

Sermon

The King in His Power

Matthew 17: 14 -21 & Judges 16: 1 – 22.

So today, we are continuing our studies from Matthew's Gospel.

Previous studies have covered:

- That Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the Living God.
- That Jesus will have the disciples build His Church and it will be unstoppable.
- That Jesus must die but will rise after 3 days.
- Last week, we saw a glimpse of the glory of His Kingdom – through the Transfiguration – and that Peter, James and John are eyewitnesses.

My sermon today is based on the reading from Matthew 17. Towards the end, I will touch briefly on the Old Testament reading from Judges. In verse 14 of our text today, we see that Jesus and his three companions encounter a crowd after they have descended from Mt Sinai. It's interesting to note that in Mark 9 & Luke 9, we read parallel passages recounting the same scene.

The Three Gospels of Matthew, Mark & Luke are often referred by scholars as the synoptic Gospels because they include many of the same stories usually written in a similar sequence.

Introductory Comments:

In today's passage, Jesus is going to talk to His disciples about faith, but He's going to do so in a teaching manner. He's going to correct them and teach them how they can better follow Him and minister in His name.

I'm pretty sure that you would be comfortable if I said that we all need Jesus! But how about, we really need Jesus!

This morning we're going to hear about four items that we really need when it comes to Jesus.

First, . . .

I. We need *mercy* from Jesus (vv. 14-16)

When we speak of mercy, we can mean several different things including mercy being the giving of help or compassion to someone who is desperately in need.

That's what's going on in today's passage. We see a man whose son needed mercy shown to him because he was in a desperate situation. Let's check out the passage. Look at verses 14-16.

14 When they reached the crowd, a man approached and knelt down before him. 15 "Lord," he said, "have mercy on my son, because he has seizures and suffers terribly. He often falls into the fire and often into the water. 16 I brought him to your disciples, but they couldn't heal him."

Imagine this man's desperate situation. He has this overwhelming concern for his son. Jesus' disciples can't help him and he's hoping something will change.

All of a sudden, Jesus shows up. Aren't you glad when Jesus shows up?

This man's son is suffering from seizures, perhaps epilepsy, and it's so bad that he's falling into fires and probably nearly drowning in water. He needs help, he sees Jesus and he says, "***Lord, have mercy on my son.***"

This man and his son needed mercy from Jesus. Even today, people all around in our community, our workplaces, our schools, and our world need mercy from Jesus. All of us need mercy from Jesus. We need mercy from Jesus.

We may have physical health issues like the boy, we may have financial burdens, we may have overwhelming hurt, broken families, and most of all we are plagued by sin. We need mercy from Jesus.

Like this man, we fall before Jesus and say, "Lord, have mercy." We must also take others to Jesus and point them to Him so that they may say, "Lord, have mercy."

We need mercy from Jesus.

Second, . . .

II. We need *correction* from Jesus (vv. 17; 19-20)

Part of Jesus' merciful ministry to us is to show us where we need correction. Jesus did this with His disciples in this passage. Check out verse 17 and then 19-20.

17 Jesus replied, "You unbelieving and perverse generation, how long will I be with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring him here to me."

19 Then the disciples approached Jesus privately and said, "Why couldn't we drive it out?"

20 "Because of your little faith," he told them.

Jesus has some piercing words for His disciples (and all those who were near), when He says, "**You unbelieving and perverse generation.**" Those are strong words.

That's the way He normally talks to the Pharisees and Sadducees.

However, remember how Jesus had just spoken to Peter when He called him Satan.

Jesus is nearing the end of His time on earth and He is getting down to the nitty-gritty. He wants to make sure that His disciples learn this very important point. He is offering them correction that will ultimately benefit them and all those to whom they will minister, and it will benefit us as well.

After all that goes down, and after Jesus corrects them, the disciples ask Jesus, "**Why couldn't we drive it out?**" They knew that something wasn't right, so they wanted to see what was up.

Jesus answers their question very simply by saying, "**Because of your little faith.**"

How difficult this must have been for them to hear.

They had faith in Jesus and His ways so they must have thought, "We have faith, Jesus!"

However, Jesus is basically saying to them that they don't really have **powerful** faith. They don't need more faith in terms of **quantity** (we'll

learn in a minute that it only takes a little bit). They need more faith in terms of **power!**

Even though this was probably hard for the disciples to hear, they needed to hear it. They needed correction from Jesus. In the same way, we need to hear from Jesus. We need correction from Jesus.

We must be sure that we are pursuing Jesus the way He wants us to pursue Him. We must be sure we are living for Jesus the way He wants to live for Him. We must be sure we are ministering in the name of Jesus the way He wants us to minister in His name. We don't need to do it our way, we need to do it Jesus' way! Amen?

We need correction from Jesus.

Third, . . .

III. We need *healing* from Jesus (v. 18)

Jesus is the ultimate healer. This man in the story knew that, which is why He asked Jesus to have mercy on his son.

Jesus did, in fact, have mercy. Listen to verse 18, once again:

18 Then Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him, and from that moment the boy was healed.

Just like that, Jesus commanded that demon to leave that boy and he was healed! Jesus is the ultimate healer.

