



# World Christian Fellowship

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## The Power of Faith Matthew 17:14-21 Faith

**Matthew 17:14-21**, *And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying, <sup>15</sup> “Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. <sup>16</sup> So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him.”*

*<sup>17</sup> Then Jesus answered and said, “O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me.” <sup>18</sup> And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour.*

*<sup>19</sup> Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why could we not cast it out?”*

*<sup>20</sup> So Jesus said to them, “Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. <sup>21</sup> However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.”*

Faith can move mountains.

From here on the Lord begins an instructional period with His disciples.

**Matthew 17-20** chapters we find the Lord's special instruction to the Twelve. He is giving them final preparation for the ministry that lays ahead of them.

Jesus has given them a revelation of His person as King.  
He has given them a revelation of His program for the kingdom.

Now Jesus gives them a revelation of the principles for living in that kingdom.

These lessons are rich, essential, and practical.  
These will be great lessons not only for them but for us.

**Matthew 17:14-21**, Jesus teaches them about faith.

**Matthew 17:24-27**, teaches them about citizenship. How to live in this world.

**Matthew 18:1-5**, teaches them about humility.

**Matthew 18:6-9**, teaches them about offending.

**Matthew 18:15-20**, teaches them about discipline.

**Matthew 18:21-35**, teaches them about forgiveness.

**Matthew 19:1-10**, teaches them about marriage and divorce.

**Matthew 19:11-15**, teaches them about children.

**Matthew 19:16-22**, teaches about wealth and rewards.

**Matthew 20:20-28** teaches about position and serving, and compassion.

**Matthew 20:29-34** teaches about compassion.

**Matthew 21** is Triumphal entry to Jerusalem.

These are profound principles for the kingdom.

In between those lessons periodically Jesus tells them about His death. So that Jesus constantly reminding them about going to the cross.

This is the first lesson on this series.

Lesson on the power of faith.

These lessons changed the life of the disciples, and I am sure it will do the same for us too!

*V 20, So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.*

Faith accomplishes great things.

**What it means by faith?**

It was faith in God's power that caused Caleb and Joshua.

**Numbers 13:30**, *Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, "Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it."*

For Job to say because he had faith in God's care.

**Job 13:15**, *Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him. Even so, I will defend my own ways before Him.*

God's protection that enabled Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to stand on the edge of the fiery furnace in faith.

**Daniel 3:17**, *If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king.*

It was also faith in God's Word that enabled Daniel to survive the lion's den.

**Daniel 6:21-22**, *Then Daniel said to the king, "O king, live forever! <sup>22</sup> My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you." was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him because he believed in his God.*

The sinful woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head.

**Luke 7:50**, *Then He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."*

**Hebrews 11**, great chapter of faith.

It was faith that enabled **Abel** to offer a better sacrifice.

It was faith that caused **Enoch** to be translated to heaven without death.

It was faith that allowed **Noah** to build a great ark and preach righteousness.

It was faith that caused **Abraham** to follow the call of God.

It was faith that caused **Sarah** to have a child.

It was faith that caused **Isaac** to bless his sons.

It was faith that caused **Jacob** to bless his sons.

It was faith that caused **Joseph** to hope in the future.

It was faith that called **Moses** to reject the pleasures of sin for the reproach of Christ.

It was faith that caused **Rahab** to receive the spies.

It was faith that came in time of crisis to **Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets**, and many others.

**Hebrews 12:1-2**, *Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup>looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set*

*before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Throughout holy Scripture the testimony to the life of faith, to the power of faith.

Jesus makes one of the great statements in all the Bible relative to faith.

Faith moves mountains and that it makes nothing impossible.

The summary of the whole testimony of the people of God through all of history is that God moves powerfully when we believe.

This incident was recorded in **Mark 9:14-29. Luke 9:37-42.**

The whole scene takes place as the disciples Peter, James, and John, with the Lord Jesus, are coming down from the Mount of Transfiguration.

They have just seen the glory of God revealed in Jesus Christ.

Having just had that marvelous experience of seeing the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, they are met by a large crowd.

**V 14**, *“And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man”*

They come down the mountain.

They meet a crowd.

**Mark** tells us it included scribes, Jewish legal experts and the nine other disciples who weren't there at the Mount of Transfiguration.

