

# After The Mountaintop

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[ 0 : 00 ] At this time in history, when Jesus was walking the earth and his earthly ministry, and then soon after the birth of the church and Peter's ministry, Paul's ministry, the world had already been inundated with much so largely superstitious views of the demonic world.

The ancient Egyptians had much influence not only over their own culture, but also over Roman culture, Greek culture as well, and you could see that in the way that they viewed demonic forces.

They knew medically what was wrong with a person.

And so they were, if you will, experts, not my word, but how they would view it, experts in medicine, were pretty much adept at writing incantations that would, in their minds, help to get rid of the demons.

In their world, there could have been a demon of paralysis, a demon of insanity, a demon of insomnia, even a demon of indigestion.

[ 1 : 51 ] And in the time of Christ, they have actually dug up burial sites where skulls were exhumed.

And the practice of drilling holes in people's skulls was verified. They would drill holes, a hole in a person's skull, with the idea that if they could provide a way for the demon to get out, a hole in the skull, literally.

And so they've dug up skulls with holes. Imagine being the patient, maybe the victim of that kind of practice, you know, and surviving it.

I don't know how that went over. Now, the other end of the spectrum when it comes to viewing demons is that the devil or demons don't really exist at all.

That maybe it's okay to make jokes about or make fun of the idea, even to the point where there are college sports teams, and professional ones, too, that use demons in their nicknames.

[ 3 : 11 ] Like, for instance, see if you, a little quiz here. The Demon Deacons, what school? Demon Deacons. Anybody?

Wake Forest, yes. The Wake Forest Demon Deacons. How would you like to have that in your school or church? Demon Deacons. Some churches, it might seem.

Anyway, that's another sermon, another topic altogether. How about the Blue Demons? Anybody know? Didn't know you were going to get quizzed when you came to this.

It's DePaul University. Now, some of you have been jumping on Duke. Blue Devils. I don't know what makes them blue. Why? I don't get it.

C.S. Lewis wrote a classic text called Mere Christianity. And in that, he talks about the errors that many people have on either extreme.

[ 4 : 10 ] One extreme is to be so overwhelmed, overtaken by, obsessed by demons and their influence. And the other is to dismiss it altogether, to make fun of it, to make jokes of it.

And so today, we're dealing with this. Luke, in the Gospel of Luke, there's a number of times where demons are involved in the story.

And that's true for today's story as well. And we've talked about this a little bit. But we're going to go a little bit more in-depth here with a little bit of a primer into demons and demonology before we start with our text.

So in Scripture, we're actually admonished to be aware of this. In 2 Corinthians 2, verse 11, the context here is in the area of forgiveness or maybe unforgiveness.

If we're unforgiving, then maybe we would, if we struggle with that, hopefully that we wouldn't be outwitted by Satan. For we are not ignorant of his designs or his schemes, his strategies.

[ 5 : 17 ] We should be aware of how the devil operates in that way. Now, one thing that we can do is to give the devil too much credit.

The devil is a created being. He is a fallen angel. He is not like God or the opposite of God, as oftentimes it's portrayed that way.

In one of the cults in Mormonism, for instance, they believe that Jesus and Lucifer were brothers. And so that's a false teaching.

Jesus is not created. He is the God of the universe from time past and eternal in his nature, whereas the devil or Satan was created and fallen.

And so he cannot be everywhere present like God can be. And so the idea that God is or that the devil, Satan, is somewhere perhaps even right now located in Mason County, I don't think so.

[ 6 : 19 ] My guess is he's somewhere over closer to Jerusalem where the action is. But certainly his demonic network is all around.

And the Bible does teach that, that we have demons and angels that are warring around us and about us. And we need to be aware that that is happening.

Ephesians chapter 6 makes that very clear. But for the most part, here's what we struggle with. 1 John 2.16, for all that is in the world, the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and the pride of life, it's not from the Father, but it's of this world.

We got plenty of struggles without demons. Let's start with that. Now, we do have to understand that demons are after us. They do want to destroy us, as we'll see in a moment.

But we've got problems on our own. And we struggle, every one of us, with our flesh and with temptation and with sin and struggles in that way.

[ 7 : 27 ] And so we need to be aware of that as well. Now, 1 Peter 5.8, Peter puts it this way, Be sober-minded, be watchful. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

The word devour here could also be translated as discredit or ruin. Understand that he will put bait in front of you. He's, in that sense, a master fisherman.

And he will put bait in front of you and try to tempt you into sin. But he doesn't care about the bait. He really doesn't care about the individual sin that is tempting you.

He wants you. And he wants to destroy you. Now, as a believer, if you've trusted Christ as your Savior, then he cannot destroy you eternally.

He can only wreck your life in such a way as to wreck the rest of your earthly existence. But he cannot touch you spiritually in a sense of ruining your salvation or your standing before God.

