

“Lord, I Believe—Help My Unbelief”

Text: Gospel of Mark 9:14–29

Theme: Jesus meets us in the tension between faith and doubt.

Introduction

Faith is often spoken about as though it must be perfect, unwavering, and strong at all times. Many believers feel that if they admit doubt or struggle, they somehow fail as Christians. Yet the Bible presents a much more honest picture of the human heart.

In Gospel of Mark 9:14–29, we meet a father whose child is suffering terribly. He comes to Jesus desperate, exhausted, and uncertain. In one of the most honest prayers recorded in Scripture he cries out:

“I believe; help my unbelief!” (Mark 9:24)

This story reminds us that faith is not the absence of struggle. Faith is bringing our struggle to Jesus.

Today we will see **how Jesus helps us in our unbelief** through this powerful encounter.

1. Jesus Meets Us in the Chaos of Life

When Jesus returns from the mountain with Peter, James, and John, He finds confusion and conflict waiting for Him.

A crowd has gathered. Religious teachers are arguing with the disciples. A desperate father stands nearby with a son tormented by an unclean spirit.

This moment occurs right after the glorious event known as the Transfiguration of Jesus. On the mountain there was glory, light, and the audible voice of God. But at the bottom of the mountain there is pain, suffering, and spiritual warfare.

This is often how life works.

We experience moments of spiritual clarity and joy, but we also return to situations filled with difficulty, illness, family struggles, and spiritual battles.

The father explains that he brought his son to the disciples, but they could not help him.

Imagine the disappointment. He had heard about Jesus. He believed Jesus could help. Yet now it seemed nothing had changed.

This is where doubt often grows.

- When prayers seem unanswered
- When suffering continues
- When expectations collapse

Yet notice something important: **the father did not walk away. He stayed long enough to bring his pain directly to Jesus.**

That alone is an act of faith.

2. Jesus Exposes the Real Struggle: Unbelief

Jesus responds with a striking statement:

“O unbelieving generation, how long shall I stay with you?” (Mark 9:19)

At first this sounds harsh, but Jesus is not rejecting the father. He is exposing a deeper problem—the pervasive unbelief surrounding Him.

The religious leaders doubt Him.

The crowd misunderstands Him.

Even the disciples struggle to trust Him fully.

The issue is not merely a suffering child—it is a world struggling to believe.

When the boy is brought to Jesus, the spirit violently throws him into convulsions. The father explains that the attacks have happened since childhood and have nearly killed him.

Then he says something that reveals his inner struggle:

“If you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.”

Those words “**if you can**” reveal the father's uncertainty.

But Jesus turns the phrase around:

“If you can? Everything is possible for the one who believes.”

Jesus is not suggesting faith is a magical power. Rather, He is redirecting the father's gaze—from the problem to the power of God.

3. Honest Faith Brings Our Doubt to Jesus

The father responds with one of the most transparent statements in the Bible:

“I believe; help my unbelief!”

This is one of the most profound prayers in Scripture.

It acknowledges two realities at the same time:

He believes.

Yet he struggles to believe.

Faith and doubt are not always opposites. Often they exist together in the same heart.

Many believers know this tension.

- We believe God is good, yet we wonder why suffering continues.
- We believe God answers prayer, yet we struggle when the answer delays.
- We believe Christ is powerful, yet fear still creeps in.

The father teaches us something important: **Jesus does not reject imperfect faith.**

He welcomes it.

Jesus did not say:

“Come back when your faith is stronger.”

Instead, He responds with compassion and authority.

What Jesus desires is **honest faith**, not pretend faith.

4. Jesus Demonstrates His Authority Over Evil

As the crowd gathers, Jesus commands the unclean spirit to leave the boy and never return.

The spirit convulses the child violently and then leaves. For a moment the boy appears lifeless, and the crowd thinks he is dead.

But then Jesus does something deeply symbolic.

“Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet.”

This moment echoes the restoring power of Christ throughout the Gospels. Jesus does not simply remove the problem—He restores the person.

The boy who was powerless is now standing.

The father who was desperate is now relieved.

The crowd that doubted has witnessed the authority of Jesus.

This miracle reveals something fundamental about who Jesus is.

He is not merely a teacher.

He is not merely a healer.

He is the One who holds authority over the spiritual realm itself.

5. Spiritual Power Requires Dependence on God

Later the disciples ask Jesus privately:

“Why couldn't we drive it out?”

Jesus answers:

“This kind can come out only by prayer.”

The disciples had previously cast out demons. But somewhere along the way they had begun to rely on experience rather than dependence on God.

Prayer is not a technique. It is a posture of reliance.

Jesus reminds them—and us—that spiritual victory flows from **continual dependence on God**.

Faith grows not through self-confidence but through **God-confidence**.

The more we pray, the more we remember that the power belongs to God, not to us.

Application: How Jesus Helps Us in Our Unbelief

This passage gives us several truths to hold onto when faith feels fragile.

1. Bring your struggles honestly to Jesus

God already knows our doubts. The invitation is not to hide them but to bring them into His presence.

A simple prayer like the father's may be one of the most powerful prayers we can pray:

“Lord, I believe—help my unbelief.”

2. Focus on the power of Christ, not the weakness of your faith

The strength of faith lies not in the believer but in the One being trusted.

A small amount of faith placed in a powerful Savior is stronger than great confidence placed in ourselves.

3. Depend on God through prayer

Prayer continually re-centers our hearts on God's power and grace.

When we pray, we admit that we cannot solve life's deepest problems on our own.

Conclusion

The beauty of this story is that it reveals the compassion of Jesus toward struggling faith.

The father did not have perfect faith.

But he had **enough faith to come to Jesus.**

And that was enough.

Perhaps today you feel like that father:

- Carrying burdens you cannot solve
- Praying prayers that feel uncertain
- Believing, yet struggling to believe

The good news of the Gospel is that Jesus does not turn away from imperfect faith.

He meets us in it.

So today we can pray the same honest prayer:

“Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief.”

And the same Savior who lifted that child to his feet is still able to lift weary hearts today.

Amen.