



‘Now!’ Sermon Series

Sermon #33

‘What NOT to say to Jesus!’

Mark 9:14-29

Wednesday, January 15th, 2024

This Past Sunday in NOW Sermon Series:

- This past Sunday we picked back up in our study of Mark, as we looked at the Transfiguration of Jesus!
 - In this sermon we studied the Glimpse of Glory that Peter, James, and John were able to see. And how for those of us who are saved, we too, will see the glorified state of Jesus at His second coming.
- This past Sunday I asked the question: *How does the Transfiguration reveal to us the IDENTITY and DEITY of Christ?*
 - **Truth #1: *The Glory of the Son.* (v. 2-4)**

- **Truth #2: *The Guidance from the Father.* (v. 5-8)**
- **Truth #3: *The Generalization of Peter, James, and John.* (v. 9-13)**

‘What NOT to say to Jesus!’

Mark 9:14-29

Sermon in a Sentence:

In this text we will see the overarching theme of what we would not say to Jesus. Through this we find the faithless wandering, faltering words, and the fruitful work.

Intro:

- *I think if we are all honest here today, we would admit that there have been **many** times where we have said things to someone that we wish we would not have said.*
 - In the text we are going to be studying tonight, we find a man in desperate need of Jesus to cast a demon out of his son, yet he uses the dangerous word when asking Jesus to do so, ‘can’ you heal him?
 - ***This is the fourth and final time in Mark’s Gospel where He (Jesus) casts out a demon.***
 - Tonight’s passage of scripture really unfolds in three different scenes that we will unpack.
 - In verses 14-19 the crowds are gathered around the disciples and

engaged in a heated debate with them.

- In verses 20-24, Jesus has an encounter with a desperate father and the man shows that he has unsure faith.
- In verses 25-29, Jesus is going to drive the demons out, and then discusses the situation with His disciples.

○ ***In tonight's sermon we certainly will see that we should never tell Jesus what He can't do, but also, we must have foundational faith in a sure and sovereign Savior.***

● ****Illustration****

- Years ago when I was just a freshman in Highschool, my mom and one of the teenage girls in her SS class that she taught were going to the movies and invited me to tag along.
 - ***We went to the movies and had a great time.***
- After the movie we dropped the young lady off at home.
 - ***At this time, I thought it was my destiny to coach basketball. I thought I would grow up and become a Head Basketball coach somewhere.***
 - (While I had been called to preach and I knew that, this was

one of the seasons where I was running).

- ***At the time I was the Assistant Coach for uncles 9-10 year old boys basketball team, and the head coach for the 9-10 girls basketball team at our Church.***
 - When we dropped the young lady off at home, her family who went to our Church, invited us in.
 - Her brother, who was 8-10 years older than me, was a referee in the local Church basketball league.
- ***The saturday before, he had made a call on my uncle who was the head coach of the 9-10 year old boys basketball team, that we did not necessarily agree with.***
 - Growing up I was taught a lot about loyalty, defending your family, and always supporting family. I was also brought up in a very blunt environment.
 - Of course my uncle did not NEED me to defend him, but in the conversation while we were visiting with that family, basketball came up.
- ***While I don't remember exactly what I said, I did make a comment about his referring skills and the poor call and lack of sound judgement he had made the previous saturday.***

- To my own personal shock and amazement, a hush went across that family's living room and they all seemed visibly distraught that I would say such a thing.
- *Ever since that day, this family has refused to have much to do with me, little conversation past small talk, and otherwise just ignoring my existence.*
 - All because I said something that I should not have had.
 - While I don't condone their reaction or behavior, I am the one to blame. I am the one who said something that I shouldn't have.
- *And to this day, if I could take back the words that I said, I most certainly would. But here's the thing, I can't.*
 - Which is why we must be ever so careful in what we say to others, but in also what we say to Jesus in our own personal relationship with Him.

Read Mark 9:14-29

Question to Ask:

What specifically do we see in this text that shows us what we should NOT say to Jesus?

