

# Help My Unbelief

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, surprisingly, Mark gives much more time and space to this particular miracle of Jesus than any other gospel author.

The parallel accounts, if you want to, you can write these in your notes, maybe you'll want to reference them later. The parallel accounts are found in Matthew 17 and Luke chapter 9. And what you'll find as you begin to study those three accounts of this specific miracle is that Mark not only gives more time to it, Mark gives more time to this event than the other two gospel authors combined.

That's pretty significant. It's unique because when we start to look at Mark's gospel, we step back and kind of consider the book as a whole, what his style is typically like. It's by far the shortest of the four gospels.

He constantly in style is pushing the story along, the narrative. Even in this particular story, almost every verse begins with the word and, and it's a literary note here on Mark's part.

He's pushing it forward. He's keeping the story moving. He doesn't want us to dwell too long on one particular thing. He wants us to keep it moving. So it's unique then that when we get to this story, he takes so much time, more time than, as far as I can tell, more time than any other miracle in his entire book he gives to this moment.

[ 1 : 21 ] Now then we can go to John chapter 21 at the very end of John's gospel. What is it that John says? Of all the things that Jesus did, he did so many more things than what you've read about.

And if all of them were written down, the world itself could not contain the books. And so if we start to step back and we have to ask this question then, okay, if that's true, why did Matthew, Mark, and Luke, all three find this to be so important to include in their gospels?

And then to take that question just a little bit further, why did Mark feel that it was so important that he gives more time to this than he does to any of Jesus's other miracles?

I think that's significant questions to ask. And I think to answer them, we have to step back for just a moment. Remember that we have divided Mark's gospel really into two main sections.

The first eight chapters, remember, are focused more on Jesus's identity as the Messiah and the Son of God. The last eight chapters are focused primarily on his purpose in bringing salvation through his crucifixion and resurrection.

[ 2 : 37 ] And so that helps us to stop and think for just a moment, okay, where does this particular miracle find itself? Well, it's not in the part where we're trying to figure out Jesus's identity. So we've already established that there's got to be another purpose for it here.

That's not lost on the story, but it's not really its main drive either. When we start to look then at when Mark includes miracles, we see that most of them are in that first section.

They are meant to say, this is who Jesus is. Look at this power. Look at what he can do and what he does. How could he be anything else than God? How could he not be the Messiah?

How could he not be the Son of God? But then when we get to this last section, there's very few miracles included. I think we could even take this section of Mark really about halfway through chapter 8 through chapter 10 and look at it almost as a subsection where Mark has really zeroed in on Jesus's training of the 12 disciples.

And this section is bookended by two miracles. Both involve Jesus healing blind men, giving them sight. What's Mark doing with that?

[ 3 : 50 ] He's emphasizing in this section right now, he's emphasizing spiritual blindness and spiritual sight. And every story, every part of the narrative vacillates between those two things.

In some cases, he's presenting an element of spiritual sight, someone who has exhibited faith in Christ and is following Christ in faith.

In some situations, it's the opposite. He's dealing with Pharisees and scribes and Sadducees, Herodians, where there is clearly spiritual darkness. And Mark is drawing these lines.

And then he particularly deals with the progressive nature of the disciples' spiritual sight. Remember the first miracle with the man that was blind, Jesus healed them.

The first time there's, he can see, but it's not very clear. And then Jesus touches him again, and then he can see clearly. Well, the disciples are in this phase right now where they can't quite see clearly.

[ 4 : 50 ] And Mark's explaining that. And so when we get here to this particular passage, we find that it has less to do with Jesus's messiahship. It has more to do with our discipleship.

And the lesson that is being driven through by Jesus first in this miracle is a lesson on the necessity of faith to the disciple.

The necessity of faith to the disciple. So let's work through the story together. The first thing, if you're keeping notes in your journals, the first thing that I would write down is a problem of unbelief.

A problem of unbelief. So the narrative picks up in verse 14 following, if you remember, the transfiguration of Jesus on Mount Hermon.

Remember, Jesus had taken Peter and James and John with him up the mountain, but he left the other nine disciples behind. We're not told of any specific instructions that he gave to them.

