

Jesus the Healer

The Grace of Gratitude



SERMON NOTES
AUGUST 11, 2024

12th Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture: Matthew 17:14-21

MATTHEW 17:14-21 (NRSV)

¹⁴When they came to the crowd, a man came to him, knelt before him, ¹⁵and said, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic, and he suffers terribly; he often falls into the fire and often into the water. ¹⁶And I brought him to your disciples, but they could not cure him." ¹⁷Jesus answered, "You faithless and perverse generation, how much longer must I be with you? How much longer must I put up with you? Bring him here to me." ¹⁸And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him, and the boy was cured instantly. ¹⁹Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" ²⁰He said to them, "Because of your little faith. For truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you."

*Some of the questions below are adapted from James Wagner's devotional guide,
The Spiritual Heart of your Health, Upper Room Books, 2002.*

Carefully read and reread the Scripture passage.
What thoughts, ideas, and questions come to you?

Name the specific illness in this story and list all the
factors that seem to work together for healing.

Just prior to this story in Matthew, Jesus and several of his disciples have been apart on the mountain top where Jesus was transfigured. This wasn't the first or last time that Jesus goes to spend time in prayer. What would it take for you to get away from your everyday, unrelenting stress and worries for periods of personal rest and renewal?

In this story, Jesus is touched by the father's persistence but not pleased with his own disciples and their inability to help the man's son. Why could Jesus' disciples not heal the boy?

In Mark's telling of the story, the man says to Jesus, "I believe; help my unbelief!"
What does this verse mean to you?

Does Jesus' reaction to the disciples' inability surprise you? Jesus tells them it is because of their lack of faith that they could not heal the boy. How does one receive such faith?

Some manuscripts of this passage add, "But the only way to force out this kind of demon is by praying and going without eating (fasting)." If we sometimes feel powerless to help certain people in our lives whom we love and care for deeply, how might we engage in purposeful prayer and fasting in seeking God's help?

What is Jesus saying to you? Have you faith, "The size of a mustard seed", to move the mountains and impossibilities in your life?