

31. Jesus Healed a Deaf and Dumb Boy

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children know that the Holy Spirit is the One who gives Christians understanding of the Word of God. We saw that is why it is important for them to become familiar with the whole Word of God, so the Holy Spirit can remind them of other Scriptures that will give them this understanding. In our topic today, we are going to see that Jesus healed a boy that was deaf and dumb.

Mark 9:14-18 says, “And when He came to the disciples, He saw a great multitude around them, and scribes disputing with them. Immediately, when they saw Him, all the people were greatly amazed, and running to *Him*, greeted Him. And He asked the scribes, ‘What are you discussing with them?’ Then one of the crowd answered and said, ‘Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit. And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. So I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not.’” In these verses, we see that a great crowd of people were gathered around the other disciples when Jesus and the three disciples came down from the mountain.

We see that the scribes were trying to start an argument with the disciples. The crowd saw Jesus as He was coming down from the mountain and started to run to Him. The crowd immediately greeted Jesus when they got to Him. Jesus then spoke to the scribes in the crowd and asked the question, “What are you discussing with them?” Jesus knew the hearts of the scribes and knew that they were trying to start an argument with the disciples. Jesus chose to protect the disciples from such questions. He knew that the disciples were not yet fully prepared to recognize and answer the traps of the scribes and other religious leaders, because they did not yet have the Holy Spirit.

We do not read that the scribes gave any answer. Instead, one of the men in the crowd told Jesus that he had brought his son to Jesus so Jesus could heal him. The man said that his son was possessed by a demonic spirit that made it impossible for the boy to speak. This demonic spirit also did other things to the boy to try and destroy his life. John 10:10 says, “The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” This verse tells us that the goal of Satan is always to destroy. These verses show us that the demons that follow Satan have the same goal. The goal of this demon was more than just to prevent the boy from speaking. His goal was also to destroy the boy.

This demon would suddenly seize the boy. Each time this happened, the demon would throw the boy to the ground. The boy would begin to foam at the mouth and his body would become rigid. In the first part of verse 22, we read, “And often he has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him...” This verse shows us that the demon had tried to destroy the life of the boy many times. Sometimes, when the demon seized the boy, he would throw the boy into the fire. At other times, he would throw him into the water. Of course, that meant the parents had to watch him all of the time to try to prevent the demon from destroying the boy. Since Jesus was up on the mountain, the man asked the disciples to heal his son. However, the disciples were unable to cast the demon out of the boy and heal him.

We go on to read what Jesus said to the father. Mark 9:19-24 says, “He answered him and said, ‘O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me’. 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. So He asked his father, ‘How long has this been happening to him?’ And he said, ‘From childhood. And often he has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.’ Jesus said to him, ‘If you can believe, all things *are* possible to him who believes.’ Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, ‘Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!’” Jesus said that particular generation was a faithless generation.

All generations since Adam have been without faith. However, this particular generation was unique. They had seen Jesus perform many miracles, including the raising of the dead, but they refused to believe. In fact, at the very time Jesus had come down from the mountain, the scribes were arguing with the disciples. The word translated “disputing” in verse 14 means *to question, to discuss or to dispute*. Mark 8:11 says, “Then the Pharisees came out and began to dispute with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, testing Him.” In this verse, we see that the Pharisees were trying to start an argument in order to test Jesus. Acts 6:9 says, “Then there arose some from what is called the Synagogue of the Freedmen (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and those from Cilicia and Asia), disputing with Stephen.” In this verse, we see that the men were trying to start an argument with Stephen, and later, they killed him. Here, we see that this faithless generation had seen what Jesus had done, but still refused to believe.

After speaking to the whole crowd, especially the scribes, about the lack of faith, Jesus told the father to bring the boy to Him. When the demonic spirit in the boy saw Jesus, we see that the demon caused the boy to go into convulsions which caused him to fall to the ground and begin rolling in the dirt. He also began to foam at the mouth. Then, Jesus asked the father how long this had been happening to his son. The father said that the demon had been doing this to the boy from the time he was a young child. He went on to explain that the demon had thrown him into the fire or the water many times in an effort to destroy him.

Then, the father said, “If You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.” Here, we see that the father wanted help, but he did not know if Jesus could help his son, especially since the disciples had been unable to help. Here, we see that the father did not know if Jesus had the power to heal the boy. This shows that the father did not have any understanding of the fact that Jesus is God. Jesus then pointed out that the problem was not His lack of power, but rather the lack of faith of the father. Jesus made it clear that He could heal the boy, if the father would believe. Suddenly, the father changed his request and asked Jesus to help his problem of unbelief. Here, we see that the father came to an understanding of the true meaning of faith. He first recognized Jesus as Lord. Then, he repented of his unbelief by saying, “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!” Paul taught the same thing when he said years later, in Acts 20:21, “Testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” Paul said that whether he was talking to Jews or Gentiles, his message was still the same. Paul told everyone that they needed to repent of their sin of unbelief and come to God through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Mark 9:25-29 says, “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!’ Then *the spirit* cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead, so that many said, ‘He is dead.’ But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, ‘Why could we not cast it out?’ So He said to them, ‘This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting.’” Jesus saw that more people were running to see what Jesus was doing, so He quickly rebuked the demon.

Jesus told the demon, “Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!” By this command, Jesus showed that He has all authority over all demons. He also pointed out the fact that the boy suffered one additional problem the father had not even mentioned. He said that this demon had caused deafness, as well as making it impossible for the boy to speak. The demon had to obey the command of Jesus, but he tried once more to destroy the boy as he came out. We see that the demon caused him to have great convulsions and to fall to the ground. Then, his body stopped moving. Many of the people that were standing there thought the boy had died. However, Jesus took the boy by the hand and lifted him up. He was able to go home with his father as a normal boy, because Jesus told the demon never to enter the boy again.

Later, when Jesus and the disciples went into the house, the disciples came to Jesus and asked him a question in private. Their question was, “Why could we not cast it out?” In the past, the disciples had been able to cast out demons. Mark 6:13 says, “And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed *them*.” They would again cast out demons in the future as a sign to prove their message about the resurrection of Jesus. Hebrews 2:3-4 says, “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard *Him*, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?”

Jesus explained a key lesson to the disciples that day, when He said, “This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting.” In this case, the disciples were depending on themselves, instead of depending on Jesus. Jesus explained what to do if we meet a person who is in bondage to a demon. We are to spend time in prayer and fasting and ask Christ to defeat the power of Satan in the life of that person. This is important for both us and our physical and spiritual children to understand. It is Christ who defeats the power of Satan, not us. We are to pray that Christ will defeat the power of Satan in the life of such a person. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children the importance of depending on Christ to defeat Satan and his demons.