

**PENTECOST 17 (2018)**  
**Mark 9 Jesus Christ, Our Prayer**

**Mark 9:14–29** When they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and scribes arguing with them.

And immediately all the crowd, when they saw him, were greatly amazed and ran up to [Jesus] and greeted him. And he asked them, “What are you arguing about with them?” And someone from the crowd answered him, “Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a spirit that makes him mute. And whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able.” And he answered them, “O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me.” And they brought the boy to him. And when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. And Jesus asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?” And he said, “From childhood. 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.” **And Jesus said to him, “If you can! All things are possible for one who believes.” Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, “I believe; help my unbelief!”** And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.” And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, “He is dead.” But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?” 29 And he said to them, “This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.”

In the Name of Jesus.

Heaven's happy Hello to you, me, the world, is that Jesus Christ, the Son of God IS our Prayer! HE is The immediate attention grabber, the Focus of the One Who focuses as only GOD can focus: The One Who puts us together and keeps us together! And Our Prayer, Christ, has GIVEN not only His Back to those who beat Him, His Cheeks and Beard to those who slapped and humiliated Him, His Face to those who spit on Him—there is NO END to His GIVING!

He GIVES to you, to me, to many, His Body to eat and His Blood to drink. To put in OUR mouths the Prayer with which the Offended Holy One is well pleased.

Saint Mark does NOT say that Jesus prayed for the young man, to cast out the 'unclean wind' in him. Yet, cast out IT WAS! Put up a life and death struggle—but it was blown away. 'Why could WE not cast it out?' the disciples asked.

Because—because—because—

---The Good News is just too GOOD for us!

Weeeeeee---the first disciples, the apostles, the holy band—  
nor WE, the ones THEY were chosen to SERVE—

WEEEEEE—my dear children of God—WE do not blow  
away ANY evil breeze! It's always Him! The One Who pleased  
heaven—TORE heaven open, when HE, in OUR FLESH,  
TURNED the HOLINESS of God FROM something about God or  
us that SEPARATES us and God!

Now: the Holy One is found, where? In the muddy water of  
the Jordan for a cleansing Baptism—but HE does not need a  
cleansing! YES HE DOES! If HE is going to be our ENTIRE  
ASSURANCE with the Unseen One!

And He is found here and there: touching what is unclean,  
dead—to teach His students that at the very point the world or we  
ourselves LEAST expect Heaven to BE—Heaven BE!

The man who brought his distressed son DID everything the  
RIGHT WAY! If doing our RELIGION is about doing prayer and  
all that the right way! Not only did the man come to Jesus—the  
man must have been paying attention to the Gospel According to  
Saint Mark! For the Christ, the Son of God, had handed OVER  
His authority to those very men! So, like the good Lutheran that  
the man was, he was CERTAIN that he would find a gracious God  
THERE, where that God of Grace had put His mouthpieces and  
servants.

Your poor pastor is going to go one step further. Not only does Jesus reveal God, Heaven, Father, Love, PRESENT where no one expects—see the Cross of Shame!—

*<sup>42</sup> And Jesus called them to him and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. <sup>43</sup> But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, <sup>44</sup> and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. <sup>45</sup> **For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.**” <sup>1</sup>*

Whatever ‘service’ they did, we do—it’s JESUS-service or Heaven is not interested.

I try again: HE GIVES and SERVES in such a way, that even when WE set our hands to our Little Tykes tools and follow Him, PLAY ‘servant of all’ and least and last—HIS GIVING takes even our PLAY TOOLS of religion and prayer and faith—Oh!, He lets us rest OUR tiny fingers on them! But He does the serving.

I’ve asked Jesus’ Spirit to lead me in this and to pardon me ahead of time. ‘Thanking you in ADVANCE, Holy Spirit!’ (I don’t care for that sentence!)

---

<sup>1</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mk 10:42–45). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

God is where no power of this world can find Him; or will even look for Him.

And JESUS is most TRULY there, right...at...the...point that I wanna bop Him in the NOSE!

Bear with your poor preacher! Hear me!

THAT MAN, that FATHER, did  
E...V...E...R...Y...T...H...I...N...G RIGHT! And if ANYONE had FAITH in the Gospel according to Saint Mark, it was that possessed boy's distressed father.

And Jesus DARES—SERVES! Hear the Spirit!—Jesus DARES to say to the man, 'ALL THINGS are possible to the one who BELIEVES!'

Praise God the Holy Spirit! HE breathed LIFE into THAT FATHER in a way this father can only marvel at! For the man did NOT respond to The Spirit IN Jesus the way I WOULD respond:

'You talk about BELIEVING?! I came to YOU. Better: I came as a LUTHERAN, to the poor SUBSTITUTES your Father above GAVE YOU to pour out your saving, healing power. And I

have asked THEM and I have asked YOU as humbly as any man could. And STILL, you speak of BELIEVING as something I still need to ATTAIN?!

And He's going to save us, my dear ones! Jesus, His Spirit, and the Father Who sends THEM. For He puts in our mouths today, with the Body and the Blood of the King no one is looking for—He puts THESE WORDS—praise the Lord! THESE WORDS:

‘Lord, God, Christ, Jesus, Spirit, Heaven—WHATEVER!—I got ALL THE BELIEVING in you a man can muster! And, like your apostles, life-and-death things are NOT in my tiny hands! So, here's the NEW DEAL: You ARE going to help me now, and answer my prayer; and let's say, let's agree, let's admit: THAT...I...DO...NOT...BELIEVE...IN...YOU...ONE...BIT!’

What a King we have! The TEXT does NOT say that Jesus COMMENDED the man for such a wonderful, Martin-Luther-like faith and prayer! Nope! That would be running the danger of putting the tools and their use back in his hands, our hands, hands without nail prints.

Nah. He answered the prayer ON HIS OWN TERMS—He wasn't fond of curious, clamoring crowds; then or now. According to HIS WILL, Jesus breathed His Spirit into the place of the spirit of this world's government and religion. Actually, the boy seemed

to get WORSE, much worse!, before he got better. But the hand of Jesus was there to raise him.

Here too!

Dear ones: the Spirit frees us to pour ourselves into a praying that IS our focus, OUR exertion, OUR sincerity, OUR sweat—

But the Spirit of Jesus frees us so fully, that before and after, over and under OUR praying-service, is HIS exertion, HIS sincerity, Baptism, His sweat.

Things got much worse for Jesus, our King, before things got better. As bad as things can get: crown of thorns; soldiers adding their spit to the layer the pastors of Israel painted on His Face.

Jesus did not go looking for trouble. In fact, the Gospel says He avoided those people as much as He could, to teach His disciples. But when the day of spitting rage came, He was not LESS the Christ, the Son of The Blessed He was sent to be. He was never MORE that blessed one!

As are we—FOLLOW ME!—right where OUR sins, or the

sins of others, would leave us wondering where God is, our faith, the next man's faith, or love, or humanity.

What peace! To work, but leave the work to Him! To focus, but to focus heaven on That One Man! To pray, but to make of our prayer NOTHING, but the One Who gives us His Body to eat; and His Blood, that was poured out for many.

'Lord, we DO believe, trust in you, stand before God with the assurance that YOU have saved us and will save us from where we are. Today, make us bold to pray: disregard OUR faithfulness; and help as so freely, as if you don't need anything from us at all! Not even our believing! Help our UNBELLIEF!'

In the Name of Jesus.