[ 5 : 52 ] But they were evidently engaged in some type of ministry as they waited for the Lord to return. That may not have actually been their intention. They probably didn't want to have to deal with the crowds in this particular moment, but the crowds inevitably found them.

And the people coming to them, some of them had very urgent needs. And now Jesus had sent his disciples out before. And when he had sent them, he had empowered them in his name to perform these works that needed to be done.

Let me just read you a part of Mark chapter six. We studied this a few months ago. Mark chapter six and verse seven, he called the 12 and began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over unclean spirits.

And then we jumped down to verse 12 and it says, so they went out and proclaimed that people should repent and they cast out many demons and anointed many with oil who were sick and healed them.

And so it's not that the disciples had not done this before. They had, God had used them to do this very thing in the past. And so the crowd start to come to them and having a little bit of experience under their belts, the nine disciples at the foot of the mountain began to minister to the needs of the people.

[ 7 : 15 ]     The problem is they failed miserably, miserably. They couldn't do the same things that Christ had empowered them to do before.

And so then we see this incredible contrast in chapter nine. We see the glory of the Mount of Transfiguration. We see this glimpse of glory, this glimpse of what awaits us, of who Jesus is in his essence, of what awaits us even beyond this life.

And then we're immediately confronted with the chaos in the valley. And we go from glory to chaos. And it's a pretty good picture, isn't it? It's a picture of what life will be for us at the end of this age.

But then down in the valley is a picture of what life is like for us now. It's chaos. It's darkness. It's wickedness. It's struggle.

And so Jesus descends the mountain and this is what he comes to. Mark gives four different people or groups here as he unfolds the story for us.

[ 8 : 22 ]     The first one we see is disputing disciples, disputing disciples. Look at verse 14. When they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them and scribes arguing with them.

So among this crowd that had gathered waiting for Jesus was a group of scribes, which is never a good thing. We often find them partnered with the Pharisees and the Herodians, always looking for a way to trap Jesus in his words, always looking for a way to discredit him.

And we know that what they were really doing based on, I think it's Mark 3, what they were really trying to do was destroy him. They're looking for any means possible by which they could condemn him and get him out of the way because he was bad news for them.

So you can imagine the delight of the scribes when the disciples were incapable of performing this miracle. And apparently they confronted the disciples about this.

And what ensued in following with that is this embarrassingly public argument. So this man brings the boy to the disciples. The disciples could do nothing with it.

[ 9 : 38 ]     The scribes find it as a reason for them to give the disciples a hard time to discredit them. And instead of exercising wisdom in this moment, what do the disciples do?

They engage in a public, embarrassing argument with the scribes. They fed right into what the scribes wanted them to do in this particular moment.

Not only had they failed in their ministry, but they allowed themselves to get sucked into a fight that was unnecessary. And of course, unbecoming of a disciple of Christ.

And this isn't too uncommon for us these days either. It only takes a little bit of surfing on the various social media platforms to find groups of Christians who are so distracted from what God has actually called us to do, they're getting sucked into unnecessary arguments, embarrassingly public arguments.

It's unbecoming of a Christian, unbecoming of a disciple of Christ. That's what Jesus walks down the mountain to. The ones who were closest to him were a complete embarrassment to him in that particular moment.

[ 11 : 04 ]     He that has ears to hear, let him hear. Number two, we see distracting crowds, distracting crowds. Look at verse 15. Immediately, all the crowd, when they saw him, were greatly amazed and ran up and greeted him.

Now again, crowds are never mentioned favorably in Mark's gospel. They weren't opponents to Jesus in the same way as the scribes and Pharisees, but they were often a distraction and even a danger to Jesus's ministry.

For the most part, they were only interested in Jesus's entertainment value. They weren't concerned with his message. They weren't concerned really with following him.

And in this moment, as they noticed Jesus, they excitedly run and greet him. But it's not because they had a genuine faith in who he was. They were just enamored by his celebrity.

Have you ever been out in public and a celebrity has emerged from the darkness, maybe incognito, but somebody notices them? And what immediately happens?

[ 12 : 12 ] The crowd runs to them. Not because they actually like the person. Not because they care anything about what the person does. But it's a celebrity. And this is what we've come to see.

