

Help My Unbelief!

Matthew 17:14-21

Welcome back and here we go!

What a wonderful journey life can be --- so full of things that delight us and bring us joy. Yet, in the midst of all our seeking fulfillment, we experience loss, suffering and pain --- for some more than others. But regardless the amount, our suffering is ours and we experience it in a way that no one else can.

Last week we talked about the “cost of discipleship”, the whole concept of having to lose our life in order to gain it --- how holding on to the things of this world actually lead to the loss of spiritual peace and freedom. Remember Jesus’ rebuke of Peter. He says “... *For you are ... mindful of the things ... of men,*” which leads us to today’s lesson on faith, or lack thereof.

1) Why do people struggle to believe God will act on their behalf?

Matthew 17:14-21

So, we have a lot going here. We have demonic activity. We have a father who has lived in this hopeless situation for a long time, and we have disciples who have not been able to help him either.

In our lives there may be areas that are similar. There may be demonic activity. We may have situations that have been in existence for a long time. We may have had others fail us...

In terms of struggling with thoughts or actions that always come back...

2) Name some things that fit that description.

Mark 9:14-24

You know it is not that you don’t believe God will help you, because I believe you do believe. Yet there are times we doubt. You may have asked God many times to heal you, to help you, but you have not found relief. You may have sought doctors, books, friends and even church, yet, here you are with the same problem.

“In order to save your life, you must lose it.”

3) How could this apply here?

You see, often we revert back to old ways of thinking and acting and then say, ‘well, prayer didn’t work’. In truth, it is us that reverted --- not God. We have found such twisted comfort in old ways of thinking and acting that it is uncomfortable not to have it.

You know in some things, it is the way of the world, meaning things --- our bodies --- deteriorate and we pass on. That is not God attacking you.

Sometimes our faith leads us to acceptance of God's will and plan for our life.

"You are not mindful of the things of God."

Think about where you need God's help today...

Is it freedom from worry, anxiety, or stress? Ask yourself,

4) Why does God want me in this state?

Okay, hopefully we found a reasonable answer there.

It is freedom from self-doubt, low self-esteem, lack of confidence?

"You are mindful of the things of the world."

5) Why does God want you to suffer?

These questions are hopefully leading us to a place of understanding. In terms of deliverance, we often hold the keys to our own freedom.

Often, our unbelief is actually in ourselves. We don't believe we can achieve success. We don't believe we can forgive. We don't believe we have the strength, and often we don't.

Philippians 4:13 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.'

Don't let past failures, mistakes, slips and MENTAL ATTITUDES decide your future.

Matthew 17:19-21

6) Where do you need God's help in believing?

Let's pray that we will recognize where God has already delivered, but I am not doing my part.

In terms of other people, let's recognize our wants for them may not be God's plan.

Let's trust that God does have our backs. Let's move forward with confidence and victory on our minds.

Let's pray.