

An extraordinary case. "If thou canst..." Quality: Good, but incomplete after 40mins

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Preacher: Tyler, John Sperling (1912-1989)

[0 : 00] In the name of God and by the Holy Ghost, as we trust, let us direct you to our lesson, the ninth chapter of St. Mark, and we read from verse 22, the latter clause.

The ninth chapter of St. Mark, commencing at verse 22, that if thou canst do anything, have compassion on us and help us, Jesus said unto him, if thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

And straightway the father of the child cried out and said with tears, Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.

Really, the whole of this narrative, this most sweet and blessed and encouraging narrative, is a household word and testimony in the living family of God.

And you will know very well the sweet hymn of Mr. Calters, where he takes up all these blessed and urgent cases, with that appeal, heal us.

[2 : 13] Emmanuel, here we are, waiting to feel thy touch. Deep wounded souls to thee repair, and Savior, we are such.

And in that beautiful hymn, he includes this poor father who was in such agony because his son, as we know from St. Matthew, was lunatic, and suffered with this foul spirit that plagued and tormented him and sought, as all those foul spirits do, to drive a poor sinner into hell.

And although we are going back here something like 2,000 years, approaching that, my friends, it may well be that some of you, including the preacher, have had experience of these very things.

And no one can express adequately the agony and distress of a child of God if a dear one is possessed with devils so that the case is extraordinary extraordinary and is in an extraordinary category where those foul spirits do their utmost to drive the poor sinner into the flames of hell.

therefore, I would suggest to you that the days of divine miracles have not passed.

[4 : 45] Wonders of grace are performed still by our blessed Lord. and this was one of them. Now there are a number of most vital things that I hope I shall be given grace to bring to you and get over to you tonight.

one thing we wish to say immediately about this dear father is this that his case so appeals to us as being the case of one of the Lord's dear children for as we were dilating yesterday in our own pulpit upon that scripture in the prayer of Solomon whatsoever sore or whatsoever sickness there be and we have many times said that undoubtedly all the living family of God have a sore they have a trial they certainly have a cross for we know from the testimony of our beloved

Savior himself for he said concerning his dear people heirs of God joint heirs with Christ as through the apostle Paul if so be that we suffer with him that we may be also glorified together and he himself said and I remember so well preaching from this at Biddenden just before dear Mrs. Aldworth was taken to glory he said these things have I spoken unto you that in me ye might have peace in the world ye shall have tribulation that be of good cheer I have overcome the world and if I may just refer to that divine service had been done

I remember saying for substance to the friends notice their tribulation or the cross or the sorrows or afflictions of the Lord's people are never in the abstract the Lord never speaks of the sorrows or afflictions or trials of his people alone he always joins with those trials and tribulations the promises of his health and blessing and favour and so I remember saying notice there that tribulation is surrounded with peace and victory and the dear saint proved it and you will prove it so

I am taking a few moments to surely establish the fact that the Lord's dear people all of them it doesn't matter what country they live in or what part of Britain or what their age is or whether they're married or single or whatever it is God's people have a cross now this appeals to me I mean after all if you have a dialogue with a person who speaks of religion and I do not wish to be critical but if you speak with one who professes the name of God and this dialogue is extended from occasion to occasion over a number of years and it never seems as if they have any trial of faith or any sore or any cross well it really makes you feel sad you say to yourself oh how I would love to hear you speak about the plague of the hut or speak about the trial of faith or speak about a cross and so on as I say

[9 : 57] I'm not critical because some are reserved and reticent but it appeals to me this does this dear father had his thought his cross his trial and you have this if you're the Lord's people it does not mean that your cross or your trial is always so heavy sometimes the Lord may relieve you and give you a sweet season of peace and relief and comfort and deliverance but more or less there is this where you have your cross and so as I said this really appeals to me here is a dear man with a cross well that is the first thing to say and the second is this where do you find this saw or this cross where you feel it the most it was his son his son not his nephew but his son don't read of any others in the family

I don't know this is just before us as the poor father and his son and in some cases in the scripture you'll find that the dear people of God were in such trouble and it was their only son or their only daughter the only one so you see this is where the saw is or the cross is it is where you feel it the most it's not on the perimeter it's right in the very centre of your heart very well I want to move on now to these very important considerations what is also very evident is that he had some knowledge of the