Jesus comes off the mountain and the crowd rushes over. Not because they want to hear him. They just want him to entertain them. They want to see what he can do. Maybe perhaps what he could provide for them.

Then we see this desperate father. A desperate father. Look at verse 16. And he asked them, What are you arguing about with them?

Someone from the crowd answered, Teacher, I brought my son to you. For he has a spirit that makes him mute. Whenever it seizes him, it throws him down.

And he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast it out. And they were not able. So Jesus asked, What are you fussing about?

[ 13 : 13 ] And probably due to some embarrassment, they hesitate to answer. So this father pipes up. He says, Let me tell you. I have a son.

And some people say that he's got epilepsy. Here's his conditions. I think there's more to it. I think there's a demon torturing my son.

He can't talk. He can't hear. So I can't communicate with him. I can't try to console him. He's constantly being thrown on the ground violently.

He's foaming at the mouth. He's grinding his teeth. And I brought my son hoping that you could help, but your disciples were unable to help him.

Can you imagine being powerless to help your son and having to set by day by day and just watch as he's tortured?

[ 14 : 16 ] He's desperate. No doubt, no one else has been able to help. He hears of Jesus. He hears that Jesus is nearby.

He goes to where Jesus is, but Jesus isn't there. So naturally, who does he turn to? Those who claim to represent him.

This is a word of warning for us, church. People who don't know Jesus by nature turn to those who proclaim to be his representatives.

It's a warning and a reminder for us that we must pursue a life that truly reflects the Lord in faith, in word, in deed.

And these disciples, despite their best attempts, were incapable of helping the man's son. And what it produced in the man was more doubt. Not doubt about the disciples.

[ 15 : 20 ] Doubt about who they said they represented. Doubt about Jesus. Here he is bringing his son, hoping for help. And after a couple of attempts, they ignore his son's condition so that they can fight with the scribes over here who have nothing to do with the whole situation.

And who's left out in the process? The desperate father who's actually come for some help. But he ends up getting ignored so they can get caught up in this battle over here.

Does that sound familiar? I feel like we get caught up in battles over here. And there's a lot of people that may be coming to us or otherwise would come to us seeking for help from Christ.

But we're ignoring them in order to get caught up in all the mess that's going on over here. Well, then we see the disappointed Lord. The disappointed Lord.

Look at verse 19. And he answered them, Oh, faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you?

[ 16 : 31 ] Bring him to me. And it's here that we begin to discover the point of the story. You can sense the emotional frustration in Jesus' words here.

He's exasperated by their unbelief. But it's not just the unbelief of one person or one group. When Mark says that Jesus answered them, he means all of them.

Everyone that's there in that moment. And of course, there's a special nod toward the disciples here, but it's not just about the disciples. Jesus says, faithless generation.

Words used five times in Mark's gospel, always in a broad sense, never to describe a specific group, but to describe people in a general sense. When Jesus steps back and says, Oh, faithless generation.

He's not frustrated only with the disciples. It's with everybody that's there present in that moment. And yes, he's frustrated with the nine. But it's not because they couldn't cast out the demon.

[ 17 : 37 ] It's not because they were just merely incapable. He knew they didn't have power in and of themselves to do those things. But Jesus also wasn't going to let them pass this off as just a mere impossibility due to their humanness.

No. What does Jesus say? Faithless. Unbelieving. What's he accusing these nine disciples of? Not in being incapable due to their humanness, incapable due to their unbelief, their faithlessness in this moment.

Because they had done these things before, they fooled themselves into thinking that they indeed had the power to do it themselves. It's not that they doubted that God could or would perform this miracle.

It's that they didn't think they needed God this time around. They didn't think they needed him. We've done this before, fellas. Let's say the words. Let's do the touches. Let's find the oil. Let's do the stuff and it will just work.

There's no notion of God's power. There's no reliance on God's work. They think they have it in and of themselves, which is just a form of unbelief. Jesus is frustrated.

[ 18 : 52 ] They're still not getting it. They're still not getting it. But he's not just frustrated at them. He's frustrated at everybody else. There's the scribes there who had no faith at all and were only trying to cause problems for Jesus.

