

2026-03-01

Be Prepared

Mark 9:14-29

In 2024 around 124 million people visited an Emergency Room in the United States. About 75% of people go to the Emergency Room because of a single problem such as abdominal pain, chest pain, sprains or broken bones, respiratory infections, skin infections, cuts, back pain or headaches. The other 25% of people go to the hospital with multiple problems. They have a combination of these things wrong. I would think that doctors find it easier to treat a person when they only have one problem because they only have one problem to deal with. When a person comes into the hospital with multiple problems, **it is much more difficult** to care for them. I have seen this to be true. Oftentimes there are different doctors for each of the problems and everyone has their say. Here we have Jesus coming down from His glorious mountaintop experience back into the valley with a multitude of problems to deal with. Jesus needs to deal with His disciples, with the scribes, with this father and with the father's son. Then there is the crowd standing around wanting to see everything that is going on. If they had cell phones back then, it would all be recorded for us.

Mark 9:14 *“And when He came to the disciples, He saw a great multitude around them, and scribes disputing with them.”* Jesus returned with Peter, James and John and joined up with the other 9 disciples. He knew even before He arrived that there was a problem going on. Jesus could see a large crowd of people standing around His 9 disciples who were arguing with the scribes.

Verses 15-16 *“Immediately, when they saw Him, all the people were greatly amazed, and running to Him, greeted Him. And He asked the scribes, ‘What are you discussing with them?’”* The crowd and the disciples were all glad to see Jesus. They knew that He would be able to solve their problem. From the dispute that was going on, Jesus wanted to hear from the scribes first. Either all the scribes held their tongue and did not say anything or the scribes started talking about many things, maybe even complaining about the disciples. But no one was talking about the real problem.

Verses 17-18 *“Then one of the crowd answered and said, ‘Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit. And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. So I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not.’”* One man in the crowd confessed to getting the whole thing started. He had brought his son to Jesus, but Jesus was not there, only 9 of the disciples of Jesus were there. So, this father asked the disciples

if they could cast out the demon that was in his son. Well, of course they could. At least, that is what they initially thought. Jesus had given them power over unclean spirits (Mark 6:7). They had gotten some experience when Jesus sent them out in teams of two. This should be a simple task for them. They were able to do it before but no matter what they said or did, this demon was not coming out. The disciples were confused, embarrassed and frustrated. Then the scribes started taunting the disciples of Jesus because of their inability to cast out the demon. It is interesting that no scribe stepped up to deal with this demon possessed person. No scribe showed the disciples how it is done. This father of the boy was losing faith fast as the disciples and scribes showed that they were all helpless in this situation.

Verse 19 *“He answered him and said, ‘O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me’”* Jesus was disappointed in everyone, the disciples, the father of the boy, the scribes and the crowd. He called them a faithless generation. What would Jesus say about our generation? What would He say about each one of us? How long would Jesus remain among these people? Not much longer. It was just a matter of a few more weeks before His coming crucifixion. After all the healings He did for people, after all the demons He cast out, after all His various miracles He did before the people, this generation was still faithless. Jesus asked for the boy to be brought to Him.

Verse 20 *“Then they brought him to Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth.”* What would you do in a situation like this? Here is a boy, probably in his teens by now, violently convulsing on the ground, rolling back and forth, foaming at the mouth. This is going on for several minutes and it does not stop. What does Jesus do? You would think that Jesus would heal the boy, but He does not. Jesus leaves the boy alone. He turns to the father and talks with him.

Verses 21-22 *“So He asked his father, ‘How long has this been happening to him?’ And he said, ‘From childhood. And often he has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.’”* Jesus wanted some history about this man’s son. This has been going on for years. This boy must have had some scars on him, having been thrown into fires and then into water. This description helped Jesus and us to know that this is an especially evil demon. It is one of the worst. Yes, there are evil spirits out there that are worse than others. I mentioned that the father was losing faith. Why do I say this? Because the father asked Jesus **IF** He could have some compassion on them and cast out the demon. **If?** After he watched the futile attempts of His disciples, and no attempt from the scribes, this man doubted that anybody, even Jesus could do

anything. While the boy is rolling and convulsing on the ground, Jesus is dealing with a father who doubts His ability. Jesus wants the father to confess some type of belief in Him before Jesus heals the boy. Of course, Jesus can cast out this demon even if the father had no faith in Him. But Jesus wants this father to trust Him. That begins with a confession of faith. He waits for a confession from the father that Jesus has the power to do something before He heals the boy.

