

Gospel of Matthew “Unable”
Matthew 17:14-20
September 10, 2023

Matthew 17:14-20

14 And when they came to the crowd, a man came up to him and, kneeling before him,
15 said, “Lord, have mercy on my son, for he has seizures and he suffers terribly. For
often he falls into the fire, and often into the water. 16 And I brought him to your
disciples, and they could not heal him.” 17 And Jesus answered, “O faithless and
twisted generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you?
Bring him here to me.” 18 And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him, and
the boy was healed instantly. 19 Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said,
“Why could we not cast it out?” 20 He said to them, “Because of your little faith. For
truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this
mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for
you.”

“They came down.”

Valleys often follow mountaintops.

Matthew seems intent to show us that the disciples are confused and unable.

Matthew 17:19-20

19 Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why could we not cast it out?”
20 He said to them, “Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith
like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’
and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.”

“Little faith” could have us thinking that we need more faith.

Mark 9 says that the disciples didn’t *pray* when they tried to cast out the demon.

Faith is the inside and prayer is the outside of the same thing - a true relationship with
God.

Mustard seed faith is conscious of its own unbelief.

Jesus leaves the light and glory of the mountaintop and comes down into our darkness
and helplessness so that darkness is not the end and light and life will come to all those
who believe.

Grow Group Discussion Questions

- 1.) What did God say to you through His Word during our Sunday gathering?
- 2.) Do you believe the Christian life is supposed to get easier as you go? Why or why not? If it doesn't get easier, then what would that mean for you?
- 3.) Is it a new idea that "valleys" often follow "mountain top" experiences? Why do you think that they do? What are the kinds of things God might be doing in those "valley" experiences?
- 4.) The disciples talked with Jesus after their failure. In Matthew 17, Jesus pointed to their "little faith." In Mark 9, Jesus said it was prayerlessness. How are faith and prayer connected? What insight does this give you about your life?
- 5.) Jesus didn't say that big faith equals big miracles, but that really small faith can see God do big things. Why is this?
- 6.) In what ways do you process failure? Are you open about it or tend to process privately? What qualities make a Grow Group a good place to share struggles and doubts?
- 7.) How can your Grow Group apply this passage together this week?