That boy needed healing, that boy's father needed healing, the disciples needed healing and guess what . . . we need healing too! We need healing from Jesus!

I said earlier that we needed mercy from Jesus for physical health issues, financial burdens, overwhelming hurt, broken families, and the plague of sin. Jesus can heal those issues and so much more! He's the heavy-weight champion healer of the world! He's the expert in the healing field. He's the king of the healing court. He's the master of the healing domain. He makes the top medical institutions look like a child playing doctor. He blesses us with all sorts of general healing in this world, but ultimately there is no healing like Jesus healing!

So, go to Jesus. Seek Him first and seek His healing as He desires to work. That healing will come in His time. You will be healed of everything

in His time. It may not happen even in this lifetime, but it will come. Trust Him. Seek Him. Have faith in Him.

That takes us to our final point:

IV. We need *faith* in Jesus (v. 20)

We never finished what Jesus had to say regarding His correction of the disciples. Jesus didn't just say that they had too little faith. He also said what they could do with a small amount of **real** faith. Look at verse 20.

“For truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will tell this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”

This is a powerful illustration that Jesus is making to help us understand how we can accomplish His will for us. Jesus is saying just a little bit of faith (the size of a mustard seed) can accomplish something great (moving a mountain).

Jesus probably didn't anticipate us actually rearranging the topography of the planet by our faith. However, make no mistake, if Jesus wanted us to relocate say the Great Dividing Range, you better believe that He'd give us the power to do it.

The point here is that if Jesus calls us to do something great, just a little bit of faith in Him can make it happen. Whether it's casting out demons, bringing healing to the sick, sharing the Gospel with a co-worker, with a friend or family member, answering the call to serve in a ministry as many here at St. Davids do, reconciling with someone with whom we have disagreement, confronting an addiction that you might have, confronting the unrepentant sin of someone else, whatever it is, if Jesus is calling you to do something, have faith in Him and watch Him do something powerful and glorious through you!

Each of you should have received a mustard seed when you walked in. This is a reminder for you that just a little bit of faith can do powerful things for the glory of God!

Here's another thing, you've got to catch this: the power of that little bit of faith is not found in you; it's found in Jesus!

Apart from the power of Jesus, you can't move a mustard seed even if you have a mountain's worth of faith in yourself. You can't even take another breath without the sovereign power of God ruling over your life.

However, with Jesus the sky is not the limit, there is no limit!

The father in this story had faith in Jesus, the disciples needed more powerful faith in Jesus and we need faith in Jesus.

We need faith in Jesus!

So how does the reading from Judges 16 link in with his powerful Gospel story from Matthew?

Loosely may I suggest that the disciples should have been able to cast out the demon from the boy. They had the authority but somehow had lost their power. Jesus said that it was because of their lack of faith; their lack of prayer and their lack of discipline. The nine other disciples who did not accompany Jesus to the mountain top were perhaps jealous of Peter, James and John. During Jesus' absence, they may have become self-indulgent and certainly neglected prayer and when a crisis came, to heal the boy, they were unprepared. Like Samson, they went out to battle, a spiritual battle without realizing that their power was gone. From their example, we see the importance of staying spiritually healthy.

Concluding Thoughts:

This powerful story in Matthew 17:14-21 shows us that we need mercy from Jesus, we need correction from Jesus, we need healing from Jesus, and we need faith in Jesus.

Jesus did something great in this passage. So here's an opportunity for you and for me to see something great happen through me, through you, and through our church.

Well, let's boil it all down here to our bottom line:

Bottom Line: Miraculous *Jesus experiences* require miraculous *Jesus faith*.

If you want to experience Jesus, you must do so by the power of Jesus! If you want to experience the power of Jesus, you must do so by faith in Jesus.

It's all about faith! You have to have faith! Faith is believing in the promises and the power of Jesus. Live in faith by the power of God and for the glory of God!

So, here's a challenge for you and for me this week:

1. *Seek the correction of Jesus.*

I don't know about you, but I want to be able to live the way that God wants me to live.

Part of living in faith is knowing that Jesus knows what's best for us.

Well, there's no one who loves you more and knows more about what's best for you than Jesus. Seek His correction.

Seek it through prayer. Seek it through Bible study.

Seek the correction of Jesus.

2. *Demonstrate miraculous faith in Jesus.* Hold up your mustard seeds! Faith as small as a mustard seed can accomplish immensely powerful acts for the glory of God.

Demonstrate miraculous faith in Jesus this week. Do something that is beyond yourself for the glory of God.

Pray for someone who needs healing. Fight the temptations of Satan. Practice holy generosity. Forgive someone who is beyond your forgiveness. Love those who are unlovable. Surrender to serve the Lord's church in some way. Make a public profession of faith in Jesus by being baptized such as we saw with Mark last week. Share the Gospel with your neighbour. Demonstrate Christ-like love to your spouse or family.

Demonstrate miraculous faith in Jesus!

Closing:

The love of Jesus shown towards us is miraculous! We can now also live miraculously by practicing faith in Jesus!

Be changed by the miraculous power of Jesus this week!

Amen.

Let me pray.