

Mountain to Valley

[Mar 9:14-29 ESV] – 14 And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and scribes arguing with them. 15 And immediately all the crowd, when they saw him, were greatly amazed and ran up to him and greeted him. 16 And he asked them, "What are you arguing about with them?" 17 And someone from the crowd answered him, "Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a spirit that makes him mute. 18 And 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." 19 And he answered them, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me." 20 And 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. 21 And Jesus asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. 22 And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." 23 And Jesus said to him, "'If you can!' All things are possible for one who believes." 24 Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!" 25 And 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." 26 And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, "He is dead." 27 But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. 28 And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" 29 And he said to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer."

I. Intro

- A. From the mountain top to the valley
- B. They went from experiencing the glory of God to the experience of arguing with the world, and an inability to heal a boy.
- C. From victory, to defeat? Or from Glory to dependance!
- D. Today we see a great contrast:
 - 1. While studying on my back porch I hear a great contrast every morning
 - 2. As the sun starts to rise, I hear the birds starts to wake up
 - 3. There are some beautiful song birds gently tweeting away from the trees
 - 4. I pull out my merlin bird app and let it identify the birds: cardinals, chickadees, wrens, bluebirds...but there is one outlier...
 - 5. The most prevalent and loudest bird I hear from my back porch is not a song bird, but rather the most confident and obnoxious of birds...The American Crow.
 - a) Its loud
 - b) Its not pretty sounding
 - c) Its mean
 - d) And when the crows are hanging out, you can't hear the other birds.

II. Text

- A. Verses 14-16: scene: disciples, scribes arguing, Jesus arrives
- B. Verses 17-19:
 - 1. the son with an evil spirit, the concerned dad with faith enough to find Jesus
 - 2. Oh faithless generation, how long am I to be with you: another reminder of His soon death and resurrection:
 - a) He was going to die, and be raised
 - b) And he was going to depart, but leave us with the Holy Spirit
- C. Verses 20-25:
 - 1. All things are possible for the one who believes
 - 2. I BELIEVE, HELP MY UNBELIEF
 - a) What a beautiful testimony of faith and reality
 - b) The man believed, but also needed help to believe

- c) This is us!
- D. Verses 26-27: healing and restoration
- E. Verses 28-29:
 1. The disciples are still learning
 2. They were participants again, and learned that prayer was to only solution

III. Points

A. A Great Contrast

1. The boy is representative of the great contrast between the glory of God on the mount of transfiguration and the reality of an angry world that rejects the things of God.
2. We see the power of Jesus, and the lack of power in the disciples and the carnal world.
3. The boy had an evil spirit that he had since birth, Jesus had deity and power from birth.
4. On the mountain, the disciples experienced the glory of God, in the valley they experienced the depravity of man.
5. The disciples go from being overwhelmed with fear at the glory of God, to arguing with the scribes.
 - a) When we recognize the power of God, and the depravity of man, we see this contrast everywhere
 - b) I also think the disciples were probably more comfortable arguing with the scribes than they were in the presence of the transfigured Christ.
 - c) We do this as well...
6. The contrast is between the faithful and the faithless, the truth is born in fruit.

B. Faithless Generation

1. There are those who believe that the world has never been worse than it is right now...
 - a) The 24 hour news cycle has made depravity an attraction that allows them to keep people in fear and angry...and tuned in.
 - b) I'm not saying we do not need to be informed, but we need to keep it in balance.
 - c) There are times we need to take a break from watching our news feed or channel and pray and plan how we are to serve in such a time as this.
2. Let me caution you, and challenge you to study the depravity of the world from a historical perspective, we have always been depraved and needing Jesus.
3. I heard a comedian talk about it regarding Adam, Eve, Cain, and Able
 - a) Cain kills Able as a direct affront to righteousness and the plan of God
 - b) So that leaves 3 people, 1/3 of which were murderers.
4. Arguments from a historical perspective:
 - a) You can find online debates of the most evil and depraved times throughout history. Many refer to:
 - (1) The Holocaust from 1039-1945
 - (2) The Mongol conquests of the 13th century
 - (3) Transatlantic slave trade 16th to 19th centuries
 - (4) The Great Chinese Famine (1959-1961) Man Made famine that killed 45 million people
 - (5) Many genocides throughout history are debated
 - (6) What didn't make the list:
 - (a) In my lifetime, abortion has claimed many lives worldwide
 - (b) According to the World Health Organization...in the years I have been alive...73 million induced abortions...per year...4 billion if estimates are correct. (The estimated global population in 2026 is 8.3 billion)
 - b) Evil and depravity are not new things, and the world has struggled with this since the fall.

5. The Contrast is clear, but should be more clear:
 - a) Our churches must protect the vulnerable and expose the predators
 - b) Christians should look as much like Christ as possible, and that will be in contrast to the world.
 6. The depravity of the world is clear, and the more aware of it we become, the larger the problem seems.
 7. But, we have to look at things differently:
 - a) You can't yell true statements at people and expect heart change
 - b) We must see people as Christ sees them, invest in them with the gospel and our very lives, and PRAY!
- C. All Things are Possible
1. Jesus can do all things, but all things are not according to His will and plan.
 2. If the church is weak today, its because prayer is weak in the church.
 3. Jesus is still mighty to save, and mighty to heal, but His plan may be to do a work very different than we ask.
 4. If we are going to overcome the world, we are going to do so by the power of God, not the power of man.
 5. The challenge from Christ in this passage is to pray, so that's how we will end the service:
 - a) Pray for families who are hurting
 - b) Pray for a specific need God allowed you to be aware of
 - c) Pray for our church's finances and ministry needs
 - d) Pray for the lost to be saved, mention their names to the Lord
 - e) Pray for missionaries serving around the world in places that have limited gospel access.
 - f) Pray for the persecuted church, the churches that need encouragement, the churches that need to find their way

IV. Close