Truth #1: *Faithless Wandering.* (v. 14-19)

- ‘And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and scribes arguing with them. **15** And immediately all the crowd, when they saw him, were greatly amazed and ran up to him and greeted him. **16** And he asked them, “What are you arguing about with them?” **17** And someone from the crowd answered him, “Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a spirit that makes him mute. **18** And whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able.” **19** And he answered them, “O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me.”
 - *Peter, James and John have just walked away from a literal ‘mountain top experience’ and as verse 14 indicates, they are walking back to the confusion and discord below.*
 - *They’ve just seen a glimpse of God’s Glory as Jesus was in His glorified state, and now they come back below to the valley with bickering and religious arguing, once again.*
 - In these verses, I believe we can see that the father we are introduced to and the crowd were faithlessly wandering around, but in a way so were the disciples, and sometimes, so are we...
 - There are **3** important things to point out here...

- ***Coming Down from Mountaintop Experiences. (v. 14-15)***

- ‘And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and scribes arguing with them. **15** And immediately all the crowd, when they saw him, were greatly amazed and ran up to him and greeted him.’
- They’ve come down from the mountain, and of course the crowd sees Jesus and runs up to Him.
- ***While mountaintop experiences are great and there are times that we certainly need them for our spiritual nourishment, we must remember, God does not intend that we stay there!***
 - ***Peter wanted to stay in that moment and even suggested that they put tents up for Jesus, Moses and Elijah so that it would last longer.***
- ***Even in our own lives when God gives us those spiritual mountaintop experiences, they are not so that we can stay there!***
 - They are so that we can come back down and share the Gospel and minister to those around us.
- It’s hard, because we all want the mountaintop to be our spiritual home, but God has placed us on earth to share His good news. We must keep this our mission.
 - ***Jesus also came back down the mountain to be rejoined with the***

disciples but also to minister to those who were hurting.

- ***Coming back to a hurting situation. (v. 16-18)***

- ‘And he asked them, “What are you arguing about with them?” **17** And someone from the crowd answered him, “Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a spirit that makes him mute. **18** And whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able.”
- In verse 16, it seems inevitable that another showdown between Jesus and the scribes/Pharisees is inevitable.
- ***But, a need arises with a father whose son is deaf due to a demon.***
 - ***Not just that, but verse 18 reveals that this demon is causing his son to have violent seizures which includes foaming of the mouth.***
 - Some liberal scholars and theologians try to blame these symptoms on different medical diseases that we have modernly diagnosed.
 - ***But because the demon is later casted out by Jesus in the following verses, I believe these symptoms are a direct result of this demon.***

- **Notice that this father has to come to Jesus with this need because he desperately went to Jesus' disciples, but they were not able to do anything. The father actually says 'they were not able'.**

- We will get to that later on in the text...
- Even though we've discussed this before in our study of Mark's Gospel, I want to point out to you several things about demons that we must keep in mind (never underestimate demons).
 - **#1:** Demons are real beings, not just mythological creatures.
 - **#2:** Demons seek to inflict pain and death.
 - **#3:** Demons are capable of inflicting physical suffering.
 - **#4:** In our own strength we are helpless against the supernatural powers of the demonic world.
 - **#5:** Spiritual victories in the past with demons are no guarantee we will achieve victory today. Especially if we operate within our own selves, instead of dependence on Christ.
 - **#6:** When all of our human efforts against demons have been exerted we can turn to Jesus. In all reality, we should start with Him from the beginning.

- **Commenting on faithless people. (v. 19)**
 - 'And he answered them, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me."'
 - The disciples have obviously messed up, and it would seem here that Jesus' words in verse 19 are a reaction to the ending portion of the father's words regarding the disciples inability to take care of the Father's son, but that may not be the case...
 - **The 'faithless generation' that Jesus calls out here I believe, is a reference to the crowd that is present, that is different than the disciples gathered.**
 - ***Word Study***
 - The word 'generation' comes from the greek word **'Genea'** and Mark uses it a total of 5 times in his Gospel (twice in Mark 8:12, Mark 8:38, Mark 9:19, Mark 13:30).
 - **Each time it is used, it is never a reference to the disciples, so we shouldn't infer that it is here.**
 - While the disciples have certainly fallen short of the task of healing this demon possessed boy, Jesus is not chastising them.
 - Whether it's to the disciples or it's to the crowd, one thing remains the same: **many did not have complete faith that**

Jesus was who He said that He was and that He could do the impossible.