Almost every one of these teaching incidents that run through chapter 20, the Lord uses a living situation as the illustration for the principle He wants to communicate.

He was the master of taking life situations and from them teaching and burying permanently in the mind's spiritual truth.

The spiritual truth is not just given verbally, but through living illustration.

## **1. The father's cry.**

A certain man.

**V 14**, *And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying,*

The man in a posture of reverence.

A posture of humility.

He was worshipping and kneeling.

**V 15**, *“Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water.*

He calls Jesus as “Lord.”

This man held Jesus in high esteem.

“Lord” the title shows that he has the deepest respect for Jesus Christ.

Jesus reputation as the sent from God, a miracle worker, teacher without equal had run its course throughout all of Galilee.

So, though we may not know the full quality of his reverence and the usage of the title “Lord,” we know the man believed that Jesus could heal. He believed He had divine power.

*“Have mercy on my son.”*

He begs for an act of mercy.

He begs for an instantaneous healing.

He wants Jesus to heal his son.

The Greek word ***Eleēō*** means to show or demonstrate compassion.

The father is in deep agony.

He is pleading for his son.

*For he is an epileptic.*

In the Greek language, it means to be moonstruck.

They believed that certain strange behavior was caused by the moon.

Even now we frequently use it for people who act strangely by calling them lunatic.

The word "moonstruck" simply demonstrates a rather pagan approach to defining this kind of behavior as something related to the moon like the tides perhaps.

The term is used only in one other place.

**Matthew 4:24**, *Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them.*

But it is used to describe behavior that includes epilepsy, which is a nervous disorder, convulsions, and seizure.

Ancient times, people believed this was caused by some movement of the moon.

They were talking about a person acting crazily and out of control.

*suffers severely.*

It is not a mild case of epilepsy but a major.

Most serious level.

**Mark 9:17**, *Then one of the crowd answered and said, "Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit.*

**Mark 9:25**, *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!"*

He couldn't hear either.

He was deaf and dumb.

So, he was epileptic at a severe level.

He was deaf and dumb.

*for he often falls into the fire and often into the water.*

When he went into one of these seizures, he would be exposed to great danger because all around there were open fires.

As he would have the obvious potential of falling into either a pool of water or falling into a fire.

He was always in danger of being severely burned, and no doubt had been severely burned, and always in danger of being drowned.

Perhaps there was, in that demon that possessed this young boy, a violent desire for murder.

Here this man's child with epilepsy, seizures, deaf and dumb, compounded by burnings and near drownings.

Mark and Luke add other symptoms.

**Mark** says that there was a demon in him, and that demon thrashes him to the ground. He foams his mouth.

It was so severe that he couldn't eat, that his body was dissipating rapidly.

Mark adds that the demon in him was an unclean demon, which may mean that he uttered profanities, that he acted in a immoral way out of control.

**Mark 9:21**, *So He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood.*

**Do you understand why the father's pleading?**

Very difficult for a father to bear.

This is his only son.

- Here is the only beloved son of his father.
- To face the only beloved Son of God.

Jesus can identify with him.

Jesus can understand the heart of this father.

**Contrast:**

The unveiled Christ, and Moses and Elijah. The transparent, beautiful light, the glow of the Shekinah coming from Christ.

A few hours after that, they descend into the reality of the sin cursed world at its worst.

**How do people get demons in them like this?**

If you are not a Christian, you don't have to do anything to get like this, because you are ruled by the prince of the power of the air who can dispatch or permit or allow or not prevent his demons to do anything to you that they want to do.

Not to say that this child was evil.

This child was possessed from his childhood.

It was the choice of the demon, perhaps not even the choice of the child in terms of any moral choice.

We have been singing and praising God for the second coming as we have been looking forward to it.

But before it comes, we have got to get back to reality.

Don't let get so caught up in the second coming and so caught up in the glory that is to come that I forget the pain that must be dealt with here.

## **2. Helpless disciples.**

**V 16**, *So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him."*

**Therapeuō** same word used throughout the New Testament for healing.

**Does that seem strange to you?**

**Matthew 10:1**, *And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease.*

**Matthew 10:7-8**, *And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'<sup>8</sup> Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.*

They had been given the power and commission to do this.  
Now they can't do it.

What is even more amazing is that they had already been doing it. This isn't the first time that they had tried to cast demons out.

