



If Only ...

Message by Andrew Kulasingham, 14th July, 2019

Scripture Reading:

Mark 9:20-24 (NLT)

So they brought the boy. But when the evil spirit saw Jesus, it threw the child into a violent convulsion, and he fell to the ground, writhing and foaming at the mouth.

“How long has this been happening?” Jesus asked the boy’s father.

He replied, “Since he was a little boy. The spirit often throws him into the fire or into water, trying to kill him. Have mercy on us and help us, if you can.”

“What do you mean, ‘If I can’?” Jesus asked. “Anything is possible if a person believes.”

The father instantly cried out, “I do believe, but help me overcome my unbelief.”

Mark 9:28-29 (NLT)

Afterwards, when Jesus was alone in the house with his disciples, they asked him, “Why couldn’t we cast out that evil spirit?”

Jesus replied, “This kind can be cast out only by prayer.”

Last week we saw that the Gospel is the message of the power of God.

Romans 1:16

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes.

Jesus said, “You will see the kingdom of God come with power.”

- We are not ashamed of this Gospel.
- We believe we will see the kingdom of God come with power.
- The Gospel is the Gospel of power - power of God to salvation.
- It is supernatural – it is miraculous – it is beyond comprehension.

We choose not to base our beliefs and theology around our circumstances. We choose to believe God’s word as it is.

Just because we haven’t seen the healing yet – does not mean God does not heal.

- I will pursue healing when I see someone who is sick – until they are healed
- I will pursue deliverance for all who are in bondage – until they are set free
- I will pursue inner healing for the broken hearted – until they see their breakthrough

Why? Because that is the only mandate given to the church – there is no plan B.

Today I want to deal with another unhelpful mindset – IF ONLY – wishful thinking.

Wishful thinking is not faith. Examples of wishful thinking are:

- If only this would happen to me.
- I hope God will answer my prayer.

The word AMEN – is not “I hope so.”

Amen means “It **is** so”; “Let it be as you have spoken, Lord”;
“I agree with God’s word and say **it is so.**”

Hebrews 11 clearly tells us what faith is.

Hebrews 11:1 (NKJV)

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Hebrews 11:1 (NLT)

Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see.

Hebrews 11:1 (AMP) -

Now faith is the assurance (title deed, confirmation) of things hoped for (divinely guaranteed), and the evidence of things not seen [the conviction of their reality—faith comprehends as fact what cannot be experienced by the physical senses].

We want to look at an incident that occurred in Jesus’ ministry to speak into this IF ONLY thinking in our lives.

READ Mark 9:14-18 - what to do when God doesn’t show up.

The Scribes were arguing with the disciples.

Mark 9:14 - **And when He came to the disciples, He saw a great multitude around them, and scribes disputing with them.**

Mark 9:18 - **“So I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not.”**

They’re trying to explain away unanswered prayer.

They’re coming up with a theology when God doesn’t show up.

Let’s stop explaining away unanswered prayer.

In Mark 9:19 – who is responsible for the kid’s miracle?

Verse 15 - **Immediately, when they saw Him, all the people were greatly amazed, and running to Him, greeted Him.**

Verse 18 - **“So I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not.”**

Thank God Jesus is here.

The crowd gasps a sigh of relief – the poor boy will finally get some help.

The father says, “I told your disciples they should but they could not.”

Here’s Jesus’ response.

Mark 9:19 He answered him and said, “O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me.”

He is saying it to the father of the boy (answered him and said...)

He is saying it to the disciples and scribes and the crowd (you generation that lacks faith...)

He’s saying: I just told you I’m not going to be around for much longer – you will have to take responsibility now – you do it.

Here are two examples of “You do it.”

- the feeding of the 5000 – “You feed them.”
- the calming of the storm – “Why don’t you have faith to stop the storm?”

Jesus had an expectation that those who have been following him should do as he does

He’s saying: I’ve given you all the grace and resources you need – you do it.

There’s another example in Mark 6, three chapters before this one.

Mark 6:7 - And He called the twelve to Himself, and began to send them out two by two, and gave them power over unclean spirits.

Mark 6:12-13 - So they went out and preached that people should repent. And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them.

Jesus wasn’t with them – He empowered them and He sent them.

Let’s stop explaining away unanswered prayer.

Let’s take responsibility for what we are called to do.

READ Mark 9:20-27

The boy is experiencing violent convulsion and foaming from the mouth.

Jesus is having a chat with the father of the boy.

DON’T MISS THIS IMPORTANT POINT.

Mark 9:21 So He asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?”

And he said, “From childhood. And often he has thrown 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.”

But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.

Why was Jesus waiting before he healed the boy?
TO REMOVE THE “IF” FROM THE FATHER’S VOCABULARY.

Mark 9:23 -

“What do you mean, ‘If I can’?” Jesus asked. “Anything is possible if a person believes.”

He’s saying, “I know what I can do. Do you know what I can do?”

Jesus was waiting for agreement – waiting for someone to agree with HIM in order to see the miracle come to pass.

Mark 9:24 -

The father instantly cried out, “I do believe, but help me overcome my unbelief!”

I believe Lord – please top up whatever is lacking

I AMEN that LORD – please make my AMEN louder.

Let’s stop explaining away unanswered prayer.

Let’s take responsibility for what we are called to do.

We are called to come to agreement with what God wants to do in people’s lives.

You know the story – Jesus heals the boy.

I will close with a “how to” – something practical for us to take home with us.

Mark 9:28-29

Afterward, when Jesus was alone in the house with his disciples, they asked him, “Why couldn’t we cast out that evil spirit?”

Jesus replied, “This kind can be cast out only by prayer.”

How do we come to agreement with God? – prayer.

Prayer is not wishful thinking. Prayer is coming to alignment with God’s Word.

When we pray we are not trying to change God’s mind – we are trying to change our minds.

2 Corinthians 1:20 (NLT)

For all of God’s promises have been fulfilled in Christ with a resounding “Yes!”

And through Christ, our “Amen” (which means “Yes”) ascends to God for his glory.

2 Corinthians 1:20 (MSG)

Whatever God has promised gets stamped with the Yes of Jesus. In him, this is what we preach and pray, the great Amen, God’s Yes and our Yes together, gloriously evident.

THE GREAT AMEN is GOD’S YES AND OUR YES TOGETHER.

Psalm 103

**Bless the Lord, O my soul;
And all that is within me, bless His holy name!
Bless the Lord, O my soul,
And forget not all His benefits:
Who forgives all your iniquities,
Who heals all your diseases,
Who redeems your life from destruction,
Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies,
Who satisfies your mouth with good things,
So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.**

1. Let's stop explaining away unanswered prayer.
2. Let's take responsibility for what we are called to do as followers of Christ.
3. We are called to come to agreement with what God wants to do in people's lives.
4. Let's come into alignment with what God is saying in his Word .
Start speaking the great Amen – God's yes and our yes together.