[ 8 : 38 ] So be clear about that. And then in Romans 6.13, Paul is writing here, Do not present your members to sin.

Don't present the parts of your body to sin as instruments for unrighteousness. And that's an unusual phrase, that highlighted phrase, as instruments for righteousness.

And the picture here is that whatever weapons we have, it's kind of like a transfer of weapons from one army to the next, to the other.

We're giving the devil, we're giving his demonic network our weapons of warfare, and we're turning them over to him. It's like we're opening the gate and letting him in.

Don't do that, Paul would say. Actually, the tense of the verb here, stop doing it. You're already doing it. Stop, stop, do it.

[ 9 : 38 ] Stop turning yourself over to him. Turning your weapons, opening the gate for him to come into your life and to wreck your life. Now, what would be good for us is to better understand how Satan comes at us.

So we're going to take a look real quickly at Satan's strategies to get us to open the gate, to let him in. And so there's four areas that you have on your notes here.

The first is temptation. Satan pursues us through temptation, putting that bait of temptation in front of us. And don't you know that when he does tempt us to sin, here's what he's very good at.

Now, Satan is not omniscient as God is. He doesn't know everything at all times like God does. But he is a student not only of the scriptures, but he's a student of human nature.

And he knows you. And he knows what makes you tick. And his demonic network knows how to get at you. And so they're always presenting the benefits of sin.

[ 10 : 44 ] Hebrews 11.25 talks about the pleasures of sin for a season or for a little while, the passing pleasures of sin. Understand that if sin didn't have some benefit, if sin wasn't pleasing in some respects, would any of us be tempted to sin?

No. There is an attraction to sin, isn't there? There's a lie behind it. There's something there that attracts us that says, ooh, I want that.

But what Satan hides is the consequence. The consequence for that sin. And so the temptation basically looks something like, hey, don't you think this is a good idea?

You know you want this. You know you deserve this. You should do this. And then when you give in to that temptation, what Satan does is he'll flip and turn around and say, how could you do that?

You call yourself a Christian. That's how Satan operates. It's all lies and deception and temptation from that. So that's the first way.

[ 11 : 55 ] The second way, he comes after us through persecution. When things are tough, when things are hard, that can be something that will cause people to stray, to fall away, to walk away.

And so we need to be careful of this. If he can discourage us, and certainly persecution can do that, hardship can do that. Or if he can cause us to doubt.

Now, doubt in and of itself is not a bad thing. It's what you do with your doubt that matters. If you take your doubt to the Lord, like we're going to see in our story today, if you take your doubt to the Lord, he will answer that.

He will provide even through our doubt. But make no mistake, if we continue in doubt, it's going to silence your witness. If you get discouraged in your walk with the Lord, if you begin to doubt your relationship with the Lord, if you doubt your standing before the Lord, you're not going to have any kind of a witness for the Lord.

I mean, this is something that a lot of young believers struggle with. I did too. As a young believer, I would fall for the temptation, and I would sin.

[ 13 : 21 ] And then in the midst of that sin, I would be like, am I even a Christian? Did I really even mean it? Was I sincere? Was my plea genuine?

Am I really saved? And that doubt kind of ruins you. At least it ruins your testimony.

It ruins your confidence before the Lord. The boldness that you might have in your relationship with God. Remember when Adam and Eve sinned, what did they do?

They went and hid. And so that's kind of natural reaction. And so we need to deal with that doubt. If you're struggling with doubt, don't let it linger.

Deal with it. Feed yourself the word of God. Talk with someone who knows the scriptures, who can help you determine, all right, these are the scriptures that I need to memorize. These are the scriptures that I need to get into my life, to meditate on, to remind me that I belong to him.

[ 14 : 26 ] That he has saved me. And even when I sin, that standing before God never changes. And now all of a sudden, yes, when I sin, I need to confess.

I need to make it right with him. But my standing before the Lord doesn't change. And so persecution is another way that Satan comes at us.

He stalks us by stoking division. Again, these are all very popular is not the right word here.

He loves these strategies. He uses them over and over again. And we can see this. And I'm going to mention two. There's more than two, but I'm going to mention in two areas of our life.

One is he hates our church fellowship. Satan hates this. Satan hates the church gathered. That's what the church is.

[ 15 : 28 ] The church is not the building. It's the people gathered. And Satan hates us, hates you for that, for being a part of it, and wants to destroy that.

And he will use division in a great way to do that. You've perhaps seen or heard or even been a part of when a church begins to be divided and has that kind of bickering and backstabbing and so forth. But he also hates your family. He hates any believer's family. Now, if you're not a believer, he's fine with you.

He still hates you. He still wants to destroy you. But if you're not a believer, he's already got you. He doesn't have to do anything to get you. He's already got you.