Faithless generation. There's the crowds who believed he could provide them with good, a good show or maybe some bread and fish, but their unbelief refused to follow him as Lord.

Then there's the Father who came to the right place and he doesn't seem to doubt Jesus' willingness, but after the disciples failed, what we find is that he doubts whether or not even Jesus can do this.

And Jesus observes everybody in this crowd and he steps back and he says, Faithless generation, how long do I have to be with you? How long am I going to have to bear with you before you will finally believe, believe before you will finally get it?

And we have to ask, do we fit any of these descriptions? Are we like the disciples trying to do the work of God without God?

[ 20 : 11 ] Relying on our own abilities to do what God has called us to do, whether it be in a ministerial way in the church or whether it be as parents or grandparents or whether it be in whatever thing that God has put in our lives for us to accomplish for his glory.

How many of us are going about those things trying to do the work of God in our lives but absent of God, thinking that we have within ourselves what it takes to do the things that God wants us to do in this life?

how many of us are like the crowds? Interested in Jesus so long as he gives us what we want or makes us feel good in the process?

Maybe we're like the Father, desperate for God's intervention, but giving in to doubt about whether his power and faithfulness is true.

Who of us would Jesus stand here today and say, faithless generation, how long?

[ 21 : 13 ] But then we get to the last phrase of this verse, verse 19. And it's the most encouraging phrase of this particular story. What is it Jesus says at the end of that?

Bring him to me. Bring him to me. This is fantastic. If the church has failed you like the disciples failed this man and his boy, Jesus is still able.

Trust him. If your life is an utter mess right now, like just an absolute mess and you don't know what you're gonna do, you feel like you have no hope in the world at all, Jesus is still able.

Trust him. Trust him. He can do for us what no one else can do. And he has a willingness that's unmatched. Nobody loves you like Jesus loves you.

Your spouse doesn't love you like Jesus loves you. Your kids don't love you like Jesus loves you. Your parents don't love you like Jesus loves you. He has an unmatched willingness to help you.

[ 22 : 24 ] And he says, just come to me. Just come to me. Bring your burdens to me. Cast yourself on me. I can help you. I want to help you.

Trust me. Believe me. Bring him to me, Jesus said. Which sets up the miracle that awaits us. We have to move quickly. Number two, we see the lesson taught.

The lesson taught. Look at verse 20. They brought the boy to him and when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth.

Jesus asked his father, how long has this been happening to him? He said, from childhood. And it's often cast him into fire and into water to destroy him.

But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us. Demon possession is not always the source behind physical disorders.

[ 23 : 34 ] We understand that. We know that. But this boy was clearly suffering from spiritual torture, not epilepsy.

There is way more going on with this little boy than just an illness. He's being assaulted assaulted by forces beyond our sight, beyond our control.

And it's easy for us to come to passages like this and even as believers just wonder, is this real? Like, is this just meant to be figurative? No, this is real.

Demons are real. And they're torturing this boy. They brought the boy to Jesus and the demon responded, the way that they always do when confronted by Jesus in the Gospels.

Began its destructive work. Tossed the boy on the ground. Caused him to convulse and so on. And then Jesus inquired of the father more about this boy's condition.

[ 24 : 45 ] Now, Jesus knew the boy's condition. It wasn't that he needed the information. He's drawing something out of this man, okay? Now, hang on to that thought. You're going to see it as we go through these verses.

He's drawing something out of this man. He's drawing his doubt out so that he can draw his faith out. And he asked him, how long has this been happening? From childhood. Not only does it happen, but the demon tries to destroy him.

Sometimes it throws him into fire and we have to rescue him out of the fire. Sometimes it throws him into water and tries to drown him. You can imagine this poor boy scarred from all of the struggle that he's gone through.

All the times he has been cast down into these different ways, these different places. And again, we see the desperate cry of his father, don't we?

If you can do anything, will you please have compassion on my boy? Will you please help? That's the same thing we would say, is it not?

[ 25 : 47 ] If one of our kids were struggling in this way, what would we do? If there was anybody that could help, we would go to that person. If you can help, please help.

And notice, he says help us. He doesn't just say help my son. He says help us. This was torture for his father. This was painful for his father.

