

5.5.BP(34). Prayer for Spiritual Cleansing- Kingdom Warfare. Mark 9:14- 29

Mark 9:14-28

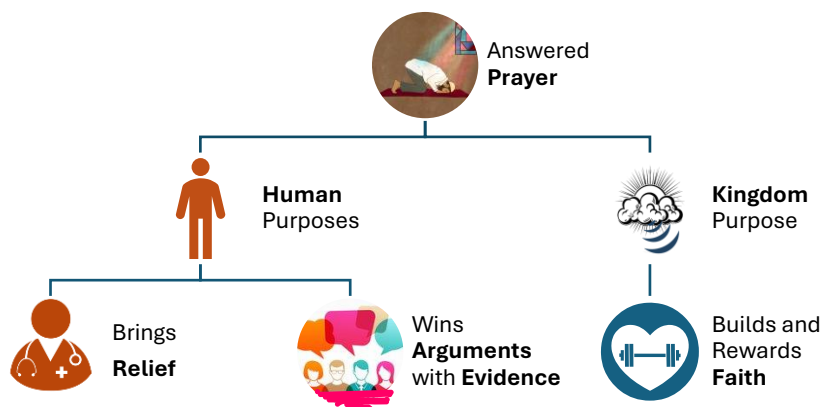
²¹ And Jesus asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?” And he said, “From childhood. ²² And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But **if you can** do anything, have compassion on us and help us.” ²³ And Jesus said to him, ““If you can’t! All things are **possible** for one who **believes**.” ²⁴ Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, “**I believe; help my unbelief!**” Mark 9:21-24

Background:

As you reach full maturity as a stage 5 disciple, a sacrificial servant, your view of prayer will mature as well. After Jesus and his close disciples return from experiencing the full glory of the Kingdom, they descend into the typical unrest and chaos of human society. At the center of this cacophony are the disciples, surrounded by the crowds and pitted against the scribes. Their argument centers around a *spirit-oppressed* young boy whom the disciples were unable to help.

From this story, we see implied several approaches to prayer. Is prayer and God's answer to prayer mainly a tool at the service of human needs, especially the direst needs as we see here as a desperate seeks relief for his son? Or, is God's answer to prayer the evidence needed to

end disputes, to prove wrong the critics of the Kingdom?



In the early days of your discipleship, often answers to prayer come quickly. But, as you mature, you will see that you must add *perseverance* to your *prayers*. And, you must realize that prayers are not simply your personal service to satisfy your needs. Prayer has a Kingdom purpose and is a primary way to *build or restore faith* when the dark Kingdom seeks to

undo the progress of the Kingdom in the lives of its people. Or, prayer is the power that confronts the unbelief which keeps the crowd from coming into the Kingdom.

The purpose of Kingdom Prayer:

- Build Faith- even if it is incremental

In this story, you will see the initial *unbelief* of the father who brings his son for relief from this evil spirit. Although his motives are not clear, he surely does not come with the faith that we have seen in others, such as the woman who pressed through the crowd to confidently make contact with Jesus. He seems to have little regard for Jesus nor his disciples. But, pushed forward by his desperation and confronted with his own unbelief, he is forced to change.

- Not necessarily reverse all suffering in world.

Importantly, if it was the Kingdom's mission simply to eradicate all demonic oppression on the earth,

Jesus would have wasted little time engaging with this father and would instead simply free the boy from his oppression. In fact, what the father believed or did not believe would not matter, if the Kingdom's mission was simply to undo the damage of the dark Kingdom. But, what good would such reversals do if people were still enslaved in their unbelief?

Thus, the Lord's higher purpose for prayer is always as a sign of the Kingdom's reality and of his power that it might anchor the faith of those who come to him.

- Not as evidence for human arguments. The Disciples were embroiled in an argument with scribes over their inability to do anything for this demonized boy. Presumably, these disciples had a heightened need to see this boy freed from demonic oppression.

If the boy were freed, it would likely give weight to the words they were levelling against

the scribes. We don't know what they were specifically debating, but to have the weight of the miraculous backing their words would have been to their advantage.

And, perhaps why they were unable to cast out this demon. Perhaps this illustrates that “prayer” is needed for such stubborn spiritual bondages because it is up to the Lord God to decide the outcomes, weigh motives, and never make the priceless treasures of the Kingdom to be put at the service of mere human bickering. Is God as interested as these disciples in *winning* an argument?