And so one of the things that I heard years ago, and I've mentioned it a number of times here, and I'll say it again now, Satan is not trying to make you evil if you're an unbeliever.

[ 16 : 29 ] He just wants to keep you dead. That's all he cares about is keeping you in your unbelief. And he will use religion in a great way in that effort to make sure that people stay dead.

I'm fine with God because I go to church, because I keep the rules, because I obey the commandments, and I pray, and I give to church. I'm okay with God because I, I, I'm doing, it's all about me.

It's not it. It's all about what he has done. Jesus paying the penalty for my sin on the cross, that's what matters.

It's all of what he has accomplished. So Satan will do everything he can to destroy the unity that we have with each other in the body of Christ, and he will do that in your family.

Do anything that he can to destroy the unity in your family. So be aware of this. And then fourthly, Satan plagues us through deception.

[ 17 : 43 ] And again, we have to be on, on guard through this. Second, or Second Thessalonians 2 verse 3, the first part of the verse, let no one deceive you in any way.

As believers, we need to guard against any kind of deception that is out there. If it's a lie, it's coming from the pit of hell. Let no one deceive you with empty words, with meaningless words, Ephesians 5, 6.

We need to be on guard for this. He constantly attempts to distort the truth, just like he did with Adam and Eve when he was talking with Eve. Did God really say?

He questions God's word, puts that doubt about God's word. We need to understand that this word is from God and is powerful in our lives without error.

He constantly attempts to distort the truth and cause us to deny some portion of the scriptures and so deceive us. And we see this in our world today where there are pastors and ministries and churches who are giving up on portions of the scripture and saying, well, that's not really for us today.

[ 18 : 52 ] That's a cultural thing from back in their day, and we've kind of grown past that. What? That's a lie from the pit of hell that we need to guard against to deny the scriptures in that way and so be deceived.

So all of that now, put that kind of in the back of your mind as now we get into the text of our story and see some very familiar passages, not so much in our section in Luke, but we're also going to look at the gospel of Mark who teases this out and adds some information for us that Luke, for some reason, leaves out.

Now, Luke's story, Luke's account of this event is just as inspired by God, but Luke's purpose is different than Mark's purpose.

And so that's why we have some of the differences that we have in these stories, not so much that they're different, telling different things, it's just one is emphasizing one point more than the other and vice versa.

So here we are in Luke 9, verse 37, and remembering our context, Jesus and three of the disciples, Peter, James, and John, went up on the mountain.

[ 20 : 09 ] They experienced last week the Mount of Transfiguration. That's what we talked about last week. And now on this day, they're coming back down from the mountain, and when they come down to the mountain, then they see a crowd of people there, and that's where the action picks up.

On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd met Jesus as they were coming down from the mountain. So you have Jesus and the three, and at the bottom of the mountain, you have the other nine.

The other nine who didn't go up in the mountain, they had some stuff going on too, and that's where we pick this up actually in Mark 9, verse 14. When they came to the other disciples, so when they got down off the mountain, they met up with the other nine disciples.

They saw a large crowd around the other disciples, and the teachers of the law, or the scribes, were arguing with them. Luke doesn't tell us about this argument, but there's an argument going on, and Jesus is not there.

So you can imagine the teachers of the law are taking advantage of the situation because Jesus isn't there, and the disciples are having a situation that they're not handling very well.

[ 21 : 20 ] We'll see that in just a moment. And as soon as all the people saw Jesus, they were, and get this, overwhelmed with wonder, overwhelmed with amazement, and ran to greet him.

At this stage in the ministry of Christ, the crowds are as large as they'll ever get. They're massive. And almost every move of Jesus, every word of Jesus, is causing wonder and amazement.

It's just, to be alive, to witness this, it would have been incredible to see this. Verse, back in Luke now, Luke chapter 9, verse 38, And behold, a man from the crowd cried out, Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child.

All right? So if you're a parent, you've got kids, you can kind of automatically put yourself in the shoes of this father who's got a son, who's got something wrong with him.

And maybe you can relate to that. Okay? Maybe you can identify with this. If you don't have children, or maybe you don't have children yet, think about what this might be like.

[ 22 : 41 ] Verse 39, And behold, a spirit seizes this boy, and he suddenly cries out. It convulses him, so that he foams at the mouth, and shatters him.

One other translation talks about how when this demon does leave, at rare occasions, it basically disrupts him, or shatters him, it throws him on the ground, and this is what's being described here. It shatters him, it will hardly leave him. He's this boy, and we're imagining he's probably 12, 13 years old at this point. His life is a ruin, right?

Because of this. I begged, I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not.

Now, I don't know what this looks like, but again, you've got to think of the disciples' mindset during this stage of Christ's ministry. They've got it figured out. Earlier in the chapter, they were successful at casting out demons.

[ 23 : 56 ] They were successful in their preaching and healing ministry. And now, Jesus has gone again with the three, and these nine. So, imagine what this scene is like.

