

MARK

READ MARK 9:14-29

Pursue

In this week's text, Mark 9:14-28, Jesus comes upon his disciples and the crowds, finding them arguing with the Scribes. A father had asked the disciples to help his demon-possessed son by casting out the demon, but the disciples were unable. Upon learning of the boy and the disciple's inability to help him, Jesus states, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me." Jesus cuts to the heart of the disciple's issue and the heart of this week's text, *faith*.

We see faith emphasis again when Jesus responds to the father's pleas for help if Jesus "can," and Jesus responds, "All things are possible for one who *believes.*" The father cries out, "*I believe; help my unbelief!*" The father acknowledges his weakness of faith and prays for help in his faith to the only one who is able. And Jesus responds, he casts out the demon and raises the now healed and whole boy.

- **Is there an area of life that you find difficult to believe God can or will do what is best? Where you might say like the father, "I believe; but help my unbelief?" What is that area? Why do you think it is difficult for you to have faith in God in this area?**
- **We see in this text that God is faithful even when we are faithless. Share a time in recent memory of God's compassionate faithfulness in your life.**

Practice

Pray for One Another

Late in the story, the disciples, amazed and confused, ask why they were unable to cast the demon out, and Jesus responds, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer." Prayer is an act of faith. It is an act of trust - not in your own strength or ability, like the disciples were attempting, but a profession of weakness, need, and trust in the one you are praying to. We saw this modeled in the father and explained by Jesus to the disciples. In this story, we see that it is not the measure of faith (the father's faith is weak) but the object of that faith that is of utmost importance (he cries out to God for help). This week we want to spend time crying out to God on behalf of one another. Break into groups of 2-3 and spend time sharing prayer requests and praying for one another. Below are a few prompts to help you consider how to pray in light of today's text.

- Pray for the areas that people shared are difficult to trust God in earlier in the lesson.
 - Pray they would see God and their circumstances rightly.
 - Pray they would depend on him and not their own efforts or understanding.
- Pray for those who may be experiencing spiritual attack. This can be anything from the physical manifestations like the boy experienced to something like accusations from the enemy.
 - Pray scriptural truth against the lies the enemy or flesh is tempted to believe.
 - Pray for God's protection from the schemes of the enemy.
 - Pray for the Spirit's help to remind them of God's word often.
- Pray prayers of praise for those who have experienced the faithfulness of God in a new or deeper way recently.
 - Pray that the Spirit would remind them of God's faithfulness often and give them grateful hearts.
 - Ask the Holy Spirit to give each member of the group eyes to see his faithfulness and hearts that rejoice in Him!

Proclaim

(Leaders, grab a piece of paper, a whiteboard, a poster board, or open a note on your phone.)

For the next few months, we will be continuing our study of the book of Mark. Have group members take a few minutes and consider one person in their life that does not have faith in Jesus but that they long to see God save. This could be a co-worker, friend, gym buddy, family member, etc. This is the person that they are going to commit to praying for and sharing Jesus with this semester.

Sharing Jesus with them could look like inviting them to church, sending them an impactful sermon, telling them something they've learned, encouraging them in light of something in the text, etc. Have each group member share who that person is and write them on the paper/board/note so that you can pray for them and we will follow up throughout the series.