

The Character of Jesus 37
Healing a Demon-Possessed Boy
Matthew 17:14 – 23, Mark 9:14 – 32, Luke 9:37 – 45

- Characteristic: Revealing hindrances to faith
 - Following the Mark account
 - (14) Jesus, Peter, James, and John were up the mountain, so the other nine were disputing with the scribes (usually Sadducees).
 - (15) The reason for amazement by the crowd is not given. Perhaps the arrival of Jesus was particularly opportune and well timed.
 - (16) Jesus asked the scribes. The father of the demon-possessed boy answered in the next verse, not the scribes, yet it had been the scribes who were disputing. Perhaps the scribes had seized on the apparent failure of the nine disciples but were afraid that their advantage would now be lost.
 - (19) The implication is that Jesus expected more from them at this juncture. Failures of faith so far:
 - The nine, weaker disciples felt defeated when their help was not instantaneous.
 - The crowd assumed failure when the help was not immediate.
 - The scribes capitalized on the slow response.
 - (21) Jesus continued the conversation to draw out the father rather than just fixing the problem.
 - (23) Jesus challenged the root of the matter, weak faith. Jesus had healed a great (albeit unknown) number without failure. Yet, they had no patience.
 - (24) The first positive outcome: the father recognized his own weakness.
 - (25) Having achieved His objective, Jesus healed the boy.
 - (26) The faith of the crowd was still dubious. They assumed the worst despite the obvious miracle, despite no history of negative outcomes.
 - (29) The disciples had treated their powers as magic tricks and neglected to consult with the One who controlled the power. In Matthew 17:20, “If you had faith as a mustard seed...”
 - (31) All three accounts have this short teaching next. I assume it is connected. This is not the first time He has told them. He is challenging their faith right after helping them get past some hindrances to faith.
- Application: Revealing hindrances to faith
 - Those weaker in faith are likely to get in trouble.
 - Let them stew in it a little.
 - Call out the obvious problems (“If you can?”)
 - Don’t be too quick to fix it. Let them think.
 - Challenge them with something even bigger.
 - Don’t give up in the face of nay-sayers.
 - Trust that God will work it out.
 - Don’t demand your own timetable.
 - Stay calm. The opposition can’t solve the problem either.