I can imagine, you know, the father comes up, and hey, you're one of the disciples of the teacher, of Jesus. Jesus, can you help me?

And maybe one of the guys is like, yeah, I got this. And he steps up, and he's like, okay, in the name of Jesus, come out. And the demon doesn't do anything. And another guy steps up, but tries his hand at exercising this demon, at driving this demon.

And none of them can succeed. And so now the teachers of the law, oh, oh, have they got an opening? Why are they failing? Is there something wrong with your Jesus?

What's going on? And so they're arguing, and they're discussing, and Jesus isn't there. So finally Jesus shows up. Verse 41, Jesus answered, oh, oh, faithless and twisted or perverse generation.

[ 25 : 13 ] Could he say the same thing about us? Our generation? Yeah, I think so. I think he could say the same about every generation.

Every generation. Caught up in sin. How long am I to be with you? And to bear with you? That's a nice way of saying, how long am I supposed to put up with you?

Bring your son here. Now, how would you like to be the dad? All right, because my son is obviously sick. My son has got something wrong with him.

My son is demon possessed. And you're going to lecture me about this generation? Jesus has a point.

Back in Mark's gospel now, Mark chapter 9, verse 20. So, they brought him, and when the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately, Mark's favorite word, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion, and he fell to the ground, rolled around, foaming at the mouth.

[ 26 : 21 ] Imagine the sight. As this boy is convulsing, and foaming, and it's a terrible, terrible scene. Jesus asked the boy's father, again, Luke doesn't include this information.

How long has he been like this? From childhood, he answered. So, it's been some time. It doesn't say from birth, but from childhood.

So, he's somewhere close to the age of being considered an adult, which in their culture, 13. From childhood.

It is often thrown him into the fire, or the water to kill him. Now, get a load of this. But, if you can do anything.

Now, sometimes, when you're reading the scriptures, and you see the word, if there, you have to ask the question, is this an if that's conditional, or is this an if that's settled?

[ 27 : 22 ] And so, the way to resolve that, is to use the word, since, instead of if. If. So, in this context, does since work? Since, you can do anything.

That's not what he was expressing, is it? It was his way of expressing doubt. So, if, is actually, a good translation here. If, you can do anything.

The Greek word could be, could go either way. But, if, you can do anything. Take pity on us, and help us. How do you think Jesus is going to like that statement?

If you can do anything. Because, that's Jesus' response. He's like, what do you mean, if I can? Seriously?

I don't think Jesus was like, seriously? But, you know, he's like, what do you mean, if, you can? And then, here's a statement. And this is a statement, that's made several times in the Gospels, that we have to be careful with.

[ 28 : 24 ] We'll talk about this a little bit later. Everything is possible for one who believes. Boy, that's a bold statement, isn't it? The question is, is it true?

The answer is, absolutely. But, there is a caveat to this, that we need to remember. And we'll talk about that in just a moment. Everything is absolutely possible for one who believes.

Now, immediately, the boy's father exclaimed, I do believe. And, and, there, there are sometimes, if you've, if you've, you know, raise your hand, if you've grown up with the King James, you, you're familiar with the King James, sometimes the King James is just better.

Help thou my unbelief, right? That's just better than, help me overcome my, you know, it's, it's just something about how that's implanted in your brain, right?

This guy, and maybe you've been here before. I believe, Lord. Help me with my doubt. Help me with my unbelief.

[ 29 : 37 ] This is the expression. This is the cry of this, this father's heart. He addresses Jesus as teacher, not as Lord, not as the Christ.

So he's not, he's not there yet himself, but he's learning pretty quickly who he's dealing with. Help me in my unbelief.

Verse 25 of Mark chapter nine. When Jesus saw that the crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the impure spirit, this demon, you deaf and mute spirit.

I command you come out of him and never enter him again. So it's, it is a complete and utter restoration for this young boy.

This, whatever, whatever illness compounded by the, the demon that is possessing him, all of that Jesus resolves in a spoken word and it's over.

[ 30 : 37 ] And never going to happen again. Verse 26, the spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. And the boy looked so much like a corpse that many said he's dead.

So he's just laying there seemingly lifeless. Jesus on the ground. But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up to his feet. And he stood up.

So this boy is completely restored, completely healed. In that moment. Back to Luke's gospel. We see how he deals with this. While he was coming, the demon threw him to the ground and convulsed him.

But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the boy and gave him back to his father. So that's all the, the information. We don't have any of the, help me with my unbelief.

All of that, you know, all things are possible to those who believe that, that part of the conversation Luke does not have in his story. Verse 43 kind of brings the story to its conclusion in Luke.

[ 31 : 41 ] All were astonished again, this time at the majesty of God. Jesus heals this boy. And everyone there is just jaw dropped.