Lord and his disciples and as the Lord had given his disciples a degree of power these disciples sometimes would perform wonderful things now at first he came to these disciples to cast out this foul spirit and of course this part is really very much for ministers but the disciples dismally failed they could not cast him out if we take a summary of the whole of this narrative one title can well be concisely the impotent disciples and the omnipotent saviour you can remember that and take it home with you the disciples were impotent they had not always been impotent but in this case they were impotent they could not cast out this foul spirit and of course the poor dear father was very dejected and this is the place we do get into sometimes your case you've carried for so long and you feel very discouraged there's no deliverance you may listen to the ministry and you'll get no deliverance

I'm not speaking any word there to find thought with the ministry of God's dear servants far from it I pray for them exceedingly but there is such a thing as you keep bringing your case and you don't get any deliverance and you get very dejected and very distressed and disappointed you've still got your sore you've still got the case like the poor man had and the disciples were powerless to effect a cure well perhaps just at this stage it would be opportune to just mention the part that is very much for the ministers of the

Lord and that is when the Lord came he effected a cure he cast out the foul spirit and this greatly exercised these disciples this search them and so we read both in St.

[16 : 06] Matthew and here that afterwards they came to the Saviour and they said why why could not we cast him out why have we failed of course this takes on a much wider application because in many things you may come to the Lord and say now I've been praying for a long time and I keep praying Lord why is it that I failed why have I failed how is it that my prayer is not effective because thou hast said that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much and you come to the Lord and I'm sure this is an inquiry that his dear servants put to their master and I'm sure gracious deacons and elders brethren and sisters in the churches and all those who fear God

I'm sure this is an inquiry that you put to the dear Lord you say dear Lord why have we failed I mean I can take up a whole range here you may have been pleading for a soul you may be pleading now and things do not improve they are exacerbated if anything and it seems as if your prayers are ineffectual now this affects to the Lord's people when they're praying for increases in the church and for the Lord to bring in others into the house of God and so on now you may come to this point sometimes you may say why dear Lord why is it that we could not cast him out why is a minister a poor agonised minister may say to the

Lord dear Lord why is my ministry so ineffectual you see well I'm not spending a long time here but it is very informative much light is thrown on this by the Lord much teaching is here much vital teaching he said and this is recorded in St Matthew he said because of your unbelief that's why you couldn't because of your unbelief and also he joined to that answer what we have here in St Mark this kind which shows that this is a special category it is something extraordinary now

I don't know whether you understand what I mean by a special category but if you walk it you'll understand that it's no ordinary case it's an extraordinary case now he says this kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting fasting I cannot preach the sermon on that but those who are spiritual I'm sure will see the importance of the two spiritual exercises that are joined together by the Lord prayer and fasting I wonder if I could give you an inkling of it yes I can our Savior often and we have this recorded he would spend the whole night in prayer to his divine father now you can see the meaning of it he would go to the mountain top or a part but you have this very language he spent the whole night in prayer now you get an inkling of this this kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting that means to say that you don't just pray for five minutes or so and then go and enjoy yourself do you understand me it's so easy to pray for five minutes or ten minutes and it may be a very sincere prayer and there may be reality in it but almost at once the next hour you're enjoying yourself now he says this kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting that means it's not going to be praying for five minutes and then enjoying yourself

belief and I hope to say just a little tonight on that in the body of the text well now he reaches the Lord had come down from the Mount of Transfiguration where his favoured trio of disciples saw him just as they see him in glory now what a wonderful experience that was a transcendent experience they saw him in all his exalted glory on that Mount well look what I can say to you do you know how to assess the amazing love and compassion of the

[24 : 35] Lord to a poor sinner that this precious one in all his shining radiant glory and majesty that he should come down from the Mount and take notice of a poor agonized father with an afflicted child that this shining one should take notice of a poor polluted sinner it's a wonder of wonders isn't it does not this overwhelm you sometimes when you think of the Lord in all his glory and yet he stooped so low to come to you and to listen to you and to attend to your case and to take a special notice of every minute detail of your case midst all his vast concerns in the whole universe in his bright abode of glory and yet he takes notice of you oh

I do adore him how wonderful the hymn has it midst all his vast concerns he could not me forget why because he loves you that's why because you're his by the gift of his father by his glorious foreknowledge you're his by purchase he has redeemed you he gave his life for you and you're his by the conquest of his spirit in the sacred supreme power of saving grace and so you look at it in all his shining glory and he comes down and think of him now in all his majesty and glory and throne in light above and yet he comes down to you poor sinner to your case well now I can take a further step this dear man came to the

