

Matt 17 vv. 14-21

Mark 9 vv. 14-29

Luke 9 vv. 37-42

Come, in our thoughts we will now return to the other nine disciples, who had remained behind at the foot of the ~~xxx~~ mount while the Lord Jesus had ascended with Peter, James and John. They had fallen asleep.

The next morning, when it began to get light, they awoke. Now they are awaiting their Master's return.

Suddenly they start, for in the distance a large crowd is coming towards them. That was something they would prefer not to see just now. They were so downhearted and sad, for ~~the~~ thought of Jesus's suffering and death was vexing them.

They look ^{at} the multitude in anxiety and dread. Secretly they hope that these people will go in another direction. But no, they are walking straight towards them, and very soon they will confront them.

They feel uncertain, nervous and agitated. Whatever are they to say to all these people? ... Of course, these Jews are looking for their Master, but Jesus is not here and they do not know when He will return.

Yes, if their Master were but present they would not be so nervous, for then He would speak to the multitude. But now they must do so themselves.

Soon the great multitude is standing around them.

From among the crowd a man steps forward. He has a young lad with him who is possessed of a devil. Just look at the poor child. His eyes stare wildly; his arms and legs move convulsively; his pale lips are foaming.

The sadly tried father had expected to find Jesus, but to his great disappointment he finds only nine disciples. Since

~~the~~

and asks them if they can heal his unfortunate child.

The disciples look at each other. In truth, some time back Jesus had sent them out to preach. He had then given them power over unclean spirits. Happy and cheerful they had later returned ~~in~~ to the Lord. They had preached, and even the devils had been subject unto them.

And now another devil-possessed person ~~is~~ has been brought to them. But now they are not so certain. They doubt greatly whether they will succeed this time.. Probably they cast many an anxious glance up the road to see whether Jesus was coming. But no, disappointed they turn their glance back towards the multitude. What must they do?

It has become very quiet, much too quiet for the doubting disciples. All eyes are upon them.

There stands the father with his only child, waiting. His sad eyes are fixed upon the disciples of the Lord Jesus.

Well now, they cannot stand waiting like this. At last they decide to attempt it. Whether it will succeed they do not know. They are extremely doubtful about it. At this moment they lack the certainty of faith.

Listen! They speak: "We command ~~thee~~ you, go out of ~~the~~ the lad". But their voices tremble and the words come from uncertain lips. Will the unclean spirit ~~obey~~ obey? ...

There is a moment's anxious quiet. All hold their breath... No, nothing happens. The child is possessed, and remains possessed. The devil refuses to loose his prey.

The disciples are put to shame. There they stand now, the ridicule of all these people. Helplessly they look upon the ~~father~~ father and his suffering child.

All at once some men step forward. They are scribes. their lips are curled in mocking smiles. Ah, now they have something. Now they can ridicule the followers of the hated Jesus of Nazareth. In the Bible it says that the scribes were

They may have asked contemptuously: "Why can ye not do ~~this~~ this healing?" If your Master really is the Son of God, if He really is the Messiah, why does He not help you now? .. Why does He not give you the power to help this poor child? .. Can you not see that it is all lies and deceit? .. Now it can be seen!"

O, the scribes are happy to be able to make mockery of the disciples. They are pleased that they can speak scornfully about the Lord Jesus. They have no pity for the suffering child ,...they do not even think about him. If only they can vent their ~~hated~~ hatred and anger. Look, there they stand, gazing on~~t~~/ the crowd in triumph and smiling proudly.

Embarrassed and ashamed the disciples stand there in silence. they do not know what to answer. They feel unhappy and miserable.

There stands the~~d~~ disappointed father, who now has no other hope of his poor boy being saved from the hellish spirit.

There stand the scribes, beaming with pleasure at this opportunity of getting the disciples in a tight corner.

There stand the people, who press around inquisitively ~~so~~ as not to miss a thing.

You can well understand, boys and girls, that it was torture for the disciples. You do not like to be put to shame or made ridiculous either, do you? That would not please you, and neither did it please the disciples.

Suddenly all eyes look in one direction. There is .. the Lord Jesus, with Peter, James and John. He has arrived un-noticed.

The people flock around the Lord Jesus. They are astonished. They cannot understand how He has appeared so suddenly. Their thoughts had been so occupied by the unsuccessful attempts of the disciples to heal the young lad, that they had not seen ~~Him~~ Him approaching. Now all attention is given to Him. They ~~salute~~ greet Him with respect.

disciples. How happy they are to see their Master again.

The Lord Jesus knows however how anxious they have been. He knows what a difficult time they have been experiencing. He takes the part of His disciples immediately.

He asks the scribes: "What question ye with them?"

The scribes give no answer however. They are sorry that Jesus has come. How they would have rejoiced if the father had been obliged to return with his child unhealed. This would have greatly reduced the respect and reverence of the people towards the Lord Jesus and His disciples. That is what they had been hoping for, and that is why the scribes now step back a little and keep silence.

No, the scribes give no answer, but the silence is soon broken by the ~~Lord Jesus~~ voice of the father whose son is possessed. "Master, I have brought unto Thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit". Do you hear what he is saying? -"I have brought unto Thee my son".

The father's intention was thus without a doubt to bring his child to Jesus, but when He was not there he had asked help of the disciples.

Listen to what the father ~~says~~ says: " I spake to Thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not".

The Lord Jesus answers: " O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me"

This was a rebuke for the unbelieving disciples, and also for the disputing scribes.