Wouldn't you? Jaw dropped, amazed at the majesty of God. Now they weren't on the mountain. They didn't see the transfiguration. God and Jesus in all his glory.

The, the brightness and the one, but his acts, his ability to heal, this miraculous moment. They're in awe at his majesty in that moment.

They're, they're, they're in awe. They're, they're in wonder. They're in amazement when they see him come down the mountain. And after this healing, they're in amazement. It's just amazement after amazement.

This is Luke's favorite word, amazed, astonished, in wonder. Now back in Mark's gospel, we have this. After Jesus had gone indoors, this conversation is not in Luke either.

[ 32 : 50 ] His disciples asked him privately, Hey, why couldn't we do this? In the context of, remember earlier in chapter nine, we, we did this.

What's the deal here? What's the deal? And Jesus answers. He replied, this kind can only come out by prayer.

Did they, did they simply forget to pray? Did, did they, were they attempting to heal this boy, to exercise this demon?

Were they doing this without thinking they needed God's help? That they could do it themselves? It's kind of, kind of what it seems by what he says.

Now, I hesitate to, to, to talk about this, but I'm going to do this. Hopefully this won't cause confusion, but will hopefully, help you to strengthen your understanding of God's word.

[ 33 : 54 ] In the King James, in the New King James translation, there's another word that's, that's there in the text that's not in the NIV, the ESV, the New American Standard.

In the NIV text here, the ESV, this kind can only come out by prayer. In the King James, the New King James, this, this kind of comes out by nothing but prayer and fasting.

And fasting is, is it added? Is it taken away? A, this is an interesting discussion because even if you read this in the ESV or the NIV, you're going to see a footnote there and you're going to say that some of the texts say also by fasting.

And so, the question is, why do we have this discrepancy here? Now, understand the ESV, the New American Standard, the NIV, they come from Greek texts that are older than what the King James or the New King James, the New King James and the King James are based on the Greek text that has many more copies of it.

There's many more manuscripts available for it. Whereas, the other translations are based on texts that are earlier than what is known as the majority text.

[ 35 : 18 ] But, they're also less in number. There are fewer of them, which makes sense because of how old they would be. So, which is it?

Do these demons only come out by prayer? Or, is it by prayer and fasting? And the way that I would answer that question is, yes.

Whenever you have a textual variance like this in your scriptures, understand that there's never any kind of doctrine or belief that is in any question.

It's always in a sense like the spelling of a name or maybe somewhere along the line a scribe either added or subtracted a word.

And the question would be, well, which is it here? Was this word added in the later text or was it subtracted out by the earlier texts?

[ 36 : 20 ] That's a good question. My personal belief here is that the ESV and the New American Standard are more correct in that when they're confronted with this situation of a demon right here, right now, the boy is sitting right there, do you have time to fast in that moment?

Because you're not going to have a meal before you heal the boy and then decide, well, I'm not going to have that meal before I heal the boy. I'm going to fast instead. No, you're going to pray in that moment.

Or you should be, as the disciples discovered. Yeah, I need to remember, it's not me. It's not about me. It's the Lord who's going to do this. I need to entreat.

I need to come to the Lord and ask for him to intervene. now, if there's an opportunity for you to fast, yeah, that's why it still fits.

And if anyone is going to be upset about one of these texts versus the other, I would say that's not worthy of us being upset about.

[ 37 : 36 ] That's not worth us separating or having disunity over, well, which one is correct and which one is wrong? my answer to that is yes.

Both could be correct, both could be wrong. Well, one or the other, I don't know. The main thing is, I can't do it. I need him to do it.

Does that make sense? Does all of that, I feel like I maybe, I didn't want to cause confusion with this. So, with that story in mind here now, I want us to talk about some of the realities that we face in a circumstance like this.

Because this setting, this event, this boy, this father, Jesus, the disciples, their failure, the argument, well, there's some realities that we need to face in our world today that this story, I think, highlights.

highlights. And maybe the main one is this. We live in a broken world. This world is broken.

[ 38 : 49 ] And we, because of that brokenness, we are in desperate need. We can't solve it ourselves. We can't fix it ourselves. It is only God who can bring healing and salvation and any kind of work that would make a difference for eternity.

So, we live in a broken creation. Now, as a part of that, I've got four points that are on your notes here that kind of describe this broken creation that we live in.

And we see this, first of all, in the boy. The boy was being destroyed. He was being destroyed spiritually. He was being destroyed physically.

He was being destroyed emotionally, in every way, and socially. Imagine, you're the parent of this child.

And now you're going to a parent-teacher conference. Or you're trying to bring them to church. or you're trying to do anything in any kind of a public setting in any way with this child.

[ 40 : 11 ] What's your life like? How is your life impacted by this? And that brings us to this next point here. Problems like this have a tendency to wreak havoc on the whole family.

