

“HELP THOU MINE UNBELIEF”

Matthew 17:14-21; Mark 9:14-29; Luke 9:38-43

We so love our son.

He has the cheekiest smile when he is happy, a smile that somehow outshines the horrible scarring so visible on his face and body. In those happy moments my dear wife and I share glances of such love, and smile back with both joy and yearning. Yes, a *deep* yearning and heartfelt desire that he could always smile and be happy, be simply normal. But he has a devil in him, something satanic that puts his life constantly in danger, and never lets us free from fear. How can I describe what overtakes him, - turns him into a person of pain and despair, falling into flames or what seems to him beckoning water. We wonder what we have ever done wrong, or what he may have done in his very early years to deserve such torture. It's not fair. My faith was strong but is now battered. There, but not really there anymore. We have lived with this torment long years, and each and every time he is overwhelmed it breaks our hearts. But then he always comes through and smiles! Bless him so!! We pray and pray that somehow this nightmare may lift, and we can just enjoy freedom...My wife still prays, still reads the Scriptures, and yes, her love is a great support to both he and I, but it is I that is responsible, and my own prayers are now mere words with no expectation. I pray for release for us all, but it is my dear wife's prayers that hold fast and true, not mine.

Perhaps her prayers have been answered. We learn that Jesus and his disciples are here! We have heard about them, - they believe in the Scriptures and its being said they are healing the sick. My wife looks at me, urges me to find them, to take our son, to see if they can heal him. No one else can.

Our son has overheard. Oh how he too would love to be free! Not a day goes by without his affliction striking him down. He looks at us both with pleading in his eyes, grabbing my hand. “Daddy, let's try and find them!” and pulls me along! He has a hope I do not share. He makes me feel guilty, - the history is too great. I would love to see healing, but my experience is one of reality, some things are beyond healing, there will always be the inevitable heartache. My thoughts are in turmoil, - desire and pessimism, hope and resignation. I act out hope for my wife and son. I cannot let them down!

To my amazement it's not long before we find what may be them, - there are some scribes in heated exchanges with some people, all talking about healing, - or rather their failure to heal! It's some of the disciples! I think of my wife and her prayers, and just begin to wonder...has God indeed led us here?? Holding my son's hand we push to the front, and I step further forward “*Please, please, heal my son! The devil has control of him!*” There is a sudden silence as they take in his damaged appearance and our heartfelt plea. The crowd stands back. One of the disciples I guess moves forward and lays his hand on my son, some others look to heaven, and they call to God. Nothing happens. They call again, looking at one another. I feel their doubts become greater than mine! Was I still expecting anything?! The thought of turning back, confessing to my dear wife that we were not successful, that nothing had changed, filled me with foreboding. I did not want that to happen. Dear God, help! I felt the strength of her prayers. The scribes began shouting again.

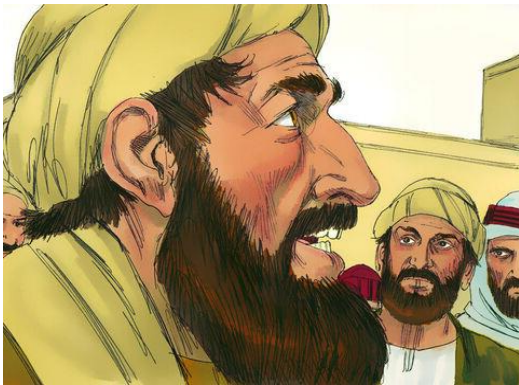
A man appears, dressed in a seamless robe. He has a sense of authority that shines from him, the presence of love that silences all those around us, and leaves the feeling that this man is of God. It must be Jesus.

“What question ye with them?”

His words to the scribes meet with further silence. I grab my chance:

My words pour out: “*Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son: for he is my only child. And a spirit taketh him and overwhelms him that he loses all control. I besought thy disciples to heal him, but they have not.*” As I speak he looks at me. I feel his calm, a knowledge of some Truth that is not touched by the challenges I talk about. Instead he addresses his disciples **“O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?”** The silence is great.

He looks at me again. I feel him reading my thoughts. **“Bring him unto me.”**



His disciples let him go, but immediately the devil within him strikes once more. He foams at the mouth, and falls writhing to the ground. Jesus keeps calmly looking at me, not distracted by the picture of my son: **“How long is it ago since this came unto him?”** My words pour out:

“Of a child. And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.”



I feel a desperation, a longing mixed with guilt, a deep love for my son, for my wife, but do I love myself? Am I the problem/ I want to say, “Can’t you see for yourself how bad this is?!” I am in turmoil, and realise I have doubted him with my words “if thou canst do anything”, - me saying to him, If thou can!!

Jesus speaks quietly, and with assurance to me, **“If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.”**

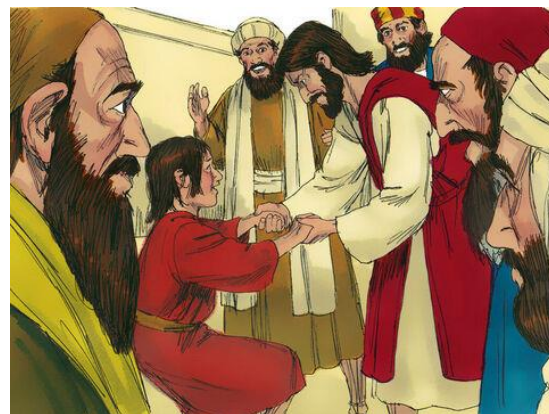
My thoughts and fears of all the wasted years run through me. I cry out with such mixed emotions, that tiny word “if” causing my thoughts to writhe round, wanting, wanting so much, to fully believe. With sobbing tears I state what he already knows:

“Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.”

Jesus places his hand on my shoulder. How to describe the impact of that tender touch! It is with such authority, as though the kingdom of Love is revealed as present right there and then, that the infinity of Love is, and always has been, in control, that nothing could shake it. My questioning of my unbelief he has fully answered, for I suddenly felt at one with him and the power he represents. Jesus looks at my son. He speaks with that same certainty with which he has just touched me: **“Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.”**

It is as though the devil inside him has seen the power of the Master, and is fighting back. My dear son is once more overwhelmed! He is thrown again down on the ground, convulses, and this time...stays still. I heard, as if in a bad dream, the people around me mutter, “He’s dead, ...the lad is dead”.

I look again at Jesus. I am feeling surprisingly calm, because I know he is in control. The evidence before my eyes is no longer true! Oh how to describe what I see and then feel. He has spoken with the power of Truth. All my fears, doubts, have been washed away. The threat of death was nothing to him, because he stands for life, - a life at one with God, a life that is part of the great love which he has for mankind, in which the whole of mankind is loved, no exceptions. It was a revelation! He had said “come out of this boy and never go in him again”. How could the devil return when it has no power. Never go in him again! Complete healing. I watch as Jesus reaches down, takes him by his hand, and lifts him up. He too looks at Jesus. He has changed, - all the scarring gone, a full happy smiling face! He looks so confident. He looks at me, and we both know that the past is over, it has no more hold. We hug tight!!



I turn to Jesus “Lord, do I now believe! Thank you. THANK YOU! Thank you.”

We both head home. My wife is waiting. I can see from her smile she somehow already knows. We all weep with joy and new found love. My unbelief is now an understanding, the memory of his touch a knowledge of the power of Christ .

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