The more pressing question is, would winning an argument, even one backed with irrevocable proofs, lead any opponent to repent and to embrace the Lordship of Jesus by faith? That is, does the Kingdom come when all argumentation has convinced opponents of their own folly?

Clearly, the truth of Jesus as Mashiach is the foundation for redeeming faith. And, as we see in this story, the revealing of His Lordship is instrumental in drawing forth true faith.

Powerful Prayer/ Personal Authority:

- Personal Authority to cast out:

Regarding the *evil spirits*, Jesus gives his disciples authority to “cast out” evil spirits (Mark 3:15). And, because disciples are “in Christ” and under his authority, they have the right as children of God to *cast out the dark spirits* troubling them.

However, the disciples encounter a different type of spiritual resistance. As you mature as a disciple, you also should have experience rebuking testing spirits that harass you, of casting out deception that prevents people from discovering the truth, or freeing the enslaved to join the Kingdom. But, you will also encounter stubborn

spiritual resistance. Here, you will need to learn to pray against persistent resistance.

- Persistent Spiritual Oppression.

This father describes this demonic oppression, which completely dominated this boy, as a life-long bondage. Whereas Jesus could engage other demonized individuals, this boy is completely inarticulate as this destructive spirit seeks to harm him. We have no idea what dark force could have such a grip. But, as *servants* of the Kingdom, we must be prepared to oppose even strong spirits that require our Father's judgment for expulsion.

Suffice to say, these stubborn spiritual opponents:

- Dark Power: has a kind of authority that resists the *rebuke* of the disciples.
- Domination: they aren't just harassing or in the background but have complete control over speech (mute) (17) and mobility (18).

- Destructive: this spiritual power seeks to harm the person, “throwing him down” (18), convulsing and foaming, and casting into “fire” and “water” (21).
- Duration of time. This spirit is not just a recurrence, it has abided and afflicted for a long duration.
- Powerful Answer to Prayer.

At the throne of Power, only our Father God and the Lord Jesus have the authority to cast out these persistent spirits. Sometimes, these stubborn afflictions may have taken root in a person, a group, an area, or over a population for a long period of time. For example, the spirit *blinding* the Jews from seeing the truth of their Mashiach is an enduring spiritual power. Only intercession and the Father’s answer, according to the judgment of his throne, can overthrow such stubborn opposition.

Progressing Faith in Kingdom.



**Teacher
to Student**
(Self-Righteous)



**Master
to Master**
(Self-Ruling)



**Lord
to Servant**
(Subject Sinner)

When the boy's father first addresses Jesus, he calls him "Teacher." Notice that this is also how the disciples addressed him early in their relationship with Jesus. Viewing him only as "Teacher," they were astonished and fearful when he displayed his power over the seas and nature, asking, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" (Mark 4:40). Jesus rebuked their narrow and limited view of himself, saying it indicated a lack of faith (40). So, this father also exhibits a lack of faith. Notice how one's view of Jesus and response to him reveals the kind of faith one has:

- **Teacher:** limited view of Jesus as a mere fleshly man. There is no expectation that he has any power beyond the natural. This shows a lack of faith.
- **Master:** (Luke 5:1-5). Simon Peter called Jesus “Master,” viewing him as one having a narrow field of authority over religious details, but Simon then viewed himself as having “mastery” over the sea, being a fisherman.
- **Lord:** (Luke 5:1-5). When the true power of Jesus is revealed, people view him as “Lord” and fall down in full submission to him, realizing their abject poverty and helpless need for him. This is true faith.

As a *mature disciple*, learn to pray strategically that your people may experience for themselves the power of God, that their view of Jesus may be recalibrated to know the fullness of his power and

authority as Lord over all the forces of darkness.
Such Lordship requires a *fully surrendered faith*.

Focus:

1. Demonic Enslavement: complete control over helpless) 8:14-17
2. Doubting Generation: don't recognize Jesus nor followers) 8:18-20
3. Repent of Unbelief: Repent of limiting Jesus) 8:21-24
4. Release Spiritual Bondage: Only by Prayer.) 8:25-29

Consider:

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Question:

Further Discovery:

