Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Significance of Faith, Part 2
Scripture: Luke 9:42-43
Code: 42-127

Well we come again to our ongoing study in the gospel of Luke, so rich and so rewarding for us to come to understand what the Scripture says. I have been accused through the years and probably with some justification of...of not emphasizing practical matters in my preaching, practical matters even in my writing. But that's not something I forget to do, it is a conviction of my own heart that the responsibility that I have, the responsibility of the teacher and the man of God, the preacher is to make the Word of God clear and not to go where the Word doesn't go but to go everywhere the Word goes. And if by understanding the Word of God you come to know and to think biblically, then the Spirit of God will take over the practical direction of your life and lead you through the Word. That's why Scripture says, "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly." And when you think biblically, and when your thought processes are dominated by an understanding of divine truth, it flushes out in every practical realm so that almost your involuntary responses are biblical, your knee-jerk reactions tend to be conformed to how you think. It's critical that people not just be given "how to" lessons, but that they understand the breadth and length and depth and height of divine truth so that it so dominates their mind that whether they act voluntarily or involuntarily, instinctively they act in response to that understanding. And there really is no richer realm of truth than the gospels which profile the Lord Jesus Christ. And so we are finding ourselves, in a sense, moving slowly and yet hopefully moving deeply through the wonderful history of Christ given us by Luke, endeavoring to understand the mind of Christ that we might have the mind of Christ, think the way He thinks, and therefore conduct our lives in response to that kind of thinking. The Bible says, "As you are in your heart, or as a man thinks in his heart, so is he."

Let's turn to Luke chapter 9 verse 37. And we go back to the text that we started in last week. The power of faith in the Lord...the power of faith in the Lord is really the subject here in verses 37 down to 45. And we started this last week. Let me sort of jump in at a very important point, if I might.

A casual observer living at the time of Jesus would have identified the Jewish people of Jesus' day as religious. He would have identified them as extremely religious, religious to the maximum, consumed as a nation, as a people with religious laws, religious duties, religious ceremonies, religious rites, religious rituals, religious celebrations, religious festivals. It would be hard to imagine any society anywhere anytime more religious than Israel of the day of Jesus. The general sort of prevailing attitude was one of fastidious morality. Their religion had an impact on how they lived their lives.

There were clear rules and standards by which they were to conduct their lives. And to fail to do so was to expose themselves to ridicule and to social disgrace and even alienation. The watching pagan would have seen these people dominated by religion, dominated by morality.

And from the visibly moral perspective they would have been right. It would also have to be said that they were involved in worshiping the God of the Old Testament. So they were not only religious but they had religion directed toward the right God. The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, the God who had given the Covenant to Abraham, confirmed it to Isaac, confirmed it to Jacob and they were the people of that covenant worshiping the God who gave that covenant. They expected when the Messiah came that He would congratulate them, congratulate them on the fact that they were not idolatrous, in fact they hated idols. They were offended every day by the presence of the Romans for a number of reasons and perhaps one of the most important reasons was that the Romans were idolaters. There were even insurrections in the land of Israel when images of Caesar appeared on coins and on other flags, other symbolic articles. They supposed that when the Messiah came the Messiah would offer them congratulations, you're exactly where you ought to be, you have attained self-righteousness, you have gained the Kingdom of God, your morality pleases God, your religion pleases God. And I'm here to congratulate you and give you the Kingdom.

That was what they expected. They expected that He would immediately side with them as the abused people, that He would conquer the idolatrous Romans, the pagan Romans, throw them out of the country, establish His Kingdom in Israel and rule the world. But He didn't. In fact, He came and indicted them. He told them that their religion was bankrupt, that it was empty, that their self-righteousness was disgusting to Him and to God. He told them that they were not a part of the Kingdom of God at all. In fact, it would be more likely that tax gatherers and prostitutes and street riff-raff would go into the Kingdom before they would. He told them that they were poor, that they were imprisoned by their sins and their lusts, that they were blind to spiritual truth, and that they were under a massive burden of guilt that would bring about divine judgment upon their heads.

They didn't like the message and so they killed Him. That's the simple story of what happened. They didn't like that. They wanted congratulations, not an indictment. They wanted affirmation of the validity of their religion. They didn't get it. Here was the Messiah indicting them and telling them they needed to repent from their self-righteousness. They needed to repent from their empty religion. They needed to repent from their own sort of idolatry in which they had made little gods out of themselves.