Oh, my. we can see this. We can see families who have children who are troubled in some way or another, some handicap or some disability, or if it's just rebellion, people who, children who erupt in rebellion against their parents.

Whatever it is, this kind of a situation can wreak havoc on a family, even if it's just other people from the outside looking in and passing judgment on behavior or the actions of the child or how the parents react.

daughter. And we need to be careful, careful about that. The family can become defined by the problem.

that even when we just see a parent or one of the other kids in the family, we can automatically place that person with what we have passed judgment on or what we have determined is what did they do wrong.

[ 41 : 54 ] I mean, in their culture, they would have assumed that this boy's father did some terrible sin or his mother did some terrible sin. That's why he was having, this boy was having this problem.

Now, Jesus corrected that thinking and said, no, no, no, no, that's false thinking. In the Gospel of John, the blind man, the disciples asked, hey, why is this guy blind?

Is it because of his sin or because of his parents' sin? And Jesus is like, shut up. I mean, that's not what he said, but he's like, no, get that out of your mind.

That kind of thinking. So for us on the outside to look into a family circumstance and think we know what's going on and we think we know what would be better, boy, we need to be careful with that kind of thinking.

And so what do we do? And let me, let me, make it more difficult if that's possible. I can imagine a parent having a situation and it's not demon possession, but there's something going on with their child and it's a struggle and it's difficult.

[ 43 : 12 ] And this boy in the story with Jesus has a wonderful outcome, a miraculous intervention, salvation, and he's restored back to his family.

Why can't that happen for me? Why can't that happen for my son or my daughter? Why can't, why don't we see it happen more often in our world today?

Boy, that's a, because people are praying, you know that, right? Mom, moms and dads are praying for their kids. They have other people in their, in their circle of influence who know them and know the struggle and are praying for them and intervening for them.

And sometimes it can go year after year and nothing happens. Sometimes the situation can get worse. why? And I think we have to return back to this idea.

If we live in a broken world, now understand the purpose of the miracles of Jesus are different than a lot of times in the way that we think about them.

[ 44 : 34 ] Remember, and I've said this multiple times, that the miracles of Jesus, the miracles that you see the disciples doing, in the book of Acts, their intended purpose is to verify that what they are preaching, what they are saying is true.

That was the purpose. Remember, Jesus came preaching. What was he preaching? That was his main focus, was to declare the kingdom of God is at hand.

The kingdom of God is here, is near. The kingdom of God is actually standing right in front of you and you're looking at him in the face. We're going to see that emphasized in our next passage in Luke.

The turning point in the whole gospel comes in our next study. It might be two. I had to think about that for a second. Understand, that was his purpose and the miracles were meant to, yes, demonstrate the compassion of God for broken people, but mainly it is to demonstrate that the message of Jesus, the kingdom of God is at hand, was to be believed, that he is the promised one, the Messiah, and that every time Jesus performed one of these miracles, what he was giving the people was a little glimpse of the kingdom.

This is what it was going to be like in the kingdom. There's not going to be sickness in the kingdom. There's not going to be brokenness in the kingdom. There's not going to, all of this trouble, there's not going to be famine, there's not going to be people who go hungry in the kingdom.

[ 46 : 25 ] All of this is going to be resolved in the kingdom, and these miracles are meant to be little glimpses of what was to come. Now the problem that we have is there are preachers and there are ministries and churches who are like, no, no, no, no, no, no, the kingdom is for today, the kingdom is for today, we need to live in kingdom power right now, so we should see healing, we should see people raised from the dead, we should see all of this stuff happening right now, just like it happened back then.

And it's not. Not like it happened in the gospels, not like it happened in the book of Acts, it's just not, we can use our senses and figure that out.

Why is it that these TV preachers and these charlatans who speak in the name of Jesus are calling people forward in their crusades and people are falling down and people are getting quote unquote healed and they come in in wheelchairs but it's never the people who come in in wheelchairs who get called up front.

and they get healed and whatever illness or whatever problem that they were having, they leave with after they came on stage and were healed.

Now, you may ask me, Rich, well, do miracles happen today? And I would say yes. I would say God still heals in miraculous ways.

[ 48 : 01 ] But it's still not like what you see in the Gospels in the book of Acts. You don't see people with the gift of healing like Peter walking past a group of people and the shadow passes and all of a sudden Doug is able to walk in wholeness and completeness because his ankle doesn't need surgery anymore.

Did I reveal too much? Did I? Okay. I just said it, so now I'm asking for forgiveness after the fact. I'm sorry, Doug. But Peter would just walk across and people, we don't see that today.

We don't see people being raised from the dead today. We don't see miracle healers, instead of having a huge crusade where people come in and give lots of money and they live opulent lives. They live kingdom lives. That's part of the scam because if they didn't, what would they preach to the people to hear it? So they live like they're a part of the kingdom and that's not what God promised.

