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The Miracles of Jesus Christ: Delivering a Demon-Possessed Boy

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THE MIRACLES OF JESUS CHRIST

MIRACLE TWENTY-FIVE: Delivering a Demon-Possessed Boy (Mt. 17:14-18; Mk. 9:14-29; Lk. 9:38-42)

SURVEY

A desperate father begs Jesus to deliver his tormented son from a cruel and vicious demon who would cause him to fall into fire and water, cast him to the ground, throw him into convulsions, and was slowly killing him. Note the ensuing conversation:

The father: *"If you can do anything, please do it."*

The Savior: *"If you believe, I can do all things."*

The father: *"Lord, I believe—help thou my unbelief."*

With this, Jesus rebuked the evil spirit and freed the son.

SIGNIFICANCE

- This is the final of three instances in which Jesus would supernaturally minister to an only child.
 1. He raised from the dead the only son of a widow (Lk. 7:12).
 2. He raised from the dead the only daughter of Jairus (Lk. 8:42).
- It is the only miracle showing the utter inability of the disciples to help the person in need.
 1. As testified to by the father: *"And I besought thy disciples to cast him out; and they could not."* (Lk. 9:40)
 2. As testified to by the disciples themselves: *"Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out?"* (Mt. 17:19)
- This is the second of two of the most frightful and graphic descriptions regarding the horrors of demon possession in the entire Bible! For the first, see miracle 14.

SPIRITUAL TRUTHS

- Leaving the Mount of Transfiguration, our Lord enters the valley of disfiguration. On the mountain, the friends of heaven (Moses and Elijah) had comforted Him. In the valley, the foes of hell would challenge Him! In essence, these words serve to summarize Jesus' ministry and mission.
- As His faithful followers we are called upon to do the same. Note Paul's words:

"Blessed be God, even the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ." (2 Cor. 1:3-5)

Thus, in church the believer may sing about "The Sweet By and By" but upon leaving, he enters the world of the "Nasty Now and Now."

- Note the Father's struggle for faith:

"And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." (Mk. 9:24)

This kind of struggling, desperate faith, even though plagued with doubt, will reach the heart of God immediately. The psalmist spoke of this:

"Like a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." (Psa. 103:13-14)

Question: How much faith does it take to please God?

Response: How much faith do you have?

Illustration: Let us suppose you face a million-dollar need but only have a ten-dollar bill. God's plan in solving this is both gracious and simple: Give Him your ten dollars and He will add the remaining \$999,990. However small our faith, He wants it all. Our problem, however, is that all too often we shortchange Him on the ten dollars.

- Why could not the disciples help this desperate father and his demon-possessed son?

On two previous occasions, they had been able to cast out demons.

"And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them" (Mk. 6:13).

"And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord even the devils are subject unto us through thy name" (Lk. 10:17).

Why then could they not help this heartbroken father? There were at least four reasons.

1. They had too little faith (Mt. 17:20).
2. They had too little self-denial (Mk. 9:29).
3. They had too little prayer (Mk. 9:29).
4. They had too much bickering (Mk. 9:14).

It is so easy to become an Ichabod Christian (meaning *"the glory of the Lord hath departed;"* see 1 Sam. 4:21-22) without even being aware of it until the crisis comes.

The Old Testament strongman Samson serves as a classic and tragic example of this very thing!

"That he told her all his heart, and said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb: if I be shaven, then my strength

will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man. And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up this once, for he hath shewed me all his heart, Then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and brought money in their hand. And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him. And she said, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the LORD was departed from him.” (Judg. 16:17-20)