**THE HEALING OF THE BLIND MAN**

***From Begging to Preaching***

***John 9***

Sunday School Lesson 13

*The Miracles of Jesus*

04/07/2019

**Introduction:** This week’s lesson focuses on a particular type of miracle that Jesus performed repeatedly during His earthly ministry – the casting out of devils. Specifically, we will examine the time that His disciples tried to cast out a devil, but they were unable to. While Jesus had taken Peter, James, and John up into a high mountain (This is where they witnessed His transfiguration.), His other disciples were left in a nearby town to continue the work. A man came to them with the hopes of having his only son cured of a very troubling condition. He had likely heard of the many stories regarding Jesus and the casting out of devils. He may have even heard stories about the disciples casting out devils, as the Lord had given them power and authority to do so prior to sending them out by two’s. The disciples willingly agreed to help the man. As the child was brought before them, they called for the evil spirit to come out of him. To their dismay, nothing happened. A great crowd of people stood by and watched, as the disciples failed terribly to perform a miracle. How embarrassing! Without Jesus there, the disciples did not know where to turn to handle the situation. Thankfully, the Lord came down from the mountain at just the right time and intervened and helped the man and his son. At this point, we should not be surprised by the disciples’ failure, as we have seen their struggle with faith over the last several lessons. The Lord had been constantly reproving them for their lack of faith. Prior to this miracle, the Lord had performed another great feeding. He had fed over 4,000 people with seven loaves and a few fish. Amazingly, the disciples questioned how the Lord would provide prior to the feeding, even though they had already seen Him do it once. The focus of our lesson will again be on the disciples, as we examine some of the problems highlighted in this story. We will also observe the struggle that the sinner faces against Satanic influences.

