

Midweek Lenten Vespers 2  
St. Mark 9:17-29  
March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021  
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

### Bring Him to Me

*In Nomine Iesu!*

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

#### **Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:**

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

This past Sunday we heard about a woman with great faith; whose persistent praying to the Lord + Jesus, even though she was an unworthy foreigner, resulted in her receiving for what she prayed: the healing of her severely demon-possessed daughter. From that Canaanite woman we received a good example of what it means to pray most fervently and with great faith. Rarely, on account of our sinfulness, do we pray like the Syro-Phoenician woman who prayed for the Lord + Jesus to heal her severely demon-possessed daughter.

Therefore, today we meet a man who is more like us. This man also has a child who is possessed by a demon. Do not let the false teachers tell you that this man is only has epilepsy; that somehow the Lord + Jesus, and those with Him, did not really understand what was going on with this boy. The false teachers say that he simply had epilepsy and that made him convulse and foam at the mouth; he was not actually possessed by a demon. These people do not actually believe in a spiritual realm; they do not actually believe that there are such things as evil spirits and demons, or even a devil. They bring their false teaching and denial of the truth of the Word of God and change the reality of what is happening to this boy. Just like the Canaanite woman from Sunday this boy is also possessed by a demon.

He has been this way since his youth. Which speaks to our condition of original sin, for children for the most part learn their sinful ways from us; from the adults and parents in the room. But children are also racked with original sin just as we are. We are conceived and born in sin. This is why we prayed in the Psalm that the Lord God would not remember the sins of our youth and our many transgressions. We have been poor, miserable sinners since we were children; since we were conceived and born, because we bear the sin of Adam. We have inherited his sin. Therefore, this demon-possessed boy who is born in original sin is not an innocent child as the false teachers like to claim. Even the woman from Sunday's Gospel reading had a daughter—a child—who was possessed by a demon. No child is without sin. No child is innocent in the Lord God's eyes. The demons that possessed that girl and this boy took advantage of this fact. This boy suffered demon-possession before he learned from the Word of God how to defend against the attacks of the devil, the world, and his flesh.

His loving father had brought this boy to the Lord's Apostles to be healed. The context of this

pericope is just after the Lord + Jesus took Sts. Peter, James and John up into the mountain and was transfigured before them. When our Lord + Jesus and those three Apostles came down from the mountain our Lord + Jesus is met with a large crowd and a desperate father with a demon-possessed boy. The Evangelist St. Mark tells us that the Apostles were unable to cast out this deaf and dumb demon. This would leave anybody in doubt that this boy could be healed. This is why this man is much like us. He is more like us than the woman from Sunday's Gospel, because she had great faith, and never doubted that the Lord + Jesus would help her. She just needed to persistently cry out to Him to help her.

This man, however, is like us. He wants to believe, but the reality of the situation makes him doubt. That the Apostles of the Lord could not cure his boy, surely led to even further doubt. The same is true of us. Instead of being persistent in our prayers like the woman from this Sunday's Gospel, even in the midst of what appears to be silence from the Lord God; that it seems like He is ignoring us, we are more like this man who confesses to his doubt, and asks the Lord + Jesus to help his unbelief. We want to believe that the Lord God will hear our prayers and will answer them and give to us what we desire, but when we do not receive it in our time frame, we doubt that we will ever receive it.

Therefore, for our benefit, we are given two examples of requesting our Lord God in the same week. One does not doubt but firmly and persistently asks the Lord + Jesus to help her, and the other is one who believes but has doubts, just like we are in prayer many times. Someone who prays not really believing they are going to get for what they pray, is someone whose prayers are useless. You do not receive because you do not actually believe that you will get for what you pray. Just as St. James says in his Epistle. In today's reading from St. James, he tells us that the effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. The righteous man is one who possesses faith; who believes that for what he prays he will receive.

One can hear the exasperation in our Lord's voice when He tells them to bring Him the boy. He has had to deal with our unbelief since the fall of Adam in the Garden of Eden. We are a faithless generation. Our Lord + Jesus desires that we would forsake our doubt and fear. He wants us to cling firmly to Him in faith. This demon-possessed boy's father is brought to this point when he finally sees that the only hope and salvation for his boy is found in the Lord + Jesus. He believes, he truly wants to have a sure and confident hope and faith, but on account of sin in him, he is racked with doubt. The only way that his unbelief can be helped is through the work of the Lord + Jesus.

How true is this of us? Only when we see what good things our Lord has done for us can our faith be increased and strengthened. Only when the Holy Ghost works through the means of grace to increase and strengthen our faith in the Lord + Jesus can we fully cling to our Lord + Jesus and His works and merits. Only when we see the futility of trying to save ourselves through our own good works and merits, can we cling fully to the works and merits of our Lord + Jesus Christ. We learn from the Word of God just how indolent in prayer we truly are; how much we neglect His Word and doubt that He will give us for what we pray. We learn this from the Ten Commandments. We learn that we do not keep them perfectly. We also learn this from the Lord's Prayer itself. For each of the petitions is a reminder that do not have for what we pray. We are unworthy of the things for which we pray, but we pray that the Lord God would grant them all to us by grace.

Gracious is something our Lord God is to all those who come to Him in repentance. This man needed to be reminded that it is only through the Lord + Jesus that his son can find healing from the deaf and dumb spirit. The Word of God also reminds us that only through our Lord + Jesus can we find healing from our sins and transgressions. Only through the Lord + Jesus do we have perfect remission and forgiveness, as we pray in the Collect for Lent.

The Lord + Jesus has compassion on this boy who has been possessed by a demon since his

youth. He has compassion on us who have been racked with sin and shame since our youth. He even has compassion on us even though we have added unto our sins and transgressions since our youth. We have multiplied sins, but He still desires to have compassion. We may believe at times that our sins are too great to be forgiven. We doubt that the Lord + Jesus can actually forgive us our sins. This is why He reminds us through His Word that He can indeed heal us of all our iniquities.

He commands the demons to depart from us, and they leave us, just as He commanded the deaf and dumb spirit to depart from this boy and never return. Our Lord + Jesus has destroyed the power of the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh by His sacrifice on the tree of the holy cross. As much as they convulse, cry out and spew lies, they have been utterly defeated. They can no longer harm us. By the work of our Lord + Jesus in our flesh, we have been freed from the bondage of slavery in which we were held. Therefore, my dear friends, do not doubt that your sins are forgiven for the sake of the Lord + Jesus' works and merits. He has perfectly fulfilled the Law on your behalf and paid the penalty of your sins on the tree of the holy cross. Cast away your doubts, and hear the promises bestowed upon you in the Word of God. For when we acknowledge our sins, He helps us through His promises to believe that we will give us for what we pray: the forgiveness of all our sins. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:**

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory! I will extol Thee, O Lord, and I will praise Thy Name forever and ever. Amen.

**The Votum:**

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

*Soli Deo Gloria!*