In verse 41 of this passage Jesus sums up His perspective on Israel. "Jesus answered and said, 'O unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you and put up with you?'" It was hard for Jesus to even bear them. It was wearing and wearying to endure these people because they

were unbelieving and perverted. Very strong words, they would have congratulated themselves that they were the people of faith. They would have congratulated themselves that they were...they were straight. Jesus said, "You're faithless and twisted."

On other occasions He spoke to the people of Israel, the Jews, and He called them a generation of snakes. He called them offspring of vipers. He said, "You serpents, you brood of vipers." He called them an evil and adulterous generation. He called them a wicked generation. He called them in another text, Matthew 17:17, a perverse generation. And He called them in Mark 8 an adulterous and sinful generation. Peter echoing what Jesus said in his sermon in Acts 2 and verse 40 called the Jews, "This crooked," and he used the word *skolios*from which we get scoliosis which is a crookedness or curvature of the spine. This crooked generation.

What was the indictment on them? They were snakes, vipers, evil, adulterers, wicked, perverse, sinful, crooked, twisted. That is an absolutely horrifying kind of description for them to cope with because they don't see that at all. And it was that that precipitated their hatred of Jesus. Jesus said some very hard words, very, very hard words, very harsh words. They were true. This statement in verse 41 fits into the hard words of Jesus, the harsh words of Jesus. "And when He said to them, 'O unbelieving and perverted generation,'" they knew exactly what He meant. And I'll show you why.

Go back in your Bible to Deuteronomy chapter 32..Deuteronomy chapter 32. Now remember, these people were people of the Scripture. They prided themselves on that, on their familiarity of the Old Testament. And when Jesus called them a faithless and perverted generation, they knew what He was talking about. The sting ran deep because they all knew Deuteronomy 32, the familiar song of Moses. Chapter 31 verse 28, Moses says, "Assemble to me all the elders of your tribes and your officers that I may speak these words in their hearing and call the heavens and the earth to witness against them for I know that after my death you will act corruptly and turn from the way which I have commanded you and evil will befall you in the latter days for you will do that which is evil in the sight of the Lord, provoking Him to anger with the work of your hands." Moses says, "I know where you're going, I know what you're going to do. I've seen evidence of it in the wilderness wandering. I've seen it all. I know exactly what's going to happen when I'm gone."

"Then Moses spoke in the hearing of all the assembly of Israel the words of this song until they were complete." He made it into a song so that it would be memorable, like a poem, easy to remember. And I can't read all of it this morning, but enough of it for you to understand how it relates to our text. Let's start at the beginning in verse 1, "Give ear, O heavens, and let me speak and let the earth hear the words of my mouth. Let my teaching drop as the rain, my speech distill as the dew, as the droplets on the fresh grass and as the showers on the herb, for I proclaim the name of the Lord, ascribe greatness to our God, the rock. His work is perfect for all His ways are just, a God of faithfulness and without injustice, righteous and upright is He." Then this, "They have acted corruptly toward Him, they are not His children because of their deceit but are a perverse and crooked

generation. Do you thus repay the Lord, O foolish and unwise people? Is not He your Father who has bought you, He has made you and established you?" There is the indictment. They are a perverse and crooked generation.

Down in verse 16 says they made God jealous with strange gods, with abominations, provoked Him to anger. They sacrificed to demons who were not god to gods whom they had not known, new gods who came lately, whom your fathers didn't dread. You neglected the rock who begot you and forgot the God who gave you birth. And the Lord saw this and spurned them because of the provocation of His sons and daughters. Then He said, "I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end shall be, for they are a perverse generation, sons in whom is no faith." There's where it comes from, a faithless and perverse generation. "They have made Me jealous with what is not God, they have provoked Me to anger with their idols, so I will make them jealous with those who are not a people. I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation." They all knew that song of Moses. You can go back to Luke chapter 9. Obviously more could be said about the passage, but you get the point. That's where Jesus found the language.

And what is He saying? He's saying to these people who prided themselves on their religiosity, who prided themselves on having shunned idolatry, who prided themselves on worshiping the true God, He says to them, "You're no different than the people of Moses' day who were indicted. You are no different than that crooked perverse and faithless generation. You are just the same. You have a defected twisted knowledge of the Lord and you lack faith in Him." That was clear because here was the Lord in their midst. Here was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob incarnate in their midst and they had a twisted view of Jesus, a perverse view of Jesus and they did not believe in Him.

So here is Jesus, God in human flesh, the Messiah, God the Son having come into the world and they manifest how perverse and twisted they are and faithless they are in the way they deal with Him. Obviously they didn't know the true and living God or they would have recognized Him when He came. Obviously they didn't have a right view of their Lord or a right view of themselves or they would have responded to Him differently. You have to have a right theology to understand the true Lord, the true God, and you must believe in Him or you can't be saved or you can't be sanctified, as we saw last time. Crucial to salvation is faith in the true Lord. Crucial to sanctification is faith in the true Lord and, of course, crucial to glorification is faith in the true Lord.

So Jesus wants to teach us about faith in this passage. We can ask the question, as we did last time, what is faith? What kind of faith are we talking about? When we talk about faith in a biblical context, this is what we mean. It is believing what the Lord has said simply because He said it. When Christians say they have faith in God, it doesn't mean some nebulous God, some God of their own

making, their own imagination, their own formulating. What it means is we believe that what the Bible says about God is true. You cannot separate our faith in God from the revelation of God in Scripture. It is not the God that I have experienced only. It is not the God that I wish to exist. It is not the God that I have formulated either out of my intuition or out of my experience. It is the God of Scripture. We who are saved are saved because we believe what the Scripture says about God, about Christ, and about salvation. We who are being sanctified are being sanctified because we believe the truth. And so we live by faith. And what that means is we believe what God has said simply because He said it. That's why your view of Scripture is so critical. All the believers access Jesus is going to teach us here, all our access to God's power in our lives is by means of faith. You can't have the power of salvation unless by faith. You can't have the power of sanctification unless by faith. Believing God will save you. Believing God will sanctify you. So what we need to know is what God has said.

Now let's get into the story. The prior passage was the transfiguration. Jesus went up into the mountain with Peter, James and John. And you remember that He was transfigured there. They saw His glory. They were literally taken into the eternal Kingdom. They saw Moses there and Elijah talking with Jesus about His departure, about His death and His resurrection and His ascension back into heaven. This was an incredibly wonderful experience. This was a glimpse of the eternal Kingdom, a glimpse of Christ in His glory, a glimpse of the glorified saints, Moses and Elijah and hearing the audible voice of God there as well. That was an experience of sight, we could say.

But then they came down from the mountain, back into the world of faith, back into the realm where you don't see but you believe anyway. And how important it is as long as we are living in this world, we have to walk by faith and not by...what?...by sight. So we have to believe the Word of God. I'm going to heaven. Have I been there? No, but I'm banking my entire time and eternity on the fact that what the Bible says about heaven is true. I believe the gospel and I have counted my eternal destiny on that gospel. I am fixed in believing that gospel because I believe that it will provide for me eternal life. How do I know that? Because that's what the Bible says and I believe the Word of God. My faith is in what God has said simply because it is God who has said it. And one of the things that God has said about Himself is that He cannot lie.

So we live in this world by faith. I pray by faith. I preach by faith. I believe the Word of God has power to transform souls. I believe that because that's what the Scripture says. I believe God hears and answers prayers, so I pray. I believe God sanctifies us through the Word and so I study the Word. I put my faith in what's revealed by Scripture and that's what the Lord wants to teach the disciples, to believe everything He has said.

"It came about on the next day," verse 37 says, the day after the transfiguration experience for Peter, James and John, "when they had come down from the mountain, a great multitude met Him." They come down, the three of them. The other nine Apostles were down below, they didn't have the

experience that the three had. After that they came down. The first thing they run into when they come down is demon possession. And this first incident Jesus is going to use is a way to illustrate the importance of faith, the power of faith. "Behold, a man from the multitude shouted out saying, 'Teacher, I beg You to look at my son.'" To look means to look intently with concern and with care, pick him out of the crowd, give your attention to him, "For he is my only boy, my only son."

And the father goes on to describe the problem. "Behold a spirit seizes him." He understood that it wasn't physiological or psychological, it was spiritual, it was a demon. "A spirit seizes him, he suddenly screams, it throws him into a convulsion with foaming at the mouth and as it mauls him, it scarcely leaves him." Demon possession, this is a very serious case, as we pointed out last time, went into a lot more detail. Compared Mark's passage which is much more lengthy and Luke...and Matthew's which is a little bit longer than this one, and we picked up an awful lot of details on the terrible torment and terrorizing that this demon had been doing to this boy since he was a very young child. And we remember, don't we, that the demon was trying to kill this boy. Obviously God had protected his life to bring him to this point so that he could be healed for the glory of Christ. And what did the demon do to try to kill the boy? He threw him into the fire whenever he could and he threw him into a well of water or a pool trying to drown him. Up to this point, obviously, unsuccessfully. The parents then were saddled with this unbelievable responsibility to try to care for this completely out-of-control boy that was under the power of this demon force who was trying to take his life, either in fire or water.

Well you go from demon possession, last time, to disciple perversion. I hate to even use that but that's the language of the text. Verse 40, "I begged Your disciples to cast it out and they could not." The man says, "You know, I went to Your..." probably means to some of the nine Apostles who were left down below, the man had already brought his boy, he had already gone to the disciples, or the Apostles, to see if they could deliver the boy. Why would he do that? Why would he go to them? Because they had been given the power to do that, remember back in chapter 9 we pointed out in verse 1 He called the Twelve together, gave them power and authority over all the demons, over all the demons. He told them, "You have power and authority over all the demons." And they had gone out after that commission all through Galilee two by two, exhibiting this tremendous power, power over demons, power over disease, power over death, cleansing lepers, etc. They had done it all so their reputation was widespread that they could do that. And so the man reasonably brings his boy.

But they couldn't do it...they couldn't do it. This one was, they thought, too severe for them. Maybe they were a little bit too self-confident and tried to act in their own flesh, they couldn't do it. But I think that the only way really to understand this based upon Matthew 17:19 and 20 is they came to Jesus a little later and said, "Why couldn't we do it?" And He said, "Because of the littleness of your faith. You didn't believe it could be done. You thought here's one that's too far gone, here's one that's too

severe." This is horrific the way this demon is terrorizing this boy. "You didn't have the faith to believe."

Now remember, He told them, Luke 9:1, "I give you authority over all the demons," all being the operative word. "But you didn't believe." And then in almost a soliloquy in verse 41, "Jesus answered and said, 'O unbelieving and perverted generation.'" It's almost as if there's a level of exasperation here. "How long shall I be with you and put up with you?" Generation is *genea*, it basically means contemporaries. And He's saying all of the people who exhibit unbelief, all of the people who exhibit perverseness, the crowd, the unbelieving people of Israel, they exhibited a lot of that unbelief and perverseness, the disciples exhibited a little of it. They were perverted in their belief just a little bit, but it was enough to think that this was not a person who could be delivered. And so their faith was limited by their failure to believe in the power of Christ. They were perverse, *diastrepho*, distorted, perverted, twisted, depraved, crooked, wrong, all of those words can be a translation of that. So they just didn't...they thought that this was too hard for the Lord. This was beyond the power available and their twisted view of God's power then went along with their faithlessness. Certainly the whole nation of Israel was twisted in their view of Christ and faithless, certainly the religious experts, the scribes and Pharisees, and we know for sure the scribes were there on this very occasion, they were guilty. They were so twisted. They were so faithless that they were plotting how to execute Jesus, how to murder Him.

But we really can't even let the disciples off the hook either. The nine who failed to deliver the demon-possessed boy failed to do so because they did not believe that the power was available. They had a distorted view. They had a lack of faith in what Jesus had specifically told them. They had no reason to have a wrong view of the Lord's power. They had seen enough. They had seen Him casting out demons. They had seen Him healing people, raising dead, controlling nature. They had seen Him deal with a maniac in Gadara who was full of a legion of demons. Why was this so difficult?

But at this point the Apostles have a twisted view. They lack full confidence in the power of the Lord to deal with this level of demon possession. And their twisted faithlessness exasperates the Lord, "How long shall I be with you?" How much do you have to see? What is there left for Me to show you? "O you of little faith," He said to them so many times...so many times. "How long do I have to put up with you?" And I keep wondering how many times the Lord has had that same soliloquy over me...over me. How long do I have to put up with you? How long do I have to bear with you and your failure to believe Me?