They had done it before.

They knew Jesus gave them the power.

They knew they had accomplished it in times past.

Now they can't do it.

**What has gone wrong?**

**Have they lost this power?**

Luke says that the father plead with them, the nine who were down below. Plead with them to do this, and they couldn't do it.

**Did Jesus promise them they could do it?**

Yes.

**Did He prove to them they could do it by allowing them to do it?**

Yes.

They had the promise and power.

**What was missing?**

They didn't appropriate the power.

It was available, but they didn't appropriate it. They couldn't do, in chapter 17, what they were promised to do in chapter 10.

The father presses past them to Jesus.

He doesn't now have a lot of faith in the disciples of Jesus, but he still has some faith in Jesus.

Some people don't have a whole lot of faith in the agents of Jesus, but they sure would like to get past the agents to Him.

### **3. Distortion of the faithless.**

*V 17, Then Jesus answered and said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me."*

We don't get very many glimpses into the heart of Jesus like that one.

#### **What would we call that in our language?**

Totally frustrated.

Seeing into the heart of Christ the pain of His heart, the disappointment that comes out of His lips.

*"O faithless and perverse generation,*

The whole generation was faithless and perverse, but he generalizes off the specific.

**Who were the specific ones who weren't exercising faith?**

The disciples.

It was the particular inability of the disciples from which He generalizes to the whole inability of the generation in which they lived.

Because the scribe was standing there, they didn't believe it either.

The nine other disciples, they couldn't.

The father himself was weak in faith.

Disciples are symbolic of a whole generation of faithless people. If they don't trust God and get twisted.

That is the generation Jesus faced.

No wonder there was a sense of frustration.

*How long shall I be with you?*

*How long shall I bear with you?*

We can see Him starting to get anxious to go back to the Father. How long do I have to endure this?

Jesus' contemporaries were disastrous failures, and even His own disciples were continually having to learn the same lessons over and over.

The crowd was seeking thrill. They don't really believe fully.

The scribes are gloating over the inability of the nine disciples to heal this young boy.

The father is struggling with faith.

The disciples had failed to exercise the faith they needed to heal the young boy, even though they had the promise and the power.

To some degree, the whole bunch of them were faithless and twisted and diverted from trust in God.

Jesus says, "33 years is about all of this I can take."

*Bring him here to Me.*

Matthew doesn't tell us what happened, but Mark does.

**Mark 9:20**, *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.*

The boy smashed into the dirt. Began to roll in the dirt, wallow in the dirt, and foam at the mouth.

To be deaf and dumb, in addition to that, and all the horror of that scene.

Demons know Christ.

**Acts 19:15**, *And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?"*

They know Jesus.

This demon knew Him.

Just like the demons in the maniac of Gadara knew Him, he knew Him.

When he saw Jesus, threw him into convulsions.

**V 18**, *And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour.*

What had been happening for years ended in one moment.

Jesus rebuked the demon and he left.

The child was cured from that very hour.

- He could speak.
- He could hear.
- He could think.
  
- No more convulsions.
- No more seizures.
- No more wallowing.
- No more foaming at the mouth.
- No more evil, vile, wretched vocabulary.

Amazing.

Jesus always had that power. Always!

It was just part of His ministry to cast out demons.

- ✓ Matthew chapter 4,
- ✓ Matthew chapter 8 twice.
- ✓ Matthew chapter 9 and
- ✓ Matthew chapter 12.
- ✓ Matthew 17 here.

Jesus had power over wretched, fallen angels.

Luke adds a wonderful little footnote here.

**Luke 9:43**, *And they were all amazed at the majesty of God. But while everyone marveled at all the things which Jesus did, He said to His disciples,*

*“All were astonished at the majesty of God.”*

**Do you know why Luke uses that phrase?**

It lingers in his mind from the transfiguration. On the mountain, the majesty of God was seen in Christ, and no less was it seen in His power over the demonic world. Majesty.

**2 Peter 1:16**, *For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.*

o, in response to the pleading of the father, and the powerlessness of the followers, the Lord confronts the perversion of the faithless generation, and He heals the child Himself.

#### **4. The power of faith.**

This is now teaching time.

We might say that it is a nice story, glad for that child. It's wonderful. Nice to have that child whole for the father's sake. Nice for people to see the power of Christ, but it has nothing to do with me.