Verses 23-24 “*Jesus said to him, ‘If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.’ Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, ‘Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!’*” The word “*believe*” is only written once in this verse. A better translation would be “*If you can!*” Jesus is repeating what the father of the boy said. Jesus is trying to make a point. Don’t you know who I am? “*If you can!*” Of course Jesus can! *All things are possible to him who believes.*” Jesus was really wanting this father to walk away with more than a son who had the demon removed. He wanted this father to walk away believing in Him and His ability. The father said, “*If you can.*” There is lots of doubt in those words. Does Jesus want to show compassion on people? Yes, He does, all the time, to everyone, well except to the scribes and Pharisees at times. Jesus wants them to stop teaching wrong doctrine. They believed and taught too much wrong to the people. Can Jesus cast out this demon. Without a doubt! Without a problem! The father needs to believe. What does the father say? He cried out in tears with a very honest statement. “*Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!*” This is exactly what Jesus is doing. He is helping his unbelief even before he asked. God wants us and everyone to grow in our faith and trust in Him according to His word and revelation to us. He wants to help our unbelief to become true faith and belief in Him.

Verse 25 “*When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it: ‘Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!’*” As Jesus was finishing His conversation with this father, He noticed that the crowd of people were coming His way. They wanted to watch the show. As the crowd arrived, Jesus cast out the demon. He told this demon he was not allowed to enter the boy anymore. That demon will have to find another person to torment. Why didn’t Jesus remove this demon from the world, from tormenting someone else? God has established a time for judgment for all people and all demons (Revelation 20:10-15). When that time comes each will be judged according to their works. Our works do not save us. Only Jesus can save us from the punishment of our sins. Our works do show what and who we believe in. What we do on a daily basis, how we live everyday in this world reveals to God and everyone who is paying attention, what we really believe. Since Jesus has power over spiritual beings, He has power to forgive us and cleanse us from all sin (1 John 1:9). Believe Him!

Verses 26-27 “*Then the spirit cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead, so that many said, ‘He is dead.’ But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.*” The evil spirit obeyed Jesus. He had been rolling on the ground for some time. Now he lay perfectly still. People thought he was dead, but he was not. Jesus reached out His hand and raised him up. My guess is that Jesus gave this boy back to his father. Many tears of joy were shed. Both, the father and the son walked away changed.

Verses 28-29 “*And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, ‘Why could we not cast it out?’ So He said to them, ‘This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting.’*” How are we supposed to take this? What is Jesus telling His disciples and us? Didn’t the disciples pray? I am sure they said some prayer before they attempted to cast out this demon. How could there be time to fast if the boy was brought to the disciples and the father expected something to happen immediately? What Jesus is telling His disciples is, **everyday they need to be prepared**. Sure, there is always time to pray, but this kind of evil can only be confronted by someone who is **devoted to prayer**, who is **devoted to a lifestyle of obedience to God and His commands**. None of us know what is going to happen to us today or any day. We do not know the struggles, challenges or hardships that we are going to face. We need to spend time every morning in prayer with our God so that we are prepared to face the day and act and say the right things. We are to be “*strong in the Lord and in the power of His might*” (Ephesians 6:10). We need to put on the full armor of God so that we are “*able to stand against the wiles of the devil*” (6:11). We need to spend time with God and His word daily. We need to know God’s word, believe God’s word and live God’s word every day. The disciples were not ready. Their minds, hearts and their discipline were not prepared to face such evil. God wants us to **be prepared** because we do not know what is coming next.

Questions to ask yourself: Are you prepared? What should you prepare for? Prepare for the unexpected. How am I to prepare yourself?

Actions to take: Learn from God what is true and what is a lie. Learn from God what is right and what is wrong. Learn the gospel. Learn to share the gospel. Grow your faith in Jesus. Understand your salvation. Learn God’s word. Pray (6:13-18).

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Teach believers to worship God; Foster growth in the Christian faith**