Then He says in holy frustration, "Bring your son here...bring your son here." He steps in to do on His own what His Apostles could have done if they had believed...if they had believed. And it wasn't their believing alone that would make it happen, as I said last week, it was their believing in His power that had been promised to them that would make it happen. The point that I'm going to keep emphasizing through this whole story is that we can believe what God has promised. We can't believe into existence things He hasn't promised. But we can believe He will keep His Word. They didn't, so He took over. "Bring your son here." The man was going to get what he wanted. The demon was going to get what he didn't want. The demon was now brought face to face with God the Son and His sovereign, the one who had originally kicked him out of heaven along with Lucifer. And the demon in response takes action. Verse 42, "And while he was still approaching," the father and the boy are coming...closing the distance from which the father had fallen on his knees and pled with Jesus crying in a loud voice, he now gets up and with the boy they close the distance to Jesus and as they approach Jesus, the demon dashed him to the ground. We would say smashed him to the ground, *sun sparasso (?)*, it is a compound word literally referring to a strong assault. It is an intense word, slammed him down and threw him into a convulsion, no doubt traumatizing his head or his brain. Mark adds the details saying, "He began rolling around and foaming at the mouth." Probably the Apostles at that point were saying, "We told You it was hard. Now that vindicates our lack of faith." The boy already scarred emotionally, the boy already scarred physically from having been slammed all over the place through his young life is again pounded by the force of that demon in an effort to kill him. What a picture.

Mark adds at this point there, right in the middle of verse 42 we can drop Mark's words as he looks at the same scene. Mark records in Mark 9:22 to 24, "If You can do anything, take pity on us and help us. Now You see, now You understand." The father says, "Take pity and help us." Jesus said to him... "If you can...He said...if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us." And Jesus says, "What do you mean if we can? All things are possible...He says...to him who believes...All things are possible to him who believes."

"Immediately the boy's father cries out and began saying, 'I do believe, help my unbelief.'" Oh what an honest statement. I believe, I do believe. Maybe I just don't believe enough. Give me whatever kind of faith I need, I do believe. And Jesus was going to use this man out of the crowd, this man who didn't have apostolic power, who hadn't been given apostolic privilege, who hadn't been given the authority over demons that the Apostles had been given, but He's going to show them that this man's faith in this incident would activate the power of God over that demon. As an illustration of what faith in the Word can do, faith in the promise of God can do, "All things are possible to the one who believes what I've said." The boy said...the boy's father said, "I do believe," and he screamed it, "help my unbelief." Whatever lacks in my faith, please fill it up.

Jesus didn't always require faith for healings, didn't require faith for the casting out of demons. In fact, rarely in the healing ministry of Jesus did He call out to a person that they had to believe. But

here in this context, the point of everything is to teach the Apostles that the power promised them is available to them if they will believe. God is not going to grant that power to them if they don't believe because that would reinforce their doubt. That would mean that they could come up short of really having a true view of the Lord, true view of His power and total trust in Him. If they have that, then that power is available to them. But He will not honor their twisted theology and He will not honor their lack of faith. So He takes this man out of the crowd who has just some faith, not a perfect faith, and uses him as an illustration of what just some faith in the Lord will do.

So demon possession and disciple perversion. We come now to the moment, the third point in this account, divine power...divine power, pick it up at verse 42, the middle of the verse, "But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the boy and gave him back to his father." It's always so matter of fact in the Scripture. No fanfare, just absolute matter of fact simple language describing what He did. But I want to just again fill in some of the gaps because this is just...its just such a marvelous picture to paint in your minds at what is going on here.

In Mark 9 it says, "When Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering, He rebuked the unclean spirit saying to it, 'You deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and do not enter him again.'" Now that tells us what He said. Here in Luke's account it just says He rebuked the unclean spirit. Here it says He rebuked the unclean spirit saying, "You deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and do not enter him again." Now after Jesus said that, after crying out and throwing him into terrible convulsions, it came out. So before Jesus said anything in the story of Luke, the demon slams the child to the ground and the boy starts convulsing and foaming at the mouth, Jesus rebukes the demon. The demon hits him one final blow, throws him into terrible convulsions. Then it says, "Came out and the boy became so much like a corpse that most of them said he is dead." Just lying there like a dead boy. "But Jesus took him by the hand," Mark 9:27, "raised him and he got up." Back here to Luke, once he got up having been healed, Jesus gave him back to his father. There's love here. There's compassion here. There's mercy here. There's kindness here all in the heart of the Lord for those who suffer. We can only imagine what joy there was in the heart of that father, what unbelievable gratitude there was to have a boy delivered who had been literally beleaguered by that demon for years and years for perhaps most of his life. But that wasn't really the main lesson. Compassion is great, love is great, of course, it's all there in the person of Christ. But the miracle is to show the faithless twisted disciples the power that was available to them because the Lord told them it was if they would believe.