The whole incident is merely an illustration of a lesson.

**V 19**, *Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?"*

With a snap a finger the demons had gone why could not we do it?

Even though you had given the power it doesn't make sense.

**Mark 9:28**, *And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?"*

They went into a home, maybe a home where they were staying in that area.

**Why couldn't we do it?**

They didn't ask, "**How did You do that?**"

They knew how He did it.

They wanted to know why they couldn't.

So, Jesus teaches them a great lesson.

**V 20**, *So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.*

*"Because of your little faith."*

That is the original text.

Not "unbelief," not "no faith."

Because of your little faith.

You had weak faith.

You didn't believe enough.

The disciples, if at all they had one problem then it was little faith.

Have you heard that before? “O you of little faith.”

They always were indicted for that.

Four times Jesus says to them, “O you of little faith.”

When the disciples first saw this child, the father brought him.

There is little doubt in my mind that they attempted to heal the boy.

Maybe they said, “In the name of Jesus Christ be gone.”

He didn’t go. Nothing happened.

Maybe they said it one more time, “In the name of Jesus Christ be gone,” and he didn’t go.

It is too difficult for the Lord. It just can’t be done.

So, they gave up.

Their faith ran out at that point, and they quit.

**Matthew chapter 6** Jesus teaches them a rather important lesson. In the Sermon on the Mount was spoken to the multitudes, but also to His disciples.

**Matthew 6:30**, *Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?*

One thing they worried about was the matter of clothing and food and drink.

They had a lack of faith in God to supply what they didn't see immediate in their hand.

All of us who believe can say my God supplies all my need.

The Lord provides all our food and all you have to do is go to the cupboard in your kitchen or go to the market and buy it.

You don't have any trouble believing God for what you have in hand, for what is accessible and available to you. That is the way they were.

But as soon as they were hearing from Jesus, "Follow Me and I want you to know there is going to be no place to lay your head."

Lord says to them don't worry about it. My God is going to take care of everything. God who clothes the grass is going to clothe you. God who feeds the birds is going to take care of your food.

They had a very difficult time handling what they didn't have but knew they needed.

They didn't have any resources.

They didn't have any jobs.

**How were they going to get fed?**

**Where were they going to sleep?**

Their faith ran out to the point they couldn't see the provision.

They were on the Sea of Galilee in a boat, and there's a tremendous storm. Jesus is asleep. They wake Him and wake Him. They say, "Lord, save us. We are going to drown."

**Matthew 8:26**, *But He said to them, "Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?" Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.*

Same words again.

They could believe the Lord would take care of them and protect them as long as there were no waves.

But as soon as the storm came, their faith quit.

It only went so far until they couldn't see any human way out, and that's where their faith ended.

We also fall into that category.

We can believe God, "I trust the Lord. I believe the Lord." Then we hit the storm, and we cannot see any way out, and our faith comes to a halt, and we enter into despair.

When faith stops, despair begins.

When faith stops, worry begins.

When faith stops, doubt begins.

### **Matthew 14:**

Peter is out of the boat. Walking on the water.

Peter's faith got him out of the boat, but as soon as he saw what was going on he was afraid, and he began to sink.

**Matthew 14:30**, *But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!"*

### **What did Jesus do?**

**Matthew 14:31**, *And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"*

Peter could believe God until he saw the wind and the storm. When Peter knew there was no human way to conquer that problem, he ran out of faith.

Faith is the ability to believe God when there are no human resources.

### **Matthew 16:**

Jesus gives this same speech.

The disciples don't have anything to eat, and they are concerned about that.

**Matthew 16:8**, *But Jesus, being aware of it, said to them, "O you of little faith, why do you reason among yourselves because you have brought no bread?"*

They needed food for themselves, for another crowd that had gathered.

They didn't have the faith to believe the Lord could supply it.

### **Summary of all four of these incidents.**

All these incidents tell us what little faith is.

Little faith is the kind of faith that believes in God when you have something in your hand.

I believe God. The Lord provides here it is, and I am holding onto it." That is little faith.

But little faith can't believe God when it doesn't have in hand its resource.

Great faith says,

- I believe God without anything in my hand.
- I believe God in the middle of the storm.
- I believe God though the wind is howling.
- I believe God though there's nothing on the cupboard.
- I believe God though I don't have any clothing.
- I believe God.

