

HELP MY UNBELIEF

MARK 9:23-24 • TV068B

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Mark 9:23-24

“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.”

I’m reading from the book of **Mark chapter 9: verses 23 and 24**, *“And 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, Lord; I believe, help thou mine unbelief.”*

Now these are the words of a father who had brought his sick child to the Lord Jesus Christ to be healed. And our Lord had looked upon this father and said to him, *“If you can believe, all things are possible to them that believe.”* What a sincere, honest and open confession and plea from this father.

He said to the Lord, *“Lord; I do believe, (I do believe as best I can, as I am able) I do believe. Lord, help my unbelief.”*

Well my friend I can truthfully say these words. Do you dare to be totally honest with God and say, “Lord, I do believe; I know that I’m a sinner. I know that I need thy mercy and thy grace; I know that. I know that I need a Redeemer. There is no power in me or in any human to save a soul. I know that Jesus Christ is your gift to sinners. I know that He died to redeem sinners. I know that He came to this earth to bear the shame and sin and guilt of those who believe. I know that. And Lord I do believe; I believe that He is able to save. I do believe He is the only Mediator between God and men. Lord I do believe.”

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But like this father, like this man, I'm given over to a lack of faith and I find so often doubts and fears and unbelief, do you? Are you a victim of depression, despondency, doubt, and fear? Can you really say with this father today, "Lord, I do believe?" The Lord knows our hearts. We might put up all kinds of professions and fronts before people, "*but God looketh on the heart. He looketh not on the outward countenance.*"

And God deals with honest people and honest people deal with God. "Lord I do believe and you know the extent to which I believe and the degree of my faith but I must confess Lord, I need help. I need help because of my unbelief."

Now I want to deal in this message today with the subject of faith, faith in Christ, the faith that saves. And I want to see if we can do something about our unbelief and about our lack of faith.

You know, the Scripture says: "*Take heed brethren.*" Paul's talking to believers, "*Take heed brethren lest there be found in you an evil heart of unbelief.*"

Do you know what He said? "*Israel could not enter into the land of promise; (they never did, most of them) because of unbelief.*" Now you be careful that God doesn't find in you that same unbelief.

And my friend; everything that goes by the name "faith" is not saving faith. Everything that goes by the name "faith" is not redeeming faith.

Over there in the book of **John, chapter 2**, it says: "*In that day many believed on Him.*" That's some kind of faith isn't it, because of the miracles, when they saw the miracles which He did?

But Jesus did not commit Himself to them because He knew what was in them. He didn't need for anyone to tell Him what was in a man. He knew what was in them. And He never did commit Himself to these people though they had some kind of faith.

Now, the religionist, the professor of faith, can produce many things that resemble saving faith. The religionist can produce many things that resemble saving faith and can deceive people, even themselves.

Let me give you some examples:

First of all: Religious professors can reform the outward man.

The Pharisees did; our Lord said: "*They were very careful to cleanse the outside of the cup, (that part that people saw) but the inside was full of extortion and excess.*" He said, "They were like a beautiful grave with grass and flowers. On the outside they appeared beautiful to men but inside that grave was nothing but dead men's bones."

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And the religionist can reform the flesh and do many good deeds that deceives many, even themselves.

Secondly: Then they speak well of Christ.

Nicodemus did; why he confronted the Master, he said: *“I know that you’re from God, whoever you are, you are from God because no man can do what you do except God be with him.”*

You can go through the New Testament and find many unbelievers who spoke well of Christ. Gamaliel did; he defended the disciples and many others who spoke well of Christ. Even Harod who killed John the Baptist liked him. He did many things. He admired John.

Thirdly: And then unsaved religionists can experience great sorrow over sin.

Judas sold the Lord for 30 pieces of silver, but we find him coming back to the temple bringing the money and offering it back to the priest saying: *“I’ve done wrong. I’ve betrayed innocent blood.”* There was some remorse there. There was a feeling of guilt and there was sorrow.

Fourthly: Unsaved religionists can do great works.

Don’t we hear people at the Judgment saying, *“Lord; we prophesied in your name and cast out devils and did many wonderful works in your name.”* And Christ said to them, *“I never knew you.”*

So, these people produced some works in the name of Jesus Christ and yet they were unsaved. They didn’t know God.

Fifthly: And then also, they can be baptized and join the church.

Simon Magus did. Ananias and Sapphira; they even sold a piece of property and brought most of the money and gave it; put it at the feet of the disciples. And God struck them dead for their thoughts and their wrong motive and for lying to God.

Their hearts were not right. Outwardly they were doing what everybody else did, looking like everybody else. Even when our Lord announced that one of the disciples would betray Him the others didn’t know who it was. They didn’t suspect Judas. They sat around there saying: *“Lord is it I?”*

Sixthly: And then they talk about a kingdom.