And they're taking money from poor people and broken people and there's no follow through. There's no, that's not Christianity.

[ 49 : 26 ] Christianity is, yes, we live in a broken world. And from time to time we do see miraculous things happening. But that's the exception more than the rule, not in the time of Jesus.

we live in a broken world and sometimes that world stays broken. We even see it in the Gospels, by the way.

We see it in the book of Acts, by the way. Jesus, if anyone qualified to not suffer or have pain, don't you think he would have been the one to qualify?

To not suffer or have pain? He was the only innocent one. He chose to go to the cross. He didn't avoid it. John the Baptist, if you would say who's second in line, you might have said John the Baptist.

He preached for maybe a year at most, and then they took his head off. Yeah, that worked. Why doesn't he get to avoid that? Why later on in the book of Acts do you have Peter who gets arrested and put in prison, and then in the middle of the night, an angel comes along and says, here, let's go.

[ 50 : 46 ] And he walks out of the prison, and he's doing just fine. But James, one of the original twelve, when he gets put in prison, he gets his head taken off.

Why? Why? Why is James killed and Peter goes free? Why does it happen like that? Why does one situation get better and one situation gets worse?

We see that today too. And I have to tell you, I have to admit, I don't have a good answer for you. I can't answer that question of why one is set free and one is killed.

healed. I can't answer the question of why one is healed. Why one goes through a surgery or a treatment and gets healed, and one goes through something similar and dies, stays sick, gets worse, and dies.

Why? It's because we live in a broken world.

[ 51 : 59 ] Do you know Jesus is going to fix it? Do you know Jesus is going to make it right? In our confusion that we have in this world, understand this is not the end.

The end of the story is yet to come, and Jesus is going to make all things new. He is going to restore us, he is going to make us whole, whatever healing, whatever the person that you love who has passed away, whatever brokenness they had, whatever illness they had, whatever it was, it's all gone, restored, youthful, exuberance, wholeness, in every way.

And that's where faith and trust, am I willing to trust him through it, or only am I only willing to trust him if he fixes it now, in the here and now?

It's so, it's such a tough question. Now, here's another thing that we, this broken world, and the disciples, they were lacking in spiritual power and spiritual understanding.

They just, I don't get it. They didn't get it. I'm going to be crucified. I don't get it. They didn't understand. And they didn't have power.

[ 53 : 38 ] Now, they would eventually get it, right? Because you come to the book of Acts, right? The Holy Spirit comes upon them. They're now possessed, indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

spirit. And now, all of a sudden, they can preach a storm, and they can heal, and they can do all kinds of incredible things. They have power. They have understanding. They wrote scripture. It's all. But right now, they're not there yet. We'll see that in just a moment. And we, too, live in an unbelieving and perverse generation.

We do. There's no question. And that's true for every generation. There are some generations who struggled with different things than we do, but every generation struggles with their own form of perversity and unbelief.

Absolutely. Our desperate need for God is evident. If we will just open our eyes and see. Open the eyes of our heart and our understanding.

[ 54 : 51 ] to see it. We talked about this earlier. The second thing, while most of our issues are due to the flesh, our own flesh, our own fallenness were drawn to sin, at the same time, we still need to guard against the destructive power of the devil's demonic forces.

Absolutely. Know that they're there. Know that they want to destroy you and know their schemes. We talked about those schemes earlier.

We've kind of hit on this a little bit, but I want to expand on this. If you'll bear with me, this is an important point. When it is God's will to work, his power is greater than any other power.

His power is greater than any other power. When, here's this caveat, here's this thing that I wanted to point out earlier with this statement. Everything is possible for one who believes.

This is also given in the context of, hey, if you have the faith of a mustard seed, you could do what? How come nobody moved a mountain back then? Right?

[ 56 : 05 ] Jesus said, if you have the faith of a mustard seed, you can move a mountain. Nobody moved one. You ever notice that? In all the scriptures, nobody moved a mountain.

Now, quiz. Can God move a mountain? Duh. I mean, he created everything. I think he could pick up and move a mountain. Right? All he had to do is say it, boom, it happens.

Why didn't it happen? If Jesus said, if you just have the faith of a mustard seed, you could move a mountain. How come nobody moved a mountain? The question is, did God want that to happen?

Or was he making the point of how much faith you need? By the way, all these faith healers and guys, they're all like, oh, the reason why you didn't get healed is because you didn't have enough faith.

What? It's not your fault? No, it's your fault because you didn't have enough faith. Ugh. I have to say, in my flesh, I want to come to fisticuffs when I hear stuff like that.

[ 57 : 06 ] I do. I want to punch somebody out. Because that, I've had to go in with people who are dying from cancer, and someone in front of me has gone in and said, well, the reason why you're not being healed of this cancer is you don't have enough faith.

