

Follow Me

Week 8: Belief and Unbelief

- I. Your life is your mission. Focus on making disciples, not multiplying. Raise your children, and lead/help form the people around you. You are responsible for the people God has put in your life (the generation in front of you, in your home). Lead by influence.**
 - A. Three relationships:**
 - 1. Father – creator, agape love
 - 2. Jesus – model, risen savior
 - 3. Holy Spirit – helper, power to be witnesses
 - B. Two questions:**
 - 1. What does the Lord/Holy Spirit want me to know?
 - 2. What do you want me to do about it?
 - C. One pursuit:**
 - 1. We would experience God in relationship.
 - D. The problem with 3/2/1. In perfect world, but in life there are Distractions, Obsessions and Addictions – And when we give in to them, they lead to guilt (I did something wrong), then shame (I am wrong), then pride (I can't show it, I have something to : (1) prove, (2) lose, or (3) hide), and then driven/ego/fear (I must perform).**
 - E. These 2 things are at war within us:**
 - 1. Belief – in who God is and what He is doing in your life. Faith and hope in the unseen God (Trinity) (the spiritual world).
 - 2. Unbelief – living by what we can see. Faith and hope in only what we can see (seeing is believing) (the physical world).

II. Belief versus Unbelief

Context: Peter, James and John have just witnessed the transfiguration of Jesus with Elijah and Moses, and God's declaration about His Son.

When they come down from the mountain, Jesus asks "What are you arguing about?" (Mark 9:16)

Jesus Heals a Boy Possessed by an Impure Spirit - Mark 9: 14-29 (NIV)

14 When they came to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and the teachers of the law arguing with them. 15 As soon as all the people saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with wonder and ran to greet him. 16 "What are you arguing with them about?" he asked. 17 A man in the crowd answered, "Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. 18 Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not." 19 "You unbelieving generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me." 20 So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth. 21 Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has he been like this?" "From childhood," he answered. 22 "It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us." 23 "If you can?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for one who believes." 24 Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!" 25 When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the impure spirit. "You deaf and mute spirit," he said, "I command you, come out of him and never enter him again." 26 The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, "He's dead." 27 But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up. 28 After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, "Why couldn't we drive it out?" 29 He replied, "This kind can come out only by prayer."

A. Insights: Jesus' question. Boy's father's answer. Jesus' response "You unbelieving generation" – is to the disciples.

- 1. Belief – is the presence of faith, and faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.**

2. Unbelief – is the presence of unbelief, not the absence of faith, focused only on what the eyes can see.

B. The problem is belief versus unbelief.

1. Impure spirit convulses the boy, but it doesn't work on Jesus (like it apparently did on the disciples).
2. Jesus asks two questions of the father. First, how long? Second, if you can? And then answers, "Everything is possible for one who believes." He is teaching through calm, systematic questions.
3. Father answers, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!" We see the same tension in the father, that we see in the disciples, and ourselves.
4. We believe in Jesus, but like cultivating the garden of faith is our life, there are the good seeds of belief (grain, fruit), but there are also the bad seeds of unbelief (weeds) that we see in the world around us. They are at war in the garden of our life.
5. Jesus casts out the spirit. The boy looks dead. But Jesus lifts him up, very much alive and free of the impure spirit.

C. Prayer and Fasting - Jesus' response to why the disciples could not cast out the impure spirit.

1. "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer [and fasting]." Other translations add "fasting."
2. The disciples are not celebrating the casting out of the impure spirit. They had experience with casting out impure spirits at this point. They thought, "this should have been us." Why couldn't we in this case? They had the authority to do this, as Jesus had given it to them.
3. Jesus had not fasted in this particular case. The impure spirit is still cast out. Jesus had fasted for 40 days and nights. He fasted into a lifestyle of prayer and fasting. He had full authority. He knew who God was and who He was as the Son of God.

D. Power and Authority

1. Power - God's power is through our partnership with the Holy Spirit (you will receive power). God's power working through your life.
2. Authority - when you know who God is and that we are sons and daughters of His. When you operate as a beloved son or daughter, that is the authority you have. Authority like a prince or princess under the king.
3. There is a war between belief and unbelief in the disciples. They have the authority of knowing who Jesus is (belief) and operating under that authority, but at the same time they are distracted by what they see (unbelief).
4. A Foundational Way of Life - We need to operate out of authority and power, knowing who God is and who we are, and that we can partner with the Holy Spirit in all that we do.
5. When you fast and pray, evil spirits are not afraid, that is not what wars against the enemy. It reminds you and solidifies in your heart who God is and who you are. Fasting reminds you to pray. Prayer needs to remind you who God is.

E. Changing Our Prayers - Relational

1. This is where our prayers have to change. Prayers have to become relational. God what do you have for me today? Your identity in God makes war with the enemy. The active agent you see here casting out the impure spirit, is Jesus operates in the fulness of (a) knowing that He is the Son of God and (b) being partnered with the Holy Spirit.

F. Praying for/Operating with God's Authority and Power in our Lives.

1. After the transfiguration, God tells us to listen to His Son.
A Foundational Statement – that the authority God has given you is your sonship and daughtership. You cannot see that, so it requires belief.
2. Unbelief occurs when you get distracted by other things that you think will impact your identity. It is not doubt, because that is the belief that you can't. Unbelief is the indifference, not even thinking about it, it is not even in mind. Unbelief means you need to experience it, see it to believe it. It's only

important when it happens, when I see it. Unbelief is the absence of faith and doubt. Living only and being distracted by what is in front of us.

3. Whether praying in the Spirit or praying an uncomfortable, audacious prayer, it will require our belief. You can't rely on human strength or talent; you must rely on God's supernatural Word and His Spirit. You have to collaborate with God on how He thinks, how He moves and what He wants.
4. What does God want from you? What has He prepared for your life? What happens if you live and operate completely like a son or daughter, not being distracted? Then building on that authority, if you partner with the Holy Spirit and are empowered?
5. We have to surrender to win. The win of living life completely for Jesus.
6. There is a war happening in the disciples' lives and ours between the fruits and the weeds. We need to ask: What are the weeds? Where is there unbelief? What are the areas that have more weight than being a son or daughter of God?
7. The disciples may have been thinking (and we occasionally are thinking): Am I strong enough (to drive out this impure spirit)? Am I weak? Am I mature enough to do this on my own? Have I spent enough time with Jesus? Am I pure enough? Am I qualified enough? Am I experienced enough? Questioning all of this in prayer.
8. Questioning all of that in prayer and then the Lord begins to speak life into your life:
You are My son/daughter, you are qualified, you are loved, and you are accepted.
You are not abandoned, you are not destroyed, you are not your abuse, you are not your neglect, you are not your rejection, you are not any of those things.
It is in prayer and fasting that we are reminded that we are His sons and daughters, and we have the opportunity to partner with Him in this life, and be in a relationship with Him for eternity!