When our Lord came into the city riding on the donkey, the people were throwing palm branches in front of Him crying, *“Hosanna to the King that cometh in the name of the Lord;”* Oh my goodness; they were praising Him.

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Two days later they were crying, “*Crucify Him, crucify Him,*” the same people. Yes, the professors of religion can produce a lot of outward signs that resemble faith, but it’s not faith.

Now, there are some things that false religionists can never produce, things that false faith can never produce. There are some things that nature cannot produce. These are works of God’s grace. These are gifts of God’s grace. These are an operation of the Holy Spirit.

Let me give them to you; there are five of them. These are five things that false faith cannot produce, no way:

First of all: A false professor, a false religionist, a man who does not have saving faith can never; he can never produce a heart that is genuinely broken over his sins; he can’t do it!

Now he might talk about sin in general. He may talk about sins of nations and sins of neighbors and sins of people but not his sins. He never has a heart before God that is genuinely broken over his sin.

He never grieves over his sin. He never says with David, in **Psalm 51**; “*O God, have mercy upon me (O God, not us, me). According to thy loving kindness, according to thy tender mercies, (not justice, mercy) blot out my transgressions. O God I acknowledge my transgressions. My sin is ever before me.*”

No false religionist, no false professor, prays like that. He prays like the Pharisee, “I thank you Lord that I’m not like other men. I tithe and I give alms. I fast and I pray and I go to church on Sunday and I’ve been baptized and I made a profession and all of these things you know.”

Psalm 51:17: “*The sacrifices of God are a broken heart and a contrite spirit.*” How many broken hearts do you know and how many contrite spirits? It’s a proud day we’re living in, proud flesh, arrogant flesh, and haughty spirits.

And God always says, “*Pride goes before the fall,*” pride of race, pride of face, pride of place, even, God help us, pride of grace. Isn’t that tragic?

And **Psalm 34:18** says: “*The Lord is nigh unto them of a broken heart. The Lord saveth such as be of a broken heart.*” I don’t care what a man, a false professor produces; he can’t produce that. The Holy Spirit has to do that.

Secondly: The false professor can never; watch this now, he can never, whatever else he does (he can join your church, tithe, preach, and hold office, be a deacon, Sunday school), but he can never do this; he can never justify God in condemning him.

He can never say, “God has a right and God ought to send me to hell; I deserve to be damned, that if God damned me and if God almighty condemned me and separated me from His presence, He would be doing just exactly what’s right.”

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No unsaved religionist can ever say that. David said it. The unsaved religionist can think of a thousand reasons why God should save him, him and his wife, his children, his grandchildren, and his brothers and sisters, and his denomination, and his whole clan.

But he can't think of any reason why God should not save him. He stands up for the rights of the creature. But David didn't. David said in **Psalm 51:4**, "*Against thee and thee only have I sinned and done evil in thy sight that thou mightiest be justified when thou speakest and be clear when thou judgest.*"

"Oh God I'm a sinner, and when you speak, and when you judge, and when you condemn, you're right in every charge that is brought against me. I have no defense; I'm guilty."

And I'll tell you, when the law comes in the hand of the Holy Spirit; you read **Romans 3:19**, "*What the law saith it saith to them that are under the law that every mouth may be stopped and all the world become guilty before God.*"

Do you know what that means? That means when God really convicts a man of sin and brings him to see Christ; God shuts that man's mouth.

And the first thing that he shuts his mouth in reference to is his own goodness, his own righteousness and his own rights and his own deserves. He shuts his mouth. He stands speechless before God, "*Dumb, like a sheep before her shearers he opens not his mouth.*"

Now, an unsaved religionist; he's all talk. He talked about his consecration, and his dedication, and his good works, and all of these things. But the man whom God has whittled down and broken and stripped and is the slain of the Lord; he says like the Publican in the temple: "*God be merciful to me a sinner.*" He justifies God.

That's what the thief on the cross did. He said to the other thief; he said, "Don't you fear God? Aren't you afraid of God; seeing we are in the same condemnation and we indeed justly? We are getting exactly what we deserve but this man hath done nothing amiss."

And he turned to Christ and said, "*Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom.*" And our Lord said, "*Today shall thou be with me in paradise.*" You find me a sinner like that and I'll find you one God's going to be merciful to, yes sir. A man who justifies God in His condemnation; "I'm getting what I deserve."

Thirdly: An unsaved man can do a whole lot of things; false faith can produce a whole lot of things, but false faith can never bow to the sovereignty of God in salvation.