Lord and he came obviously with the case of his dear son he was his son in any case I want just to find the exact words here one of the multitude answered and said master I have brought unto thee my son which hath a dumb spirit and so on and he brings him to the Lord now I just want to stop to say this to you I endeavored to express this point rather yesterday afternoon in my own pulpit if I can concisely name it to you now it may help you something like this now here was this dear man's trial all his agonized prayers and his deep exercise and the deep waters and the floods and the flames that he went through but you'll come to the place where you'll feel that you may not say it but you'll feel it

I believe there's a blessing bound up in this I believe that with all I'm passing through there's a blessing bound up in it so that out of the greatest trials and the greatest agonies the things that you've grown about you've got in your heart sometimes a sweet persuasion that something most blessed will come out of it am I speaking the truth you know well that I am now if things are light unsmooth and there's no agony and no travel and no prayer without ceasing and no wrestling you don't expect anything do you but where you pass through so much perhaps for a number of years in your poor soul you get that feeling that God gives you that there's a blessing bound up in it it's rather sweet to me to name that particular aspect of the subject now just one other word when he brought him to the

Lord that is this poor lunatic son the two things come immediately into my spirit when he brought him the loving fatherly interest the Lord took in the case he said to his father he said how long ago is it since this came unto him see he had the ear of the Lord now the Lord knew all about it but look at his divine compassion he says to him well how long is it ago that this came unto him and he said of a child he told the dear

[31 : 55] Lord all about it the Lord knew but you see I must not stay really but if I use a simile you take for instance your doctor now I know that they are heard pressed but if when you enter the consulting room and you sit down and they show such a kind interest in your case well you are half cured aren't you it's not a matter of some brusque expression and writing a script and off you go you know if they say well now tell me all about it now you think of the dear Lord this is how he is to his dear people he said how long is it ago since this came unto him oh you'll say the

Lord is the Lord is interested in me he's interested in my case he's interested in my trial he's interested in my exercise look at his love how he's speaking to me and the liberty I feel in speaking to him now how wonderful this is is it not so he had come to the right blessed person the dear Lord himself with this dear son I said there were two things the other thing is this we mentioned that this foul spirit had cast him into the fire and water to destroy him didn't we more than once off times see the tendency of that foul spirit was to take that lad we don't know how old he was but the tendency of that foul spirit was that if there was a fire that devil would cast him into it or if he saw any water he must get in it to cast him in it now with all the efforts of that devil he never destroyed that lad and with all the efforts of

Satan and those foul spirits they can never destroy one of the Lord's dear elect you get just the same thing with the mad gathering now what is thy name legion so we are many many incarnate devils and there the poor dear man was a terror to the whole district and he was cutting himself and dwelling amongst the tombs and all this but all that legion of devils could never destroy him but immediately the Lord cast them out and they had permission to enter into the swine the whole herd went down a steep slope into the sea and perished in the waters and yet the whole legion of devils couldn't destroy that man why because he was a chosen vessel why because he was going to be a preacher throughout all that district he declared what the

Lord had done for him the Lord said to him go home to thy friends and tell them how great things the Lord has done for thee and have had compassion upon thee and he published throughout all that region now this may encourage you if you're in this exercise see with all that legion of devils they couldn't destroy him and yet immediately they enter the swine violently do they go down that steep place into the sea and perish in the waters that is the swine now then a further step the dear father now comes to his impassioned appeal to the dear Lord and the whole of my text reveals two things it shows that he had the affliction of unbelief it shows also that he had a little faith but it was not very strong and he came to the

Lord in rather a different way to what the letter did he said to the Lord but if thou canst and that really doesn't apply to the Lord as to whether he can does it the Lord put it the other way round when he answered him as though he would say to him dear heart it's not a matter of whether I can do it it's a matter of if thou canst believe my power is limitless but nevertheless it was a wonderful appeal to the Lord it was an appeal that you may feel in your spirit it will reveal your weakness it will also reveal that you've got life he came to him and he said but if thou canst do anything for us and he appealed to the tender loving compassionate heart of the

[38 : 47] Lord Jesus that human heart he still retains though thrown in highest bliss and he appealed to his heart and he touched his heart for his heart is soon touched with human woe we are told in the hymnal soon touched with human woe so he appealed to that heart Jesus full of all compassion this is it have we are to