The lad is now brought to the Lord Jesus.

o, just look! ... He falls ~~xxxx~~ upon the ground and rolls over and over convulsively. He is foaming at the mouth. Poor child! It is terrible to witness his suffering. What will

that father's thoughts have been? It was his child, his only child.

Jesus remains quite calm. He asks quietly of the father: "How long ~~as~~ it ago since this came unto him?" Jesus means: "When did he first get this? Has he been suffering long with ~~this~~ affliction?"

The father replies at once: "Of a child". He then ~~goes~~^{oe} on to relate how much anxiety ~~they~~ have had with their child. How happy that father and mother ~~had~~ been when the little fellow was born, for he was their first. But O, their joy did not last long, for it soon appeared ~~d~~ that their child had a terrible illness. He was lunatic. From time to time the boy had terrible fits. It seemed then ~~that their~~ as though their onlt dear one was mad. An evil spirit had gone into the child. Furth ermore this devil made their ~~child~~^{lad} both deaf and dumb. Night and day those parents had to watch him, for he was not safe for a moment on his own. Sometimes the devil cast the child into the fire, and if the watchful father ~~had~~ not quickly pulled him out, he would have been burned alive. Then again the evil spirit would cast the boy in the water, so that he would surely have drowned had not his father saved him speedily. How cruel the devil is , isn't he? Satan tried repeatedly to murder that child.

Having come to the end of his sad story, the father cries ~~o~~ out: "But if Thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us". These words sound like a cry of despair.

O no, this father does not believe in the almighty power of the Saviour. Just hear his words: "If thou canst do anything".

He has his doubts whether Jesus is able to help here at all. If only the case was not so serious. He looks at Jesus with helpless eyes.

Jesus says: " If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him~~t~~ that believeth".

where not able to do it, and shall the Prophet of Nazareth be able? O, he feels the doubt and unbelief in his heart. He sees his poor child lying convulsed upon the ground. Then the sorely tried father bursts into tears.

"Lord I believe!" he cries trebling, but his voice lacks the certainty of faith. That doubt ... that doubt! He cannot get rid of that, and that is why he prays: "Help Thou mine unbelief". ~~x~~ It is as though he says: "Lord, thou requirest that I believe in thee, but I cannot. I am full of unbelief. I cannot cast those doubts out of my heart. Help me. Give unto me faith in thee. Take thou the unbelief out of my heart".

The multitudes~~sz~~ have been listening to everything in breathless silence. Those behing press forward. The tension increases.

The Lord Jesus knows and understands the battle which is raging in the anxious father's heart. He turns towards the evil spirit and commands: "Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him".

Here speaks the King of kings. Jesus does not ask, He commands.

The devil must obey. O, what a blow to the prince of darkness. Truly, he must release this child, but he still makes one last attempt to murder him. He tries to tear him to pieces.

In the Bible it says: "The spirit cried, and rent him ~~so~~ sore, and came out of him".

Look, there lies the lad, motionless and with ~~eyes~~ ^{eyes} fast closed. It seems as though Jesus is too late. This is what many of the Jews think too.

"He is dead", comes the mournful remark from all sides.

And, in truth, it looks very much ~~xx~~ like it.

The crowds are mistaken however. The help of the Son of God never comes too late. Just see what happens!

The Lord Jesus bends and grasps the child's hand. The Lord lifts the boy up and ... he stands! He was not dead, it only seemed

~~xxxx~~ to be so.

Then stands the lad, ~~completely~~ restored, and completely sane. The wild look in his eyes has gone. He can speak and he can hear. He is completely restored.

Jesus then gives back to the father his only child.

Look, there goes the father, his son walking beside him. A joy previously unknown fills this man's heart. He no longer needs to hold his son fast. Henceforth he can sleep peacefully without worry or fear that his child may drown or burn.

They enter their home. What happiness must have reigned there. He tells with emotion what has taken place. Deep reverence for Jesus fills the hearts of those people.

The scribes too went away. They ~~were~~ were not so happy. On the contrary, they are disgruntled and dissatisfied. Everything has once again worked to the honour and glory of that hated Nazarite.

Is there no gratitude in their hearts then, that the unhappy child has been saved from such misery? ... Gratitude? ... Not a word of it. They clench their fists in anger and their eyes blaze with helpless fury. They too have suffered a tremendous defeat.

The people too go home. They are discussing excitedly among themselves what they have just witnessed. The scribes and Pharisees may say what they will, they may attempt to ridicule Jesus, but He is a mighty Prophet. That cannot be denied.

Jesus and His disciples also go away. They enter into a house.

Timidly and shyly, the nine disciples approach.

"Lord", they ask privately, "Why could we not cast him out?" "Why could we not heal the child?"

Their Master replies: " Because of your unbelief". He tells them that it was because they had doubts in their heart. They had trusted too much to their own strength. "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; ~~and~~ and nothing shall be impossible to you".

From this story you can learn how powerful and how cruel the devil is. Nowm all of you lie under the might of this prince of darkness. O, children, only the Lord Jesus can save you from ~~that~~ that power. He is stronger than all the devils together.

And do you knowwhat is the most fearful part of it? ... You do not realise that you are slaves of the devil. May God open your blind eyes that you may see the deadly peril in which you stand. Serve sin no longer, but ask the Lord to save you from it. Jesus was able to save that poor lad, and He is able also to save you from everlasting ruin.