Mark of great faith.

Most of us are good at the little faith.

We believe God because we can see what He's done and it's right here.

In all these four incidents of little faith, the Lord was present.

In each time Jesus took care of it, provided for them, gave them what they needed, met their need, took them at the point of their little faith and did what they couldn't do.

But this time, Jesus was away.

They couldn't do it because He wasn't there.

This is a new test for them.

Usually Jesus was with them, and when they couldn't do it, or when they couldn't believe, He would step right in and take over.

But now He left them on their own, and He is giving them a lesson for them to handle when He has gone.

The way it is for you and me.

Jesus is starting to cut the cord!

Jesus is starting to turn them loose, to leave them on their own.

As Jesus begins to let them go on their own, He starts to teach them a profound lesson.

The lesson is that everything you want, everything you need isn't necessarily going to come the first time you ask God.

The first lesson.

They said, "Come out."

Didn't come out.

Maybe they said, "Come out."

Didn't come out.

### **You know what little faith is?**

It's the kind of thing that doesn't know how to persist in prayer.

It doesn't know how to persist in prayer.

When they were young and new, Jesus responded immediately.

This happens often happens with new Christians.

They come to Jesus Christ, and they start to pray and ask the Lord for things, and they come very fast. Because they just have a little faith to start with, and the Lord wants to strengthen that.

Some of us who have been a Christian a long time, and we ask the Lord for something, and it seems like He's not even there.

We ask Him again, and it seems like He is not ever there. After two or three times, you say, “it’s obvious He is certainly not interested in this project.” We exercise little faith.

But the Lord is strengthening us.

The longer you have been a Christian, the tougher the test must be to strengthen you.

Like when you start lifting weights, you start with a little bit. But the longer you do it, the more weight you must add.

The trials and testings that God gives us get longer and harder as we go, because that’s how he continues to strengthen us.

Now, the Lord was available to these nine disciples, but He was testing, “How long will you persist in prayer?”

Even these apostles, with their apostolic uniqueness and their gifts of miraculous healing, casting out of demons, were dependent on the prayer of faith to see the power work.

We are too dependent on the power of faith.

You go to the Lord with a problem two or three times, nothing happens. You give up.

Other people say, “I have been praying for someone to come to the Lord for two months.” The test is how long are you going to stay there?

Let God strengthen your faith.

*V 20, for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.*

You just said we had little faith, and now you tell us if we had faith as little as a grain of mustard seed, and that’s the littlest seed that was known in that part of the world.

### **What are you saying?**

You just said we had little faith, and that’s why we couldn’t do it. Now you tell us if we had a little faith, we could do it.”

No, most people misinterpret that mustard seed.

The principle of mustard seed is not that it’s little, no.

The principle of mustard seed is that it is little, and it does grow.

### **Do you remember that principle?**

**Matthew 13:31-32**, *Another parable He put forth to them, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, <sup>32</sup> which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.”*

The mustard seed is something that starts very small and grows very large.

### **What is our Lord saying?**

If you had the faith that is illustrated in a mustard seed, you would start out small, but your faith would grow and increase. They started out with a little bit of faith, and they just bailed out.

There are many things that God desires for you to experience in your life that God desires to accomplish in your life that are available to you through the exercise of His divine power.

But that power will never be tapped until you have the faith that starts small, and when it meets with resistance. When you don't see it happen, the faith doesn't die small.

It gets larger and larger. You continue persistently in prayer.

**Luke 11:5-7**, *And He said to them, "Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; <sup>6</sup>for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; <sup>7</sup>and he will answer from within and say, 'Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you'?"*

They all used to get in the same bed to keep warm. Some of us can identify with that: those of us who have raised kids, waking up in the morning with two little feet by your head.

He says that I can't get out of bed. I am huddled in here with the whole family. I get up and everybody's going to get up. We are inextricably tangled in this deal.

**Luke 11:8**, *I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs.*

His persistence.

Please? Get up, I need the bread, and just goes on and on.

He won't do it for a friend, but he will do it to get rid of the guy.

If a person will give you something to get rid of you, what will God do for you when He loves you and when He wants you to come?

But the same lesson is true.

God wants you to persist in prayer because that's the extent extension of your faith.

