

March 13

Desperate Father, Despairing Disciples

Yahweh said to Satan, “Yahweh rebuke you, Satan! Yes, Yahweh who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Isn’t this a burning stick plucked out of the fire?” – Zechariah 3:2

[Mark 9:14-32, Caesarea Philippi] Coming to the disciples *on the next day, when they had come down from the mountain*, he saw a great multitude around them, and scribes questioning them. Immediately all the multitude, when they saw him, were greatly amazed, and running to him greeted him. He asked the scribes, “What are you asking them?”

One of the multitude answered, “Teacher, I brought to you my son, who has a mute spirit; *have mercy for he is my only child. He is epileptic, and suffers grievously; and wherever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams at the mouth, and grinds his teeth, and wastes away. I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they weren’t able.*”

He answered him, “Unbelieving generation, *how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to me.*”

They brought him to him, and when he saw him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground, wallowing and foaming at the mouth.

He asked his father, “*How long has it been since this has come to him?*”

He said, “From childhood. Often it has cast him both into the fire and into the water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us, and help us.”

Jesus said to him, “*If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.*”

Immediately the father of the child cried out with tears, “I believe. Help my unbelief!”

I believe. Help my unbelief!

When Jesus saw that a multitude came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to him, “*You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again!*”

Having cried out, and convulsed greatly, it came out of him. The boy became like one dead; so much that most of them said, “He is dead.” But Jesus took him by the hand, and raised him up; and he arose and was cured from that hour. *They were all astonished at the majesty of God.*

When he had come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, “Why couldn’t we cast it out?”

He said to them, “*Because of your unbelief. For most certainly I tell you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will tell this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. But this kind can come out by nothing, except by prayer.**” [*often “and fasting” was added here]

They went out from there, and passed through Galilee. He didn’t want anyone to know it. For he was teaching his disciples, and said to them, “*Let these words sink into your ears, for the Son of Man is being handed over to the hands of men, and they will kill him; and when he is killed, on the third day he will rise again.*”

They were exceedingly sorry, but they didn’t understand the saying, and were afraid to ask him. *It was concealed from them, that they should not perceive it.* [Matthew 17:14-23, Luke 9:37-45]

1. What prayer drove out this demon? Why would the early church add “and fasting”?
2. Why did scribes often question Jesus’ ministry (Jan. 21)? Why did the disciples despair?
3. Jesus, my desperate prayer is... and I’m despairing now because... Thank you that...