1. THE DISCIPLES COULD NOT FIX THE SITUATION BECAUSE THEY DID NOT SEE THE PROBLEM. (MATTHEW 17:17-19; MARK 9:22-24)
2. **Notice that Jesus immediately identified the problem, but the disciples still did not see it. (Matthew 17:17-19).** When the man told the situation to Jesus, the Lord’s first response was one of rebuke. He questioned how long He would have to continue to endure the unbelief of that generation. Can you imagine how difficult it must have been for the Son of God to constantly deal with such doubt and blindness, even from those closest to Him? When Jesus made that statement, the book of Mark tells us that it was directed toward the man. However, we know that the statement was to be applied by all that were there that day. The man was certainly partially to blame for his lack of faith. Jesus’ disciples were also to blame though. The great multitude of people who had been swayed so easily by the scribes needed to also heed the Lord’s rebuke. Unfortunately, the disciples did not understand that the message was for them. We know this because they asked the Lord privately why they had failed. Jesus gave them the same answer that he had given the first time. It was because of their unbelief.
3. **Notice that the man acknowledged that he was a part of the problem (Mark 9:22-24).** As Jesus questioned the man regarding the boy, the man made a statement that showed his limited faith. He said: “if thou canst do any thing.” He questioned whether the Lord had the ability to perform the miracle. Jesus put the answer back to the man. He told him: “if thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.” Jesus wanted it to be clear to the man that the only thing limiting a miracle was his own doubt and unbelief. At this point, the father understood that he was the problem. He recognized that his lack of faith was to blame. Perhaps, he had put the blame on the disciples or on his son. He may have even blamed God for the situation. Under heavy conviction and weariness, the father cried out: “Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.” Now that the problem had been identified, the Lord could provide the solution. This is the method by which the lost come unto salvation. Until they can identify their sin problem, they can’t possibly find the solution in Christ. We should also consider how many Christians have a problem in their life right now, but they are unwilling to identify it for what it is.
4. THE DISCIPLES INABILITY TO HAVE AN ANSWER CAUSED GREAT EMBARRASMENT TO THE WORK OF CHRIST, AND IT OPENED THE DOOR FOR THE CRITICS (MARK 9:14-17; LUKE 9:1)
5. **Notice that the scribes seized the opportunity to cast doubt on Jesus and His disciples (Mark 9:14-17).** The scribes wasted little time in setting about to discredit the Saviour. For the first time in Jesus’ ministry, they had an opportunity to cast doubt on His power. Most of their attacks had been based on what He had said. These attacks seemed to have little impact on the people, as great crowds followed Jesus everywhere that He went. However, if they could find a reason to cause His power to be put into question, they knew that they could turn people away from Christ. The scribes were under Satan’s influence. Satan actively seeks for ways to cast doubt on the deity and goodness of God. He has critics ready to pounce on every opportunity. The disciples did not have an answer to give the multitude. It wasn’t just that they could not perform the miracle. They didn’t even know why they could not perform the miracle. The scribes, on the other hand, knew the reason. To them, it clearly showed that the disciples were not who they claimed to be. They proclaimed with total boldness that the disciples could no longer be trusted. Their hope was to dissuade anyone that would listen. It’s likely that there were some (maybe even many) people there who started to really question the authenticity of Jesus.
6. **Notice that the disciples knew they had the power, but they still did not have an answer (Luke 9:1).** The disciples knew that they had the power to cast out devils. The Lord had personally assured them when He sent them out that they would be able to heal and cast out devils. As mentioned previously, they had already gone out in groups of two and performed many miracles. They were probably confident that they could help this man. Yet, knowing they had the power to do it did not help the man or his son. They could have talked all night about how the Lord had given them power over the devils, but until they actually performed it, that conversation would have been muted. The disciples did not understand that faith was the answer. It is the engine that powers all of the miracles. If the miracle is not working as expected, check the engine! As Christians, it is not enough to just know that we have the power of God in our own personal lives. Do we have an answer for the lost? Can we lead them to Christ? Can we help them to experience that power for themselves? We ought to know how to answer every man.
7. THE DISCIPLES SOMEHOW ALLOWED PRIDE TO BE THE RESULT OF THEIR FAILURE TO HEAL THE MAN’S SON. (LUKE 9:46-50)
8. **Notice that they forbad others to cast out devils after their own failure to do so (Luke 9:49-50).** It’s hard to believe that the result of the disciples’ failure would be an increase (or revelation) of their pride, yet that’s exactly what happened. Not long after Jesus healed the troubled child, the disciples let Jesus know that they had taken the liberty of stopping someone else from casting out devils. The reason was based upon the fact that the person was not in their inner circle. If they could not cast out devils, then there was no way that someone who wasn’t as close to Jesus (physically) could possibly have the power to cast them out. You can tell that their pride had been wounded by their own failures. While our own shortcomings should humble us, our flesh pushes for an alternate reaction. It tries to find a way for us to quickly reestablish how much we value ourselves. We often think of pride as something to worry about while we are doing really well, but pride can be the scariest when it is a wounded animal.
9. **Notice that the disciples argued over which of them was the greatest, immediately following their collective failure (Luke 9:46-48).** The Bible does not tell us which disciples were primarily involved in this argument, but it seems likely that this argument may have been between Peter, James, and John. After all, they had not personally failed like the other disciples had. On top of that, they had been allowed to go with Jesus and witness His transfiguration. I believe that this prompted an attitude of superiority among the disciples. They should have been learning from the situation, but they were instead puffing up their pride. They should have been encouraging one another to do better, but they were instead putting each other down and lifting themselves up. They should have all recognized how far away they were from where they needed to be. Not only does pride come after we fail personally, but pride also knocks loudly when the failure is not individual.
10. THE TROUBLED CHILD SHOULD REMIND US OF THE TERRIBLE CONDITION OF THOSE WHO ARE LOST. (MARK 9:18-22)
11. **Notice the suffering that the child had to endure (Mark 9:18-22).** This young man was in a miserable condition. First, he was not in his right mind. He could not think rationally. He made foolish and crazy decisions. Secondly, he would inflict harm upon himself. He would burn himself with fire and even try to drown himself. Third, he was constantly tormented. This evil spirit was aggressive. He wanted for the young man to hate life itself. He wanted for the young man to be given over to some vice, as a way to drown out the suffering. We also see that the child foamed at the mouth and gnashed his teeth. Needless to say, the young man was in constant pain. There was no escape for him. He was stuck in the most miserable of positions.
12. **Notice that the evil spirit fought the hardest when he saw Jesus (Mark 9:20).** Sometimes, we may feel like giving up on those who get so close to being saved but then fail to follow through. It may even seem like they are worse now than they were before. The crowd probably thought the same way about the young man. They were so close to bringing him to Christ, but then he went and had a terrible and scary episode. Yet, the Lord was still able to provide healing.

**Conclusion:** Are we willing to properly identify the source of a problem in our Christian life? There are so many Christians who often say: “I see nothing wrong.” The disciples felt that way, yet they were in the wrong. We must also be sure that we are prepared to give an answer to every man. There’s someone out there counting on you and me.