

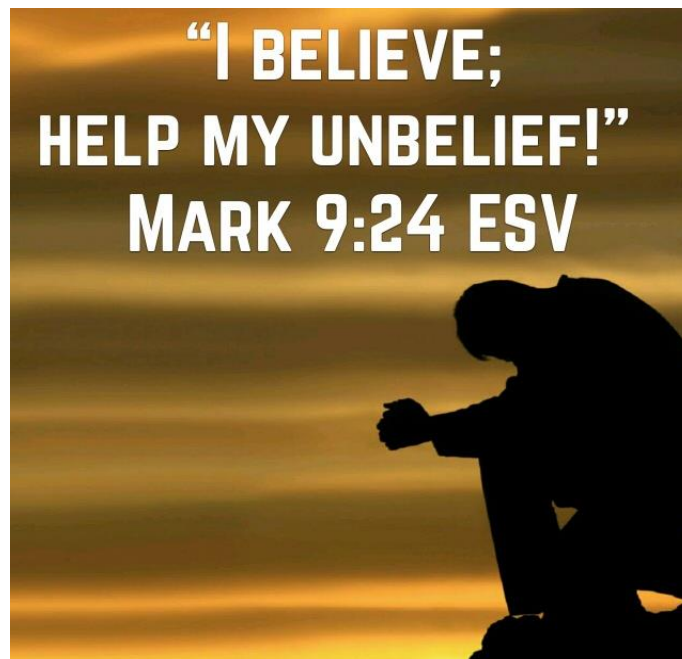
September 20, 2020

## **"Who do you say that I am?"**

**"Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, "Who do people say that I am?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets."**

**"But what about you?" he asked, "Who do you say that I am?"**

Mark 8:27-29



As Jesus neared the end of his ministry on earth, he began to prepare the twelve, and especially his inner circle, for what was going to happen to him. A part of that preparation was to take Peter, James and John, his inner circle, to the top of a mountain and there he was transfigured before them. These three saw Jesus as he really is and they saw him talking with Moses and Elijah.

As they come down from the mountain top they are confronted with a large crowd embroiled in a major argument. When Jesus asked what the problem was, a man in the crowd answered, **"Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech...I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not."**

We can almost imagine this scene. The nine Apostles who were not invited to accompany Jesus to the mountain top have been faced with this challenging demon possession. These men all have experience driving out demons, but try as they might, they cannot handle this one.

The boy's father begs Jesus, **"But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us."** For many of us this father's plea really reflects our own struggle to believe. We pray for many things, but often unspoken in our prayers is this same thought. **"...if you can do anything..."**

We pray that God will end the plague of Covid. We ask that God will heal the divisions in our land. We ask God to draw the hearts of the lost to him. We pray for our family to be safe and

secure. And through all of those prayers runs this little niggling doubt; **"...if you can do anything..."**

When Jesus tells this pleading father, **"Everything is possible for him who believes..."** he isn't just addressing him. He is addressing each and every one of us. This one truth runs throughout Jesus' teachings on prayer; **"...whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours..."** (Mark 11:24)

The gospels make it clear that God's promise to provide for us is not dependent on his capacity to intervene, but on our capacity to believe that he can and will. In a very real way our God is much smaller in our minds than he is in reality. We really struggle to wrap our minds around such an all powerful father who can and will do what we ask.

So, when we pray, we pray like this desperate father; **"...if you can do anything..."** Jesus wants us to absolutely understand and accept that his capacity to do something is totally and completely unlimited. The truth is he can do everything, but we struggle to believe that truth.

Returning to our challenge in this series; **"Who do you say that I am?"** our understanding of the depth of Jesus' power is essential to our relationship with him. If my faith in Jesus' power is limited by my own unbelief then I will never really enjoy the relationship with him that he longs for.

Like this father, we need to pray again and again, **"I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"** This is, for all of us I think, the obstacle to the relationship with our Master, that all of us long to experience. We long to know from day to day that we can turn to our Lord in prayer for anything and because we truly believe that he can, he will answer those prayers.