- *If this was in fact meant for the disciples, then they must not get ahead of Jesus. Everytime they are without Him they are in a crisis.*
 - *If Jesus statement is directed towards the crowd, then it's time that they realize that Jesus is the Christ.*
 - We too, must learn this same lesson...

Truth #2: *Faltering Words.* (v. 20-24)

- ‘And they brought the boy to him. And when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. **21** And Jesus asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?” And he said, “From childhood. **22** And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.” **23** And Jesus said to him, “‘If you can’! All things are possible for one who believes.” **24** Immediately the father of the child cried out[d] and said, “I believe; help my unbelief!”
- In Matthew and Luke’s account of this narrative, they leave out the important conversation between Jesus and the boy’s father that we find in Mark 9:21-24.
 - *For Matthew and Luke, they focus on the Miraculous portion of this narrative as Mark looks at wo the miracle is connected to faith,*

and then faith to discipleship (which is why the major theme of Mark’s Gospel is discipleship).

- Scholar James Edwards wrote ‘*For Mark the significance of Jesus cannot be fully conveyed by WHAT he does, but only be WHO he is. One can be amazed by a miracle, but one can only trust and believe a person.*’
- What begins as a desperate plea, will develop into the faltering words of the father.
 - In these several verses, I believe there are **4** things to point out....
- ***Demons Recognize Jesus.* (v. 20)**
 - ‘And they brought the boy to him. And when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth.’
 - There’s no more messing around at this point.
 - *If the crowd surrounding them and the disciples nearby did not recognize that, then certainly the demon(s) did.*
 - The word ‘convulsed’ here in the greek means to attempt to tear to pieces. To agitate.
 - *This demon recognizes that Jesus is coming and makes one of the final efforts in making this boy’s life more of a miserable time than it already was.*

- While this is such a sad image, it's true that demons are real and in this case, physically harming...
- ***Destruction since the beginning. (v. 21-22a)***
 - 'And Jesus asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. 22 And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him.'
 - ***When Jesus asks the father of the boy 'how long has this been happening to him?'***
 - ***Jesus is inviting the father to share his story, struggles and heartache with what has happened throughout the boy's life.***
 - ***This is an important reminder to us that Jesus does care about how you feel and what you are going through. See in verse 21 that Jesus willingly asks the father this question...***
 - ***The father responds by stating that the boy has been dealing with this demon since he was born.***
 - ***The father even goes on to explain that at times, the demon's effect on the boy has been close to fatal, close to losing his life.***
 - For a moment, we need to look at this father's desperation and see where he is. What he is

about to say is certainly dumbfounding considering who he is talking too, but at least this father is looking in the right direction.

- Remember the disciples couldn't help...

- ***Dumbfounding words. (v. 22a)***

- 'But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.'
- Much different than the words of the leper back in Mark 1:40-45 (who said would), the Father here says ***'if you can do anything'***
 - ***Now, somewhat to the Father's defense, we have to see that the Father just went to Jesus' disciples, His closest followers, and they could not do anything.***
 - Just as scholar James Brooks said 'The inability of the disciples to cast out the demon appears to have shaken the faith of the father.'
- ***But still, the fact that the father said 'if you can do anything' still shows that He did not truly have faith and actual belief that Jesus is who He said that He was (the Son of God).***
 - ***I believe the father is in the right direction, and he has a mustard seed of faith.***

