# **The Gospel According to St. Mark**

**Mark 9:14-32**

**Concordia Commentary – Dr. James Voelz, 2013**

## **Mark 9:14-29 – “But I caaan’t!”**

* Now what?
  + An argument is at hand
  + Broader term for disciples than the twelve
  + “Amazed”
    - The Greek directs us to a high level of excitement here, which is often used in Mark as a indication that a divine activity is about to take place.
      * Think of “cue the dramatic music!”
* The problem
  + A father speaks
    - “Teacher”
      * 1:27
      * A recognition of Jesus’ ministry.
        + Not “healer” or “prophet” or “messiah”
      * In Mark, teaching often precedes a miracle
        + 1:21, 6:34
    - Another unclean (unwashed) spirit…
      * It is NOT from God
    - And it has great strength!
      * A reminder of a prior encounter where people could not contain or control a man so possessed
        + 5:1-4
        + Jesus was able to do something then when others could not.
* Jesus responds
  + Faithless/Unbelieving generation
    - Focus is not clear as to whom this is directed towards, but is more than likely aimed at the disciples as they are the focus in this scene
  + Time is short.
  + Bring him to Me!
    - Imperative
* And so does the unclean spirit.
  + Remember what happened in 5:6-7
    - Forces opposed to the reign and rule of God are in hostility with His creation as well.
      * They don’t care about the boy…
      * Or you for that matter!
* Time for a heart-to-heart
  + “If You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.”
    - Appeals to Jesus’ compassion
      * 6:34
    - Help us
      * Isaiah 63:5
  + “If you can…”
    - Jesus’ uses the father’s own words.
    - As a sigh of frustration…
    - Or a mimicking of such a statement.
    - But this is not the focus.
  + “All things are possible for the one who believes.”
    - A negative response from Jesus.
      * 7:27
    - True discipleship is being called for here.
      * A call to keep focus on Jesus rather than on one’s self
    - And a true disciple comes to Jesus!
      * Immediately!
      * Basic belief
        + “I **DO** believe;”
      * But a true disciple comes to Jesus because he cannot stop relying on himself as a sinful human being
        + “**Help my unbelief!**”

A true disciple believes and therefore comes to Jesus because at our very core we know we do not believe (rather trust ourselves), and comes to Jesus to be helped with our unbelief!

“Create in me a clean heart, O God!”

* Bad timing
  + A crowd is on the way.
    - The people want a show
  + No time to wait.
    - Jesus needs to instruct in what He has come to accomplish by His death and resurrection.
* The call of exorcism
  + No laying on of hands
  + Notice the language of how the unclean spirit leaves the boy!
    - “like a corpse… he is dead”
      * There is a strong possibility the boy is in fact dead at this point
        + Remember the people’s reaction to Jairus’ daughter.

Mark 5:35

* + - * + Another resurrection AFTER Jesus’ passion prediction and transfiguration

A sign that He indeed does have the power to do all things!

* + Now, Jesus lays His hands on the boy by taking his hand, and he “arose”
    - Resurrection language!
* What is wrong with us??
  + A teaching moment/opportunity for Jesus with His disciples
  + So why couldn’t they cast him out?
    - They were sent out with authority to cast out demons with success!
      * 6:7, 13, 30
    - But after this, we never see them commissioned to do those things again.
      * It was not an ongoing command, but a singular mission.
      * Therefore, after chapter 6 it is never appropriate for the disciples to attempt such a thing
        + They HAVE no authority over unclean spirits.
    - If they have no such authority, what are they supposed to do?
  + “only by prayer”
    - What did the boy’s father do?
      * Turns outside of himself and goes to Jesus, who is God.
        + Who is the only one you are to pray to?
    - The disciples looked to themselves and their abilities
      * They were acting on their own authority while Jesus was on the mountain for His transfiguration.
        + Where have we seen this before?

`Exodus 32:1-4

* + - What does prayer do?
      * Eyes to God/Jesus; eyes off of self
        + Romans 8:15
        + James 1:5
        + Mark 4:38
    - A new reality
      * This is not easy
        + No glory here for the disciples

More faith and less sight

## **Mark 9:30-32 – A Second Passion and Resurrection Prediction**

* On the move
  + Passing through Galilee
    - Was in Gentile country (8:27) where He stated His first passion prediction (8:31).
    - The focus is on getting to Jerusalem.
* Undercover
  + Does not want anyone to know
    - 8:30
    - The crowds were still wanting/expecting miracles
    - Jesus needed teaching time with His disciples
* A second prediction
  + Repetition is important in Scripture
  + A different set of details are given here.
    - He will be handed over
    - He will be killed (noted twice)
      * How dead is dead? Really, really dead!
    - He will rise
      * Following on the heels of another “resurrection” (9:27)
      * After being really, really killed and dead, how amazing will this resurrection be?
* But, they still do not fully see
  + Same as Peter back in 8:31-32
  + Their hearts are still hard
    - 6:52
  + And they are afraid to ask
    - How did the father respond??
      * They do not want to go to Jesus for help with their unbelief!
        + How do we deal with battles against addictions?
    - Fear is the opposite of faith in Mark
      * 5:36