Mark 9:28 then adds, and 29, "When he had come into the house after it was all over, His disciples began questioning Him privately, 'Why could we not cast it out? Why couldn't we do it?'" And Mark 9:29, "He said to them, 'This kind cannot come out by anything but prayer.'" Some translations add, "And fasting," although that's not in the preferred manuscripts. Jesus says, "You're going to have to

pray." In other words, you're going to have to come before Me in believing prayer. As we remember from Matthew 17, "Because of the littleness of your faith it didn't happen." You're going to have to come to Me in believing prayer, you're going to have to say, "O God, do this...this is a severe demon, this is a strong demon." And, you know, there are differences. You remember the account of Daniel 10, you remember, where the Lord wants to answer Daniel's prayer and send an angel and the angel is literally withstood by a demon and can't get through. And Michael the great archangel, super angel has to go and help break the bondage that has literally occurred at the strength of demons holding up the answer to prayer. There is a spiritual war and it's a real one. And there are some demons rightly serious and severe. And the disciples knew this was different than what they had seen and Jesus says, "This one is not easy. This one requires prayer and prayer assumes faith."

And then in Matthew 17:20 He said this to them also, "For truly I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it shall move and nothing shall be impossible to you." Now we all know that passage, don't we? We all know that passage. I'm not sure we understand what it means, let me just simply tell you what it means. Moving mountains was not a literal promise. Nobody's ever done that, except God Himself. Moving mountains was a metaphor for difficult things. We use it that way today. You might say to somebody, "Boy, you really expect to move mountains, don't you?" We use that metaphorically to refer to extreme difficulties. They had just seen a mountain. They had just seen a demon-possessed boy in an extreme condition where with a more formidable demon than perhaps some others that they had seen in their...in their application of the authority that the Lord had delegated to them. They saw something more severe than anything they had ever encountered. This to them was one of those extreme difficulties. Jesus simply says to them, "Look, it's not impossible...not impossible to move those mountains, it's not impossible if you have faith." And it doesn't require a massive amount of faith, it requires faith as of a grain of mustard seed, the kind of faith that that man had who said, "I believe, help my unbelief." He didn't say, "I totally believe," he said, "I believe a little but I know I'm not complete in my faith."

But there's a caveat here and the caveat is this, nothing is impossible if you have even a small amount of faith if God has revealed that it is His will. That's very important to understand. I think again back to this misconception about faith, that somehow faith is a personal power which makes things happen just because I exercise faith. No, faith is believing what God said simply because He said it and believing enough in what God has said to pray that God will do what He said He will do. And my faith in praying that God will do what He said He would do, believing that that is what He will do activates His power. It doesn't mean that if I believe hard enough I can make things happen, including healings. Simply a matter of the Apostles believing that what Jesus told them they could do they could do and then praying for the power of their Lord to be released to do it. The word had already been spoken, the promise had already been given, the will of God had already been displayed and manifest. All they needed was to believe it. Such a critical lesson. I can't even...I can't

even begin to emphasize how critical a lesson this is. This isn't about teaching us how to cast out demons. This isn't about teaching us to heal. This is not about teaching us how to move mountains, nobody does that simply because we believe hard enough. This is about believing that God will do what He said He will do. But He will not do it in a twisted and perverse heart because He will not honor that, no matter how impossible it may be. If God said He will do it, He'll do it if you believe. If you doubt and have a twisted view of Him, you're like the double-minded man and the double-minded man, James says, don't expect him to receive anything from God because God will not honor his doubt. God promises is, for example, God promises no matter how wretched you are, no matter how wicked you are, no matter how sinful you are, no matter how ungodly your life has been, no matter how long you have wallowed in sin, if you come and repent and cry out for salvation, He will save you. Is that a promise? Can you believe that? Then you go to God in faith and you believe that. You can't come to Him without the faith to believe and expect Him to give you salvation. It's predicated on faith. But He will save you because that's His promise.