He's asking for Jesus to do something. But Jesus latches on to one element of the man's plea that reveals his doubt. Look at verse 23.

And Jesus said, if you can, if you can, all things are possible for one who believes.

I don't think Jesus is speaking out of frustration here. I think before, he's speaking out of frustration. Oh, faithless generation. Now he's dealing with this man one-on-one. He's not frustrated with him at all.

[ 26 : 48 ] He's drawing this out. He wants him to acknowledge his doubt so that Jesus can get him to acknowledge his faith. It's amazing what Jesus does here. He has to empty us before he can fill us.

And he's doing that with this man. And he says, you can just imagine. We see the tenderness of Jesus in these miracles all the time. You can imagine Jesus not being frustrated, but getting down with the man, looking the man in the eye, maybe putting his hands on his shoulders, whatever would have been customary in that day, getting his focus and just saying compassionately, all things are possible for the one who will believe.

What's Jesus saying? Essentially he's saying this. The question, the issue here is not my ability. Of course I can do this.

The question is not whether I can. The question is whether you will believe because all things are possible for the one who will believe. He was directly challenging the man to believe for his son to be healed.

The burden rested on the father's faith, not on Jesus' ability. Jesus could certainly do it. No doubt he could do it. And he needed this man to understand it's not about my ability, it's about your faith.

[ 28 : 10 ] Will you believe? Which makes me wonder how often we fail to experience the power of God at work in our lives, not because he's incapable or unwilling, but because we fail to believe him for it.

Isn't that what Jesus is saying? All things are possible for the one who will believe. Now, not to put an asterisk on it, but we do have to understand this correctly, don't we?

Because many of prosperity preachers have taught a false gospel that is dangerous and has destroyed people along with this verse. Jesus didn't say all things are guaranteed.

That's not what Jesus told the man. He said all things are possible. And he didn't mean that we have to reach a certain quantum of super spiritual faith that would put God in a position where he has no other course but to listen and obey our request.

That's not what Jesus is saying. Faith is not an instrument that controls God. No, he is God. He does what he wills. And God will never answer a request that goes against his sovereign will.

[ 29 : 40 ] That's not what Jesus is saying. We can't control God. Many people have turned away from Christ because somebody has told them God will give you whatever you want if you just believe enough.

If you just believe enough God will give it to you. And when they don't get what they want who is it that they end up rejecting? Not so much the preacher that lied to them but the God who they now feel has betrayed them.

What else could I do? I put all the faith I had into this one day. I really wanted this job. I really wanted this thing. I really wanted God to do this thing and he didn't do it and it's his fault. That's not what Jesus is saying.

That is not what this is about. The Bible helps us to stay grounded on this. Okay? I want you to consider the Apostle Paul for a moment. If we were to stack up and list the most faithful people in the New Testament Paul is going to be at the top of the list.

Who had such faith as Paul? And yet when he asked God to take away something that caused him to suffer God wouldn't do it.

[ 30 : 48 ] And it wasn't because Paul didn't have faith. It's because it wasn't God's plan for his life. Let me read it to you. 2 Corinthians chapter 12. Paul says, To keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited.

three times I pleaded with the Lord about this that he should leave me. But he said to me, My grace is sufficient for you for my power is made perfect in weakness.

Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Here's a faithful man full of faith that God can take away this thorn that God has given him.

And yet God says no. You say, How do we reconcile that with what Jesus is saying here? Remember, Jesus didn't tell the man all things are guaranteed. He said all things are possible.

Every impossibility is made possible when you believe God for that thing. It doesn't mean that he's always going to do it, but it does make it possible. But there's a ditch on the other side of the road here, isn't there?

[ 32 : 09 ] It's easy to let the prominence and prevalence of prosperity gospel to lead us to a constant state of doubt. Like we want to be so careful sometimes.

I feel this way at least. I want to be so careful sometimes not to give people the wrong idea with a verse like this that I basically go through my life in a constant state of doubt. Praying for healing for someone, but always having to put a parenthetical statement on it.

Lord, if you desire to do this, if this is your will, we need of course to pray for God's will. But the mindset behind those prayers sometimes is that we don't really think God is going to do this and we're saving ourselves from the embarrassment of expressing a faith that doesn't actually come to fruition later on.