And they're talking to this sweet woman who knows the Lord, who loves the Lord, who served the Lord all of her life, and who prays fervently, and now she doesn't have enough faith. That's not Christianity.

Is it God's will? Now think about this for a moment. Everything is possible with God. Right?

We believe that. True. Everything is possible with God. If, if that thing that's possible with God is not in His will, is God going to do it?

Think about that for a moment. Well, everything is possible. I'm praying for a Corvette. Right? Or I'm praying for some monster truck, or I'm praying for whatever.

[ 58 : 22 ] I'm praying for a million dollars in my bank account. Well, a billion. Inflation. I'm praying right? If everything is possible, come on, Lord!

We're not silly like that. But if everything is possible, why won't my son get better? Why won't this cancer go away?

Why do I struggle from week to week and can't pay my bills? Lord, if everything is possible, and then the question becomes, is God going to do something against his will?

So are you saying that it is not God's will that my cancer gets better? Would you say the same thing about James in jail?

It's not God's will that James be set free from prison? you see where I'm going with this? You see why this is so hard? Do you see why people can manipulate and twist and get people to believe in stuff by taking advantage of their brokenness and their desire to be well for themselves or their family?

[ 59 : 45 ] Oh, we have to be careful. We have to be careful. That even when we voice in our prayers, Lord, I beg you, please heal my son.

Please heal my wife, my husband. Please heal. Please, please, Lord, resolve this issue with my job. Please, Lord, whatever the circumstance might be, there may be a reason that God is allowing that to continue.

You won't understand in this life. But then our Lord also needs to be, Lord, whatever your will is, I'm willing to accept.

I'm willing to trust you. I trust you, Lord. And if that means this cancer I have takes my life, so be it.

[ 60 : 57 ] I'm yours. There's no better place to be than in that position. Dying of cancer, but in the will of God.

You might say, well, I'd be willing to be outside of God's will and get healed from the cancer. I don't think you want that.

But it's a struggle, isn't it? It's hard. It's hard to to I wish I could. Ah, Lord God, it is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm.

Nothing is too hard for you. It's not that God can't. And you and I, we believe that.

We have the faith to believe that that statement is absolutely true. So it's not about a lack of faith or unbelief.

[ 62 : 10 ] And here's another one. We cannot rightly claim to be trusting God if we are knowingly disobeying his word. real quick.

The story has a couple more verses and then we're going to go. While they were all marveling at everything Jesus was doing, Jesus took his disciples aside, said to his disciples, Mark chapter 9, they left that place, passed through Galilee.

Jesus did not want anyone to know that they were there because he was teaching his disciples.

He's setting apart a time to teach his disciples because what's coming is important.

And he says to them, let these words sink into your ears. Son of man is about to be delivered into the hands of men. They didn't get it. They didn't get it. They didn't understand it. We have hindsight.

We have the Holy Spirit revealing this to us. They did not. They did not understand it. It was concealed from them so that they might not perceive it again because of what he was trying to accomplish getting to the cross.

[ 63 : 23 ] He didn't want someone to come in and upend that. And they were afraid to ask him about this saying. I started with this.

Talking about the devil's schemes. Don't open the gate. Don't turn over your weapons to him. What do we do instead? Present yourselves to God as those who've been brought from death to life and your members instead as instruments of righteousness.

It's Romans 12. 1. It's this passage. It's Galatians 2. It's you dying to yourself and saying Lord it's yours. My life is yours.

You present yourself to him. Whatever that means. Whatever the outcome of that is. Let him have control. Lord we thank you so much for your word and even in the difficulties that we've talked about today.

There are some things about life that confound us that we struggle with that are hard to think about hard to talk about hard to understand and there are some things that we will not cannot understand

in this life and that's okay because Lord we have to understand that you are God and we are not and that's a good thing.

[ 64 : 56 ] that's the best place to be. Say Lord here I am use me in whatever way you will use my life it's yours.

I present the members of my body to you to use for you to use as instruments of righteousness to declare your truth to declare your love to demonstrate in a very broken world what it looks like to be a follower of Christ.

Lord we don't have all the answers but we have the one answer that makes everything else fade away and that answer is you it's Jesus he he has done everything that we need when Jesus died on the cross on my behalf so that when we place our trust in him it is his penalty his sacrifice his giving of his own blood of his life to pay the penalty for my sin that makes me when I place my faith in him it makes me fit for heaven for his kingdom for his glory and his honor and I want to because of what he has done for me I want to give my life to him in response and say

Lord my life is yours you are now my savior and you are now my lord my master you are in charge and whatever you see fit to do whatever is your will that's what I want it's how you taught us to pray may your will be done on heaven as it is on earth as it is in heaven may we with sincerity be willing to pray that every day lord we love you and we praise you we ask that you would continue to open our eyes to understand your word and we ask it in Jesus name amen Thank you.