And when you have come to salvation and received His grace, Scripture promises you that when you need help in time of need, you can go to the throne of mercy and whatever it is you need, He'll display it and He'll dispense it. And He will honor the prayer of faith that cries out at the throne of mercy to have your spiritual need met. If you need hope in the midst of the darkness, if you need joy in the midst of sorrow, if you need love in the midst of bitterness and hatred, if you need comfort in the time of pain and suffering, if you need strength in the hour of weakness, if you need wisdom in the midst of foolishness, if you need help in the midst of despair, if you need victory in the midst of defeat...it's there because all of that's been promised. If you need somebody to take all your cares and your burdens and bear them, He'll do it. If you want forgiveness for your sins, if you want cleansing, if you want spiritual opportunity for the proclamation of the gospel, if you want a place to serve and minister, those are all things that He has promised to give us. And when you pray in faith believing that He means what He says and you ask in faith, He'll give it...He'll give it. Those who in the severest circumstances believe are the ones who learn this lesson. You're losing your life partner with a terminal illness, you don't know what the future looks like, you're afraid, you're already anticipating loneliness, your heart is broken, your shattered, you don't know how you're going to take care of the family...but the Bible says God will provide everything that you need, right? My God shall supply how many of your needs? All your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Do you believe that? If you go in faith believing and ask God to fulfill that promise which He has made, He will do that...He will do that. There's nothing that He has said He would do that He will not do if you believe. If you believe, one that He is capable, you have a true view of Him and not a twisted one, and if you believe that He will keep His word, then you will experience that power...that provision. That's what this is about.

For the disciples, it was the unique ability to cast out demons and heal the sick. For us, because we aren't given those promises, those were for the Apostles, it is whatever promises God has given in the Word of God that apply to us, we can literally draw on the fulfillment of those promises by faith...by faith.

Well the story ends with a fitting climax. Verse 43, "They were all amazed at the greatness of God." They were all amazed at the greatness of God. All of them were. I mean, there's no other explanation. They knew it was God. You know, the word amazed, *ekplesso, ekplessomi*, really an interesting word, it means *ek*is a little word, preposition that means out of. It means to be out of your mind. It means to be out of your senses. What it means...it's a wonderful way to express something that is absolutely unexplainable. It is literally incomprehensible, it is inscrutable. They were searching their brains but there was nothing inside their minds that could give them a rational explanation for what they had seen. This was outside their ability to understand, beyond their capability to comprehend. And they knew it was the greatness of God..it was the greatness of God. By the way, that word "greatness" is translated majesty in, of all places, 2 Peter 1 where Peter recalling the transfiguration says, "We were eyewitnesses of His majesty, we saw His majesty, we saw His greatness." They saw it down below, too. Peter saw it on the Mount of Transfiguration, he saw the majesty of the Son of God, he saw His nature shining out. But they saw the same majesty, the same greatness of God in His power over that demon. That demon was vanquished. Peter says, "The people in the valley saw the same majesty that we saw on the mountain," not its nature, we saw its nature shining out from Him, but they saw its effect. And here again, beloved, is Luke's message, "Jesus is the majesty, Jesus is the greatness of God, Jesus is the glory of God veiled or unveiled, unveiled on the mountain, veiled in the valley, but the same greatness. And as God His word can be trusted. Whatever He has said, you can believe it and you can pray believing that He will do what He said He will do and He'll do it cause His own nature and integrity is at stake." Jesus is still in the business of delivering tortured souls today, souls tortured by demons. He can do it, He does it constantly, even now. But He is also faithful to all those who call upon Him according to His revealed promises to deliver to them everything He has promised. Don't ever be guilty of being a part of a perverted and faithless generation.

Father, as we end our service this morning, we should end it with a moment of self-examination in which we ask ourselves if we're not faithless and perverted, if we don't think we have a problem too big for You to solve, a struggle too great for you to resolve, a dilemma too confusing for You to understand, Lord, help us to believe everything You've said, everything, that we can commit our way unto You and trust in You and You'll bring it to pass. That if we give our lives to You You'll guard us and keep us and You'll work everything together for our good, everything. Help us to believe that, to believe it prayerfully, trusting You to do what You said You would do. Lord, what a terrible dishonor it is not to believe You, so we claim every promise You've made for Your people and by faith we ask, O God, that as our lives move on hour by hour and day by day, whatever it is that You've promised to

us, we might come before You in prayer believing that You will do it. And we know why because Jesus said whatever you ask in My name, I'll do it that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You want to display Your glory through honoring Your Word and as we pray and believe and You respond and fulfill what You've promised, we in return give You praise. This is to Your glory. Amen.

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