Don't do that. Jesus takes the man and he says, listen, this is not about my willingness. This is about your faith. Believe. Believe me.

Believe me. Trust me. Follow me. It's a lesson we need to learn. Jesus' point is that when faith is put in the right source, it makes possible everything that is otherwise impossible.

[ 33 : 27 ] And when we trust Christ, we appeal to the one person with the ability and willingness to do absolutely anything. We avail ourselves to the fullness of his power.



And true faith believes in the promises of God. True faith submits to the sovereignty of God. And true faith trusts the power of God.

True faith believes the promises of God, submits to the sovereignty of God, and trusts the power of God. And it does not waver when the outcome is different than we hope.

It trusts the Lord even when he says no. Isn't that Paul's point? I asked God three times to take this away.

He didn't do it. And I trust him. He did the right thing. It's hard for me, but this is right because God is always right. The father needed to understand that.

[ 34 : 33 ] He needed to understand that the healing of his son was not threatened by any inability in Jesus, but by his own doubt, which is what leads us to the father's response in verse 24. Immediately, the father of the child cried out and said, I believe, help my unbelief.

I believe, help my unbelief. I love this. I love how he responds because it reveals that his faith was actually more robust than what we originally supposed.

Notice he didn't try to think positive thoughts or dig deep within his heart for the necessary kind of faith. It's not what he did.

Isn't that what our temptation would be? If somebody were to tell us that, we're really seeking for God to do something. They said, if you just believe, you gotta believe, you gotta believe. Maybe we sit there and we think, okay, well, what do I have to do to believe? Do I have to just think really hard and just convince myself of something that I don't actually feel is true in that moment?

No, that's not what the man does. What does he do? He cast even his doubts, even his doubts, he cast wholly on the Lord Jesus. Jesus, I believe whatever doubts are within my heart, please help those things.

[ 35 : 52 ] Help my unbelief. Help my unbelief. That's true faith. True faith doesn't ignore the doubts that are in your heart. True faith goes to the Lord with those doubts.

It casts those doubts on him. That's what Jesus was drawing out of this man. That's why he inquired more about the boy. He wanted to expose his doubt so he could then fill him with this faith that he needed.

And how did that faith look? It looked like surrender. It looked like surrender. Jesus, I don't have this faith. If it's gonna be there, it's gonna be because you help me have it.

You give it to me. Help my unbelief. The word helps, interesting. It's the same word he uses in verse 22 or 21 when he's asking for God to help his son.

It literally means to rescue. So the father's asking Jesus at this moment, please rescue my son from this demon and please rescue me from my unbelief.

[ 36 : 53 ] Rescue me from my doubt. Jesus isn't interested in you trying to dig up some kind of confidence from somewhere in the depths of your being.

It's not there. It's not there. You can't do it. He wants you to exhibit true faith by recognizing you can't actually provide it for yourself.

He wants you to cast yourself wholly on Him. He wants you to bring your doubts to Him trusting that if anyone can do something with Him it's Him.

Casting all your care upon Him because He cares for you. Help my unbelief should be the daily cry of every one of us. Lord help my unbelief.

Quickly we see the power of God. Verse 25 when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together He rebuked the unclean spirit saying to it you mute and deaf spirit I command you come out of Him and never enter Him again.

[ 37 : 59 ] After crying out and convulsing Him terribly it came out the boy was like a corpse so that most of them said he's dead but Jesus took Him by the hand and lifted Him up and He arose.

It's amazing. It's a picture of the gospel. This boy was gripped by evil. He was enslaved by the powers of this world.

His condition was such that he could not help himself neither could those closest to him provide any type of rescue. There was only one person that could meet his need and without any effort from the boy Jesus delivered him from his bondage to the wickedness and death.

