

Praying in Faith – Leader's Notes

Matthew 17:14-20

The week of February 23, 2020

Background: The disciples were mystified as to why they could not heal an epileptic boy. Jesus had given them the power to heal, but they mistook God working through them for their having the power to heal others. Having faith does not affect our confidence in ourselves, but it builds our confidence in God.

Discussion:

1. While Jesus was on the Mount of Transfiguration (vs. 1-13) with Peter, James, and John, a father asked the remaining disciples to heal his epileptic son. What prevented them from healing the boy? *Jesus described them as unbelieving and perverse. A strong faith was needed for healing to take place.*
2. (v.17) "Unbelieving" means being without faith and "perverse" means "willfully distorting the truth." Who was Jesus addressing when He made these accusations? *"You" is plural and refers to those who'd gathered to see what was happening. By the fact the father asked Jesus to heal his son, he is demonstrating his faith in Jesus; and the disciples clearly had some measure of faith in Jesus.*
3. (vs. 19-20) What prevented the disciples from successfully healing and delivering the boy? *Jesus said the disciples had "so little faith." As followers of Jesus, they clearly had a measure of faith, but in this instance it fell short of what was needed to bring healing and deliverance to this boy.*
4. What might have contributed to their weakness of faith? *Answers will vary. Most likely it was feeling overwhelmed by the magnitude of this boy's condition, or it may be that they were relying on themselves rather than trusting fully in God's power and love.*
5. With whom does the power to heal lie? *See v.19. Jesus healed the boy fully and immediately (literally "at that very hour"). Healing doesn't occur because we want it to happen. It occurs when Jesus wants to show us His love and power in this particular way.*
6. Why did Jesus choose to heal and deliver this boy at this time in this way? *Clearly, the crowd was unbelieving. Jesus chose this time and this way to give them a basis for putting their trust in Him and themselves be healed.*