God, I want this, and you got it then you would never learn to strengthen your faith. You would never be ready for the trial.

The Lord asks us to persist and persist.

**Luke 18:1-8**, *Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart,<sup>2</sup> saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man.<sup>3</sup> Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.'<sup>4</sup> And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man,<sup>5</sup> yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.' "*<sup>6</sup> *Then the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said.<sup>7</sup> And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?<sup>8</sup> I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"*

Here is a judge, who feared not God nor man, and a widow. She came and wanted vengeance.

The judge wouldn't give it.

She came and troubled him and kept coming and kept coming.

The judge said that this woman is driving me out of my mind.

Finally responded.

If an unjust judge will do that, what will God do? Who is a just and loving God.

The lesson here in Matthew 17.

The disciples started on the project, but they ran out of faith, and they didn't see their answer immediately.

The Lord said that if you had faith like a mustard seed, which starts small and gets bigger and bigger, you would have been able to do it.

It is not saying that if you had a little, tiny faith the size of a grain of mustard seed, that you could say, "Mountain be removed." It's not talking about literal mountains. It is talking about mountains of difficulty.

It is figurative.

This was a rather common Jewish phrase.

When the Jews talked about removing mountains, they used it in reference to the ability to get past difficulties or to remove difficulties.

Jesus never meant this to be taken physically and literally.

After all, the ordinary man seldom finds any necessity to remove a mountain.

What Jesus meant was, if you have faith enough, all difficulties can be solved, and even the hardest task can be accomplished.

**V 20, "Nothing is impossible to you."**

But that nothing is conditional.

Jesus was saying to the apostles, “Nothing is impossible to you, which was in the framework of my promise to you.”

I promised you could do these things, and it’s possible.

It is only possible, first, if it’s within the framework of God’s will and God’s promise.

So, don’t make that so broad that it means nothing is impossible. It must be qualified somehow, and it’s qualified by the promise of God.

I promised you could do this, and you can do it if you have faith that grows. I want to stretch your faith. I want you to learn to trust Me. So, you will be able to trust me in the extreme tests.

What the disciples should have done, when they didn’t heal the man in the first, second, or third time was to keep on praying, and keep on trusting, and keep on believing God till their persistent prayer broke through and reached its point where God wanted them to learn. Then God would have responded.

It isn’t that they had to batter down heaven to get his attention. It is that God knew exactly what he was going to do, but He withheld it in order that they might continue to stretch their faith.

The principle is clear.

The disciples couldn't heal, even though they had a promise. They couldn't heal even though they had available power because they weren't persistent in prayer.

The lesson for us is God is giving us promises.

- Promise for wisdom.
- Promise to meet all our needs.
- Promise for comfort, peace, joy, virtue, strength, safety, protection, deliverance, and fruit.
- Promise of guidance,
- Promise of forgiveness,
- Promise of freedom,
- Promises for all you need.

God has given us power in the Spirit of God.

Often, we don't experience the fulfillment of the promise in God's power because we don't know the persistence of prayer that keeps on praying until God responds.

## **Conclusion:**

*V 21, However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."*

The terms "and fasting" are not there in the original text. But in the Mark account it is there. So, we will take it as it is.

**Mark 9:29**, *So He said to them, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting."*

**Mark 2:19**, *And Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast."*

Persistent prayer.

Jesus did not fast before or after this event. But His life was full of fasting and praying.

### **What does fasting do?**

It gets us to hear the voice of God more clearly.

**Mark 9:23-24**, *Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes." <sup>24</sup>Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!"*

The father's unbelief wasn't known to the disciples, but Jesus knew it and made him to confess.

**James 5:16**, *Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.*

Effectual, dedicated, fervent, passionate, continuous, persistent prayer gets results.

- You may never know the full promise of God.
- You may never know the full blessedness of God.
- You may never know the full reward that all that God wants to bestow upon you until you learn persistent prayer.

**George Mueller**, prince of intercessors, began to pray for a group of five friends. Five friends.

After five years, one of them came to Jesus Christ.

After ten years, two more of them came to Christ.

He prayed for 25 years, and the fourth man was saved.

For the fifth, he prayed until the time of his death.

Fifth friend came to Christ a few months after George Mueller died. For that fifth friend, he prayed 52 years.

Perseverance.

**Have you bailed out already?**

If you do, you miss the power of God.