- But may we all still see that we must be careful of what we say that Jesus cannot do, or question what He can do...
- ***Divine ability is not the issue. (v. 23-24)***
 - ‘And Jesus said to him, “If you can’! All things are possible for one who believes.” 24 Immediately the father of the child cried out[d] and said, “I believe; help my unbelief!”
 - Jesus responds by saying ‘if you can’ a reference to Himself, and then proclaims that all things are possible to the one who believes.
 - ***What Jesus says here is significant because the divine ability of the Son of Man is not the issue, the human unbelief is the issue.***
 - One scholar said ***‘The sole bridge between frail humanity and the all-sufficiency of God is faith.’***
 - I believe that Jesus is asking the father of this boy to do exactly what the Psalmist wrote: ‘Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!’ Psalm 34:8
 - The father doesn’t deny what Jesus has stated, the Father simply responds by saying ‘I believe, help my unbelief’
 - ***This is great honesty and humility from the father.***

- The father is basically saying ‘I know that my faith is partial and very weak, but Jesus you are the only One that can save him. Save my son, in spite of me!’
- ***If we are honest, most of us, if not all of us, have been at this same spot before that this father was at.***
 - So far this morning we’ve seen the:
 - ***Truth #1: Faithless Wandering. (v. 14-19)***
 - ***Truth #2: Faltering Words. (v. 20-24)***

Truth #3: Fruitful Work. (v. 25-29)

- ‘And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.” 26 And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, “He is dead.” 27 But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. 28 And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?” 29 And he said to them, “This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.”’
 - ***Jesus has dealt with the faithless wandering, and the faltering words, now He is going to accomplish fruitful work in this boy’s life.***

- Jesus is going to do what the disciples did not do, He is going to cast this demon out.
 - *The fruitful work of Jesus is on display in this text as He casts out a demon, and also, a foreshadowing of what's to come...*
 - I believe there are 3 things to point out concerning the fruitful work of Jesus' ministry in this particular case.
- **His Power over demons. (v. 25-26)**
 - 'And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again." 26 And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, "He is dead."
 - **We've seen in several instances of Mark's Gospel that Jesus has power over demons.**
 - And while that may seem redundant, let us remember that not all of the miracles of Jesus, like this one, are recorded in the scriptures! There were many more instances of Him casting out demons I believe that did not get recorded.
 - 'Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I

suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.' John 21:25

- *We should never get tired in scripture or in our world, of seeing Jesus power on full display.*
- In verse 25, Jesus sees the crowd coming, and as He's done before, does not wish to make a big scene or spectacle of this.
 - *There are two really important words in the greek text that show the power that Jesus used to deal with this demon in this boy.*
- ***Word Study***
 - Verb #1: The word 'rebuked' in verse 25 comes from the greek word **'Epiteimao'** ἐπιτίμησεν which literally means to set a value upon, to assess a penalty, to allege as a crimination. To reprimand. Occurs 29 times in the NT.
 - Verb #2: The word 'command' that Jesus uses in verse 25 comes from the greek word **'Epitasso'** which literally means to set over or upon, and to charge.
- **These two words come from the same root word, but here have different verb forms.**
 - *Mark uses these two greek verbs in particular to express the authority that Jesus had over demonic forces.*