Is that not what salvation is? We're enslaved to evil to sin to the powers of this world incapable of helping ourselves incapable of being helped by those around us desperate for God to do his work and only Jesus can do it and he doesn't need our help wouldn't do any good anyways it is all of his grace he does this work the demon had no choice to obey it fled dramatically actually and the crowd that had gathered presumed that the boy was dead but again Jesus tenderly and compassionately does what he doesn't send the disciples to him he doesn't send the father to him he gets down with the boy himself taking him by the hand and raising him up and

Matthew says at that point he gives him to the father the word that Mark uses here when he says that Jesus lifted him up is the word for resurrection it's not that the boy was actually dead I don't think that he was not in this case I think that he probably seemed lifeless after such a traumatic moment but I don't think that he was actually dead but Mark wanted us saves our souls he raises us from spiritual death to eternal life we must not see in this miracle anything less than what Jesus has done in each one of us at the moment of salvation that's what that is we are dead Jesus raises us up and then what does he do gives us to the father gives us to the father that's the whole point

[ 41 : 08 ] Ephesians chapter two but God being rich in mercy because of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead in our trespasses made us alive together with Christ by grace you have been saved and he has raised us up with!

seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus that description of salvation is illustrated by what Jesus does for this boy finally we see the place of prayer the place of prayer look at verse 28 and when he had entered the house his disciples asked him privately why could we not cast it out and he said to them this kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer at the end of the day the whole event is teaching us something about the necessity of faith in discipleship and whenever the disciples had an opportunity to ask Jesus more about how they had failed Jesus response was that they did not pray which is why it gives us light as to what the problem was at the beginning

Jesus said it was their unbelief but then when they ask he says this only comes through prayer so at one time in Mark chapter 6 they had recognized how desperately they needed Christ's power as they fulfilled the ministry that he had given them this time however they relied totally on themselves apparently they didn't even stop for a moment to pray for God's help which reveals to us their unbelief they knew God could do it but they didn't think they needed him now similar to the point made in verse 23 about faith Jesus wasn't giving a measurement of prayer to follow when seeking his work he wasn't saying you have to pray a certain amount of times or that you have to say a certain kind of words what he meant here was that prayer is that external action that reveals an internal faith in other words when we truly rely on

God it will show up in the way that we pray our faith and our prayers are inextricably linked and this kind of praying faith is an essential quality of faithful disciples so we conclude that our greatest failures in life are prayer failures and our prayer failures are a direct result of our unbelief at its very heart prayer is a demonstration of our total reliance on God but the problem is that so many of us go through life not actually thinking that we need him that much else we would pray right now think about what Jesus has just said they said why couldn't we do it Jesus says you didn't pray so let's switch that around and just restate it a different way how can we do it Jesus says this only comes by prayer how are we going to raise kids to love the

Lord in a society that hates him our kids have nothing going for them nothing everything they're going to grow up in in their life outside of the faithfulness of their families and their church is going to push them to wickedness and evil and corruption and as far as this world around them is concerned they have no hope and if we're being honest parents we can't help them because what's in me is not much better than what's out there how are we going to raise kids to love the Lord in this culture I think Jesus would say this kind only comes by prayer how are we going to reach Cornelius with the gospel we can come up with all kinds of strategies isn't this what churches do they come up with all kinds of strategies strategies that are exempt from God's power it's not that they don't have a good plan it's that they think that their plan is what will do the work our plan can't do any kind of work how are we going to reach people with the gospel this only comes by prayer how are we going to stand up against the evils of this society how are we going to confront the sexual revolution!

[ 46 : 12 ] to go and try to confront people about it it's not just that way we can do that until we're blue in the face and it won't matter unless we have God's power now how do we see God's power come to work through prayer through faith so the question is are we praying are we praying and begging God to help us strengthen us help us do what is necessary to raise our children and our grandchildren are we praying earnestly!

that God would do his work in our church not just through the systems that we come up with but that God would do it despite our systems are we praying that God would do his work in the world are we just hoping that somebody that knows a little bit more than us figures out a way to deal with it are we praying do you pray I believe Jesus would say that unbelief is the greatest danger facing the church today it's the greatest danger that has faced the world ever since the first sin unbelief prevents us from receiving the grace of God and salvation it leads churches to carry on in ministry that's powerless it robs us of the miracle working power of God that he is so willing to pour out on our lives and it's revealed in our lack of prayer and I think God's message is clear in this passage may we join with this desperate father and cry out help my unbelief help help my unbelief

Thank you.