

Prayer Lesson Four

Freedom in Prayer: Dealing with Unbelief, Etc.

I Clearing Up Some Mistakes and Misunderstandings

<p>Matthew 17:19-21 NKJV <i>Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why could we not cast it out?”</i> ²⁰ <i>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. ²¹ However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.” [b]</i></p> <p><i>[b] NU-Text omits this verse.</i></p>	<p>Mark 9:29 NKJV ²⁹ <i>So He said to them, “This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting.”[b]</i></p> <p>Footnotes:</p> <p><i>[b] NU-Text omits “and fasting”.</i></p>
<p>NASB ²⁰<i>And He said to them, “Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you.</i> ²¹<i>”[a]But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.”]</i></p> <p>Footnotes: <i>Matthew 17:21 Early manuscripts do not contain this verse.</i></p>	<p>NASB ²⁹<i>And He said to them, “This kind cannot come out by anything but prayer.”</i></p>
<p><i>The following versions make the same footnotes in both passages. Holman Christian Standard Bible, New International Version, and English Standard Version.</i></p>	
<p>Conclusions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “And fasting” was likely not in the original manuscripts in Matthew or Mark. 2. “Prayer” was not in the Matthew version but in the Mark version; so, Jesus most likely said, “This kind goes out only by prayer.” 	
<p><i>The question is: What is Jesus talking about? To find the answer is in Matthew 19:20...the reason they could not cast it out was unbelief. Unbelief can only be dealt with through prayer. Only one person prayed in this story...the father of the child. What did he pray, “Lord I believe. Help my unbelief.”</i></p>	

a. This does not make much sense if you think Jesus is saying that the demon was so strong that only by prayer and fasting it would obey and leave.

b. Sometimes we think that some of our problems are so big that we must do all the spiritual gymnastics in order to make the “problem” leave.

c. Jesus had already given his disciples authority over all the powers of the enemy by this time.

d. Jesus spoke his faith and the demon obeyed, and Jesus told His disciples to do the same thing.

II Where does faith come from? Romans 10:17 (NASB)

¹⁷ So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ¹.

A Faith comes as we hear about Jesus and all the things He has done.

Philemon 1:6

That the fellowship of your faith may become effective through the knowledge of every good thing which is in you for Christ's sake.

III 4. Our faith can be increased Luke 17:5-6 (NASB)

⁵ The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!"

⁶ And the Lord said, "If you had faith like a mustard seed, **you would say** to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and be planted in the sea'; and it would obey you.

A Each of us has at least mustard seed sized faith.

1 We don't need to fret about how MUCH faith we have.

B We use the faith we have to speak what we want to happen.

1 In prayer, we can speak to problems, sickness, poverty, spiritual blindness, enemy interference and tell them to be removed and it will obey us if we use even a small amount of faith.

IV The Parable of the Unjust Judge Luke 18.

A Jesus gives the purpose of the story in vs. 1 and 5-8 ¹Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart, ⁵“yet because this widow bothers me, I will give her legal protection, otherwise by continually coming she will wear me out.” ⁶And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge said; ⁷now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? ⁸"I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?"

b. God wants us to pray and not lose heart

1. *Faint (ἐγκακεῖν) To turn coward or lose heart. Word Studies in the New Testament.*

¹ The earliest versions say “Word of Christ” and the later say, “Word of God”.
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c. “Jesus is contrasting His willingness to answer our prayers with this unjust judge's unwillingness. The parable is a contrast, not a representation.” Andrew Wommack's Living Commentary.

Luke 11:8-13

"I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs. ⁹"So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰"For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened. ¹¹"Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he? ¹²"Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he? ¹³"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"²

- a. “So, the point Jesus is making is that if a friend would help you at the most inconvenient time, then how much more will our loving heavenly Father help us without pleading.” Andrew Wommack's Living Commentary.
- b. The Lord is promoting the opposite of importunity in prayer. He is saying, “You wouldn't have to hound a friend with insistent and repeated requests. Why would you then think that you have to treat God that way? Just ask and you shall receive” Andrew Wommack's Living Commentary.
- c. Persistence in vs. 8 means **shamelessness**: New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.

V Wrong expectations in prayer lead to fainting and unbelief.

a. Expecting immediate manifestations, and if they don't happen immediately, some will tend to give up. This is walking by sight, not faith.

1. Mark 8:22-25 *And they came to Bethsaida And they brought a blind man to Jesus and implored Him to touch him. ²³Taking the blind man by the hand, He brought him out of the village; and after spitting on his eyes and laying His hands on him, He asked him, "Do you see anything?" ²⁴And he looked up and said, "I see men, for I see them like trees, walking around." ²⁵Then again He laid His hands on his eyes; and he looked intently and was restored, and began to see everything clearly.*

aa. Jesus Himself had to minister more than once to this man, not because God was resistant, but because of the persistent and ingrained unbelief in the blind man and the surrounding town.

bb. Mark 6:5-6 ⁵And He **could do no miracle** there except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. ⁶And He **wondered at their unbelief**. And He was going around the villages teaching.

² **Matthew 7:9-11** “Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? ¹¹ If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!”
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2. Jesus prayed for Peter's faith to not fail. Luke 22:31-32

³¹"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; ³²but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."

a. It appeared that Jesus' prayer was not answered, because Peter went out and denied the Lord.

b. When Peter denied the Lord, most people and theologians would say that Peter's faith failed.

VI Although we always immediately receive, we rarely immediately SEE the manifestation. Mark 11:24 "Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive *them*, and you **will** (future) have *them*."

VII What do we do between the receiving and the manifesting? What do we do in the face of contradictory circumstances?

a. Philippians 4:6-7

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

b. 2Cor 12:8-9

Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. ⁹And He has said to me, "**My grace is sufficient** for you, for power is perfected in weakness " Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

VIII Don't take Grace lightly. Grace is the Gospel.

Acts 20:24 "But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the **gospel of the grace of God**.

a. Romans 5:20 but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,

1. Where sickness increased, grace super increased, where problems abound, His grace super abounds, where contradictory circumstances abound, His Grace (undeserved favor) super abounds toward us.

2. Romans 5:17 much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

3. So in the midst of waiting for the manifestation of our requests, and in the midst of contrary circumstances, we have the privilege to receive a super abundance of His Grace (Heb 4) which will sustain us and more than provide for us.