It won't do it, no way. Although the Scripture declares over and over again, "*Salvation's of the Lord. The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord and of Him only. For by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves; it's the gift of God.*"

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This thing of salvation: *“It’s not of him that willeth it’s not of him that runneth; it’s of God that showeth mercy.”* This thing of salvation; God said, *“I will be merciful to whom I will be merciful. I’ll be gracious to whom I will be gracious. Cannot I do with mine own what I will?”*

“Before the children were born, (Jacob and Esau, both born of Rebecca, twins in the same womb, sired by the same father) it was said to her, “The elder shall serve the younger. Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated.”

All over the Scripture it says that.

And our Lord Jesus Christ said one day as He paused and lifted His eyes unto heaven; He said; *“Father, I thank you. You’re Lord of heaven and earth. And you’ve hid these things from the wise and the prudent and you’ve revealed them to babes. For even so Father; it seems good in thy sight.”*

Why, natural man will let God sit on the throne in creation. He’ll let Him sit on the throne as far as the weather’s concerned. He’ll let Him sit on the throne in dispensing alms and good things but God’s not going to sit on the throne in salvation.

He’s going to put man there. That’s man’s throne. Man saves himself. And he insists that God owes man something. He insists on the rights of the creature, the natural heart does, the rights of man. Everybody ought to have a chance.

But I’ll tell you this, salvation’s not by chance; it’s by grace. Salvation’s of the Lord. And God almighty, *“will be merciful to whom He will.”*

But unsaved men, unsaved religionist’s, unsaved professors; they will not, they cannot; their natural hearts won’t let them bow to the sovereignty of God and the Lordship of Christ in this matter of redemption.

False faith won’t let you do it and that’s one of the marks of false faith, an unbroken heart, justifying yourself in your sins and not bowing to God’s sovereignty in this matter of salvation.

I’ll tell you this, the God of the Bible is sovereign, almighty in creation, in providence, in salvation, and in all things. He’s Lord, He’s God, He’s boss. He’s on the throne. He’ll do what He will with whom He will for His own glory.

“Hath not the potter power over the clay to make of the same lump one vessel unto honor and another to dishonor?” God says, *“Can I not do with my own what I will? Who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say unto Him that formed it: Why did you make me like this?”*

Fourthly: False faith can never, now listen to me; it can never receive Christ alone, as the way to God, as the truth of God, and as the life of God.

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The false religionist will take Christ along with his faith. He'll take Christ along with his works. Oh he'll take Christ; he'll believe on Christ, he'll receive Christ, along with his morality. Oh he'll receive Christ.

He'll believe on Christ along with his baptism, along with his church membership, along with his belief, along with his obedience, but never Christ alone. He can never say:

“The dying thief rejoiced to see

That fountain in his day

(A man who couldn't walk, who couldn't work, who couldn't wash, who couldn't witness)

And there may I though vile as he, though vile as he

Wash all my sins away.”

He cannot say: “In my hands no price I bring,” (because he's bringing something).

“Oh Lord here are my works; now you supply the rest. Lord; here's my righteousness; you make up where I come short. Lord; here's my payment and you make up what I lack.”

He can't say:

“In my hands no price I bring

Simply to the cross of Jesus Christ I cling

Could my tears forever flow?

Could my zeal no languor know?

These for sin could never atone.”

If I work as long as Methuselah lived, if I labor harder than all the saints of God put together, if I wept and prayed and cried more than the greatest man who ever lived; I couldn't put away one transgression. It's got to be Christ alone.

And the natural man can't say that. He can't submit to Christ. He can't come as a beggar. He can't come empty handed. He can't come stripped, broken, crying, “O God save me or I perish.” I've got nothing to offer.

Fifthly: Natural faith, unsaved people, false religionist's, and false faith can never; now watch this, this is important, you might see yourself here; he can never fully understand the relationship between faith and works, never can.

He never can understand it. He's always confused, always confused. He sets one Scripture against another. He reads this Scripture and it looks like it's teaching that and he reads another and it looks like it's teaching the opposite. He's confused. He sets one Scripture against the other.

He can't reconcile sovereignty and responsibility, faith and works. He can't do it. He's confused. He reads **Romans 4** where Paul said, “*Abraham was justified by faith without works.*”

And then he turns over and reads **James 2** and James says, “*Was not Abraham our father justified by works?*” Uh-oh, he’s confused.

Well Paul said, “*Abraham was justified by faith without works.*” James says, “*Abraham was justified by works.*” Looks like Paul and James got a contradiction there. Not in the mind of a redeemed man; he understands both and he knows they’re saying the same thing.

