

Powerful Faith

Key Verse:
*“Straightway the
father of the child
cried out, and said
with tears, Lord, I
believe; help thou
mine unbelief.”*
—Mark 9:24

Selected Scripture:
Mark 9:14-29

of today's lesson, we find Jesus “transfigured” upon a “high mountain” to appear in glorious apparel before Peter, James, and John. (Mark 9:1-9) Peter would later confirm the import of this event by explaining they “were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.”—II Pet. 1:16-18

Upon coming down from the mountain, they found the other disciples surrounded by a multitude, and the scribes questioning them. When Jesus asked the scribes why they disputed with the disciples, a man stepped out of the crowd, explaining that he had brought his young son to have a demon cast out which had been tormenting him. Jesus answered, saying, “O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me.” Upon seeing Jesus, the demon threw the boy into a convulsion.—Mark 9:14-20

Jesus asked how long the boy had been possessed of the demon, and his father said it had been since childhood. Jesus said to him, “If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.” (vss. 21-23) Here the

Lord stressed the exercise of faith in God's power. Paul later said, "Without faith it is impossible to please him." (Heb. 11:6) Realizing his lack of faith as the reason the demon still possessed his son, the man cried out with tears, as noted in our Key Verse. Jesus rebuked the demon, and it immediately came out of the boy.—Mark 9:24,25

Afterward, the disciples asked why they were not able to cast out the demon. Jesus' answer lies at the center of today's lesson: "This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting." (vs. 29) Jesus stressed to his followers that their greatest power would result from a life of self-denial and prayer, based on unwavering faith. The Lord has given many "exceeding great and precious promises" to those who live in such a manner. In this and other miracles, the Lord required faith as the condition of the healing. He thus manifested by works the coming glory and the power of his kingdom, which had been shown on the Mount of Transfiguration.

God is now seeking a class of specially faithful and obedient children to be joint-heirs with Jesus in his coming glorious kingdom. In selecting this class, which will help bestow his blessing upon the whole world of mankind, the Heavenly Father desires only those who can exercise absolute faith in him. Consequently, God's rule in dealing with the church throughout the Gospel Age has been, "According to your faith be it unto you."—Matt. 9:29

In the kingdom there will be manifestations of divine power given to all who exercise faith. To us now, however, is given the privilege of developing a strong, deep faith based upon God's promises. As they descended the mount, Jesus told Peter, James, and John that they should tell no one what they had seen, until "the Son of man were risen from the dead." (Mark 9:9) The three descended with this thought impressed upon their minds. Since Christ's resurrection it has been the privilege of his followers to preach, by powerful faith, the coming glory of his kingdom. ■