

The Faith to Move Mountains

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: Matthew 17:14-21

The gospel records many occasions in which Jesus cast out demons. On this occasion, a man came requesting this be done to his son. Jesus' disciples "could not cure him," but Jesus cured him immediately. Afterward, Jesus' disciples asked Him why they could not cast out this demon. Jesus' answer provides an important lesson about faith. We can make application to our lives today.

A Misconception

- The faith to move mountains and make all things possible is a powerful thought – but many miss the point
- Many have the concept that if they believe sincerely and pray hard enough, anything can happen – but that is not what this passage is teaching; sincere and fervent prayer may not result in the outcome we desire (2 Corinthians 12:7-9); the requests that are granted are those that are in accordance with God's will (1 John 5:14-15)
- God certainly has the power to do anything He chooses to do (Genesis 1:1; Psalm 33:6, 9; Ephesians 3:20) – but this is not just about what God has the power to do; it is about believing what the Lord told them they should expect Him to do

The Context

- The disciples were unable to cast out this particular demon because of their lack of faith (Matthew 17:20) – the problem was not that they lacked some general understanding of the nature and power of God; the problem was that they ignored what the Lord had already promised regarding casting out demons
- The disciples had previously been instructed to "cast out demons" (Matthew 10:8) – therefore, they should have understood that the Lord gave them the power to do this; this understanding would have been based upon the Lord's explicit instructions (Matthew 10:8)
- Reminder: the source of true faith is the word of God (Romans 10:17) – the disciples should have had faith that they could cast out this demon; why? because they received word from Christ that they had been given the ability to do it
- There is a difference between believing the Lord was able to grant power to cast out demons to anyone He wished and knowing, based on His word, that this power had been granted to them – the disciples needed to believe the word they received; they were capable of doing this
- Lesson for us – believe that God will do what He said He will do and deliver on His promises; that which is revealed in His word is what we can and should accept by faith

Application

- Jesus told His disciples that they would be able to cast out demons – this one was difficult, but they should have had enough faith in the Lord and His word to do it; this was why they were rebuked (their lack of faith)
- In the same way, we must have faith to understand that we can do what the word of God says we can do
- We can be saved (Hebrews 11:6) – despite our past sin and the punishment for it (Romans 3:23; 6:23); God made salvation possible; we must have faith and do what He commands (Hebrews 5:9; Mark 16:16)
- We can overcome sin (1 Corinthians 10:13) – God promised that every temptation can be overcome; we must have faith this is true, then find and take the way of escape
- We can do all things (Philippians 4:13) – whatever challenging circumstances exist, we can face them; if we're faithful to the Lord, we'll be able to handle the trials of life and continue to follow Him

Conclusion

- Let us not make the same mistake as the disciples and fail to believe the word of God
- Let us have faith in the Lord and His word and serve Him accordingly