence that shows up most clearly. That we need him all the time.

[31 : 46] And it's in our prayer life. Every time I talk about prayer and preach about prayer, I feel like an imposter. I'll just be 100% transparent. Is there anybody in here that says, I pray too much?

I think prayer is one of those things that every time we start talking about prayer, everybody realizes, you know what? I probably should pray more. I probably should be a little more sincere about it. And here's what we need.

We need Jesus through sincere prayer. Turn over with you in your Bibles to Mark. Mark chapter number 9. This is the parallel account of this.

Mark chapter 9. Jesus has healed this young boy. And they get back in the house in verse number 28 of Mark chapter 9. And when he was coming to the house, his disciples asked him privately, why could not we cast him out?

Notice Jesus' response. And he said unto them, this kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting.

[32 : 55] Jesus is reminding them, you weren't connected to the right source. Why is prayer so important? Because doesn't the Bible say that Jesus already knows everything?

I mean, he knows everything, doesn't he? Doesn't the Bible say that he already knows what we need before we even ask? Yes, it does say that. And there's nothing that we go to God in prayer and he's like, I didn't know that.

You know, sometimes we pray like that. Lord, I'm not sure if you've looked at your calendar, but have you looked at mine? Because it's not working out. Okay, y'all pray. I don't know how y'all pray. But I sometimes go to the Lord and act like he doesn't know what's going on.

You know what prayer really does? Prayer keeps us dependent. Prayer isn't a backup plan. But that's kind of what it was in the disciples' life right here.

They got there and they said, okay, here's what we're going to do. Remember last time we said this? Remember last time we did this and all of a sudden these demons came out? So let's just follow that list. What's going on? But you know what?

[33 : 57] When you really said those other accounts, here's what they did. They were connected to the source. They were praying about it. They said how they taught and they prayed and they did all these things. Prayer keeps us dependent. It's foundational for spiritual victory.

Every time we stop praying, it's usually because we think we can handle situations on our own. That's the hard reality of it. And that's how it is.

We look at a situation and we say things like this. I don't even got to pray about this. Okay. I say things like, I don't even got to pray about this. I'm laying it out here for you this morning.

But it really just means, you know what, I can handle this. I've done this before. I mean, we say things, this is what we say. This ain't my first rodeo. Yeah, there we go. Now it's connecting.

You know what prayer does? It keeps us aware of our need for God. It's a posture of dependence. That we come to him, he's already working.

[35 : 01] He already knows what he wants to do and how he's going to do it. But here's what it gets us. We can sometimes go to God and say, God, I really need you to do this. I need you to get on the same page with me. No, no, no, no, no. That's wrong. We need to be on his page.

That's why people take these verses that God will grant us the desires of our heart. No, here's what it means, that when we're in communion and we're in fellowship with him, God places those desires in our heart. Then we go to him and ask for those desires.

He says, yeah, I'll do that. That we're on the same page with him. Saying in Jesus' name is not a signature to get what you want. No, it's saying, listen, that I'm in line with what God wants.

And that God, if this is God's will, then God will accomplish it. That it keeps us dependent. That it keeps us aware. And when you pray before you act, you acknowledge this, that it has to come through him or it's not going to happen at all.

That's why we pray on Sunday mornings. We pray every time we gather. Lord, we need you to show up. Listen, if God didn't show up, we just had a good time eating donuts, drinking coffee, and talking to each other. But we need God.

[36 : 01] We need him to be here. We need him to show up in our lives. Prayer keeps us dependent, but it keeps us humble. When the disciples failed, they said, Jesus, why couldn't we do this?

I believe they sincerely tried, but they were self-reliant. See, what true prayer does is it humbles us. It admits this, Lord, I can't, but you can.

That's where the strength flows from. It keeps us connected to his power. We're not going to get into this long because we're running out of time and you're Baptist. But it says prayer and fasting.

You say, what's the big deal with fasting? What's the purpose of it? Here's the reality. You're going to like this point. We need food. No? Yeah.

Don't act like you're not thinking right now what you want to eat after this. You're like, this guy needs to wrap it up and we need to eat. You know what fasting is? It's voluntarily setting something aside that you need to focus on what you need even more.

[37 : 04] Him. That's what fasting is about. It's not about being some religious, pious person like, well, I fast. Because that's what the Pharisees did. I fast twice a week. No, here's when you fast.

Lord, I know I need food, but what I really need right now is you. Maybe you have something in your life and you don't have the answers and you're trying all the things in your strength. Hey, maybe try fasting. Go to the Lord in prayer and say, Lord, look, I'm not going to eat for a couple days because I need you to show up.

Because here's what it does. It refocuses our life. When we fast and we pray, we're declaring that Christ is our greatest need. That's what it is. So what have we seen today?

That we need Jesus, whether it's in our struggles, in our faith, in our prayers. That we never advance beyond our need for him. We're all going to fail.

But let's make sure with God's help that we are failing forward. We are failing in his direction. And when he does, we don't run the other way. We don't blame him. We don't blame others in the church.

[38 : 07] No, we say, Lord, would you help me? Would you grow me? Will you let your failures drive you closer to Jesus, deepen your faith, and strengthen your prayer life?

See, we'll never reach a time in our life where we don't need Jesus. Where we have enough faith and we pray too much. It's never going to happen to anybody in this room. Failure doesn't disqualify you.

It reminds you who to depend on. Maybe that's where you're at. Maybe that's why you're stuck.

Maybe that's why it feels like you're in the mud and your wheels are spinning. Because you're trying to do it on your own. Here's the truth.

You need Jesus. Christian friend, let me just remind you that maybe you're in a season where your faith feels weak. Maybe you're trying to handle life in your own strength and it's not working.

Maybe the critics have been loud. Maybe the battle has been fierce and you've just grown weary.

Just let this truth in this morning remind you you're never too big. You never outgrow Jesus. Let it be a moment maybe this morning when the invitation starts in just a second to be just a moment of surrender.

[39 : 12] In Mark's account, the father says, Lord, help my unbelief. Lord, I need you. Here's a beautiful thing that Jesus is not repelled by our weakness.