And then he turns over to the **Book of Hebrews** and he reads, “*By faith Rahab perished not,*” by faith alone. And then he returns to **James 2** and James says, “*Rahab was justified by works*” and he’s confused again, contradiction.

No, there’s no contradiction. In **Romans and Hebrews**, when Paul said, “*Abraham was justified by faith without works and Rahab was justified by faith without works;*” he’s talking about the justification of the soul before God.

And we are justified by faith, totally by believing on Christ, receiving Christ, without any works at all. We’re totally passive in the justification of our souls. You don’t justify your souls by works, if so, how many works, whose work?

We’re justified by Christ. Christ is our justification before God, before the holy throne of God, the courts of God, the law of God, the truth of God. “*Christ reconciled us to God.*”

Now James is writing about the justification of our faith before men. He says, “*Show me your faith without your works.*”

You can’t do it. The only way to show faith is by works. The only way to show anybody your faith or to reveal your faith or to know your own faith is by what your faith does for you, what your faith does through you, what your faith produces.

If my faith in Christ is true, saving faith, it will produce works, it will produce a labor of love, it will produce works of faith, it will produce righteousness so that I can see a change and others can see a change and that’s justifying my faith.

Noah was justified by grace, by Christ, but he proved he believed God by building an Ark. Abraham was justified by believing but he proved he believed by leaving his father’s house when God told him to. Do you see what I’m saying?

Paul says, “A man is not saved because he prays.” And James is saying, “A man’s not saved who doesn’t pray.” Do you see that? Paul says, “A man is not saved; he’s not redeemed, because he prays.” Prayer can’t save; Christ saves.

But James says, “A man is not saved who doesn’t pray.” And Paul says, “A man is not saved because he’s honest. That’s not why we’re saved, because we’re honest. But James is saying, “A man who’s dishonest is not saved.”

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His faith is phony. If he's a crook his faith is phony. He might talk about faith all day, believing God all day, but if he cheats people and robs people and is dishonest in his dealings with them he's a crook. His faith's phony. That's what James is saying.

Paul said, "We're not saved because we love people; we are saved because Christ died for them, was buried and rose again." But James is saying "a man who doesn't love people is not saved, a man who hates is not saved."

But this natural religionist, this false professor, he can't see that, he can't justify that. He's still confused and you can't make him see it. And the only way you can see it is if God will reveal it to you.

Those are the **five marks of false faith**.

Now; let me say this to you, faith is going to be tried. God is going to try faith. In **James 1:12** it says: "*Blessed is that man that endureth trials, for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life.*"

You are going to get tried. Faith in Christ is going to be tried for Christ's sake and for your sake. God's going to try you. Untried faith may prove to be false. Now let's don't fight against these trials and tribulations and troubles that God sends our way. They are for our good.

Faith will be tried by the Word of God!

Now listen to me a moment; this is important; faith will be tried by the Word of God. Remember how it is also said in the Scripture, that those who followed the Lord on the earth, many of them; "*But when they heard these words they departed and walked no more with Him.*" They followed Him because of the miracles. They followed Him because of the healing. They followed Him because of the good feeling. They followed Him because of all the good food.

They followed Him for all these reasons, but when He started preaching, when He started teaching, when He started telling them who He is, what He came to do, and when He started telling them what God almighty did to save their souls and how God saves sinners. When He started teaching them, they left.

They couldn't endure His teaching. They said, "*This is a hard saying; who can hear it?*" They couldn't take His teaching. They couldn't take His doctrine. They couldn't take His Word.

And now I see that today. I see folks that are hollering about, "healing the body" and about, "good things in heaven, streets of gold, no depression and everybody's lives happy ever after."

But I'm telling you this, true faith bows to the Word of God, whatever it says, whatever it says. True faith bows to the Word of God. We believe His Word. True faith will endure the trial of the Word of God.

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Christ said, *“He that heareth my Word and believeth on Him that sent me hath everlasting life,”* (not he that believeth in miracles, and he that believeth in healing, and he that believeth in tongues, and he that believeth in this, that, and the other) *“He that heareth my Word.”*

Faith will not only be tried by the Word of God; it will be tried by persecution. Yes sir; true believers have been mocked and ridiculed and persecuted even, not only by the world of flesh, but the world of religion, even by their own household.

And it'll be tried by poverty and plenty. We are prone to think that poverty is a greater spiritual trial than prosperity but it's not so. For every one person I've seen fail because of poverty I've seen 20 depart from God because of prosperity.

True faith will be tried by sorrow; Job was, Eli was, and Stephen was. True faith will be tried by years. True faith will be tried by death. But Paul said, *“The time of my departure is at hand. I fought a good fight. I finished my course. I've kept the faith.”*

“He that endureth till the end; the same shall be saved!”