- In Mark 1:25-26 and Mark 5:6-10, the demonic force asserts itself more violently than in this instance, but even there Jesus is still all powerful.
- *Verse 26 reveals to us that the demon leaves the boy's body in a 'deathlike' condition.*
 - The crowd that was looking on, viewed him as dead.
 - You can just hear the gasps and the murmurs of 'oh look, He's dead! Now the boy is worse off now than when Jesus got involved.'
- *Even with this statement of the onlookers 'He is dead' is another thing to not say to Jesus!*
 - A situation is not over until Jesus says that it is over.
- *The word convulsed there in verse 26 is a reference to the agitation that the demon physically caused the boy, one last time, as he had to exit the body.*
 - Jesus had the power to bring the demons out of the boy, but there was still a major lack and absence of faith with those who were looking on. At this point, since they verbally expressed that the boy was dead, they thought all of this was over.
- *In reality, this was just the beginning steps of Jesus own death, burial, and resurrection that was to come.*
 - In this situation with the boy, we see a great PREVIEW of what's to come...
- *The Preview. (v. 27)*
 - 'But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.'
 - Dr. Daniel Akin says *'Literally the (greek) text reads, 'Jesus raised him and he was resurrected.'*
 - *When studying verse 27 in the greek text it's important to point out that the second and third verbs in verse 27 are often used throughout the NT in regards to resurrection.*
 - What we find here in Mark 9:14-29, has strong parallels to Mark 5:41-42.
 - *I believe that this exorcism is a preview of Jesus' own death and resurrection.*
 - *Jesus has the power to cast out demons and to raise someone up.*
 - Contrary to the crowd and even this doubting father, Christ was in control of the entire situation.
 - *And based on the prior questions that Jesus' disciples had about Jesus death and suffering in Mark 9:2-13, Jesus provides insight into the meaning of His own death and resurrection.*
 - It's important that we see here Church that satanic powers bring death, but the

divine power of our Lord brings resurrection life.

- Now, Jesus and His disciples leave this public area and go somewhere privately, where the disciples asked a genuine question...
- **Public Failure should lead to Private Prayer. (v. 28-29)**
 - ‘And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?” 29 And he said to them, “This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.”
 - **Whenever something doesn’t go as we have planned or we have failed at a certain task or responsibility, we must be willing to ask ourselves the hard questions.**
 - **Clearly that’s what the disciples do here, they realized that they weren’t able to cast the demon out, so they ask Jesus WHY?**
 - An interesting thing that I notice here in the text is that this question they asked, is asked in private.
 - **Not all of our failures have to be on public display.**
 - While our failures do need to be looked at to prevent them from happening again, they need to be

dealt with between God, our close circle, and ourselves.

- ***In this instance we need to give the disciples credit, they do not play the blame game, and they do not make excuses. In verse 28 they simply ask Jesus, why weren’t we able to do this and how can we improve?***
 - ***As individuals and as a Church family, we can and do need to learn from this:***
 - When something doesn’t go well or the way we planned it, we must stop blaming it on someone else, thinking it is someone else’s fault, and take responsibility for our own actions. Ask Jesus and those around us, why didn’t it work and what can I do better?
 - ***Notice also, they asked ‘why could WE not cast it out?’***
 - They are still relying on their own strengths and abilities instead of relying on Christ.
 - Dr. Daniel Akin said ***‘The disciples failed big time. It was public, brought ridicule, cast doubt***

on their Master and mission and filled them with self-doubt.'

- *When we face failure, we should be compelled to question ourselves, and not one another.*
- Up until verse 29, faith has been greatly emphasized by Jesus, but here, Jesus injects the priority of prayer.
 - ***We must see in this that the two go together, hand in hand.***
 - Scholar James Brooks said 'Prayer, especially a whole life of prayer, is the avenue to faith.'
- When Jesus says 'this kind' in verse 29, that is a reference to casting out demons.
 - ***Jesus is not saying that some demon casting require prayer and others do not, instead Jesus is saying that whenever you step foot on the spiritual battlefield, you will lose the battle if you do it in your own strength.***
 - Faith bridges the gap and faith can be experienced and exercised through prayer...

Conclusion:

- So if you are here tonight and you are saying the wrong things to God, meaning:
 - *You don't trust Him.*
 - *You blame Him.*
 - *You grieve Him by your lifestyle of sin.*

- *You tell him, like the father in our text tonight, that He can't do something...*
- *I encourage you to follow what Jesus is saying here in verse 29...*
 - *Bridge the gap in your life to have faith in God in all things through experiencing and exercising prayer.*
- And don't forget the truth of Luke 1:37:
 - 'For nothing will be impossible with God.'
 - **Truth #1: *Faithless Wandering.* (v. 14-19)**
 - **Truth #2: *Faltering Words.* (v. 20-24)**
 - **Truth #3: *Fruitful Work.* (v. 25-29)**