

I. Introduction

Good morning! I really appreciate how our guests from Northshore Baptist Church have shared with us this morning from their hearts and from their own experiences. Thank you, Hilario, Lois, Brad, and Liz! God bless you!

The main points for my message today are simple. First of all, *we are in a spiritual battle and the enemy is real*. Second, *we have victory in Jesus*. Amen? Amen! Let's read today's Scripture, Luke 9:37-45.

II. Scripture Luke 9:37-45 (NIV)

[37] The next day, when they came down from the mountain, a large crowd met him. [38] A man in the crowd called out, "Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child. [39] A spirit seizes him and he suddenly screams; it throws him into convulsions so that he foams at the mouth. It scarcely ever leaves him and is destroying him. [40] I begged your disciples to drive it out, but they could not." [41] "O unbelieving and perverse generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you and put up with you? Bring your son here." [42] Even while the boy was coming, the demon threw him to the ground in a convulsion. But Jesus rebuked the evil spirit, healed the boy and gave him back to his father. [43] And they were all amazed at the greatness of God. While everyone was marveling at all that Jesus did, he said to his disciples, [44] "Listen carefully to what I am about to tell you: The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men." [45] But they did not understand what this meant. It was hidden from them, so that they did not grasp it, and they were afraid to ask him about it.

III. Teaching

Last week we talked about the transfiguration of Jesus and about the three witnesses on the mountaintop. Moses was there, representing the Law. Elijah was there, representing the prophets. And God the Father spoke from heaven. **Luke 9:35, "A voice came from the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him."** The Law, the Prophets, and Father God all testify to Jesus' identity as the Son of God, Lord and Savior.



After these things, **Luke 9:37-38** tells us, **"The next day, when they came down from the mountain, a large crowd met him. A man in the crowd called out, "Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child."** They came down and found a crowd waiting. And out of the crowd came a man asking Jesus for to help his son, his only child. The father explains, **Luke 9:39-40, "A spirit seizes him and he suddenly screams; it throws him into convulsions so that he foams at the mouth. It scarcely ever leaves him and is destroying him. I begged your disciples to drive it out, but they could not."**

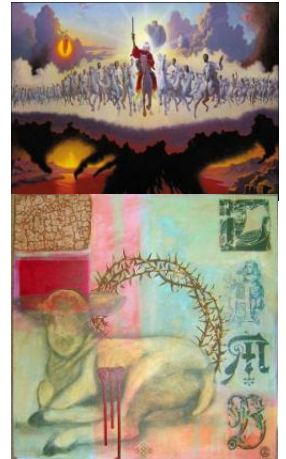
Peter, James, and John saw Jesus in His glory on the mountaintop. But while they were having a great mountaintop experience with Jesus, the other nine disciples were having a tough time down in doubting valley. When Jesus sent the twelve out, Jesus gave them power over demons and disease. But now, the nine disciples are unable to cast out this demon. What does Jesus say? **Luke 9:41, "'O unbelieving and perverse generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you and put up with you? Bring your son here."** Jesus tells it like it is. The nine disciples were unable to cast out the evil spirit because they had fallen into unbelief.

But why were they having a crisis of faith? I can think of two possible reasons. First of all, they were left in the valley while Peter, James, and John went up the mountain with Jesus. This could have led to loneliness and jealousy, two faith killers. Also, as we saw last week, Jesus had just told them that He was

going to be killed in **Luke 9:22**. “**And he said, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life."**”

The disciples had trouble accepting this. As we discussed last week, they could understand a Messiah who came as a conquering King to destroy the enemies of God. But they had trouble understanding the idea of a Messiah who was to be the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Lack of understanding often leads to confusion and frustration, two more faith killers. These are some possible reasons why the nine disciples might have been having a crisis of faith. In any case, a man came and asked them to cast the demon out of his son, but they could not do it because there was doubt in their hearts.

In the big picture, I think God allowed the disciples to fail in order to keep them humble for future ministry. Still, at that time it must have been a tough experience for them to fail in front of the crowd. But then Jesus returned, and the boy was brought to Jesus. **Luke 9:42-43**, “**Even while the boy was coming, the demon threw him to the ground in a convulsion. But Jesus rebuked the evil spirit, healed the boy and gave him back to his father. And they were all amazed at the greatness of God.**” Jesus rebuked the disciples for their unbelief, but Jesus did not abandon them. Jesus came to them, took care of the problem, and continued to prepare them for future ministry. And Jesus does the same for us.



We live in a fallen world full of sickness, death, war, and poverty, and we ourselves often fall short and are tempted to sin in various ways. But Jesus will never leave or abandon us. Whatever troubles we face, we can be sure that Jesus is there, ready and willing to help as we turn to Him in faith. When we trust in Jesus, then we can experience hope, peace, and joy.

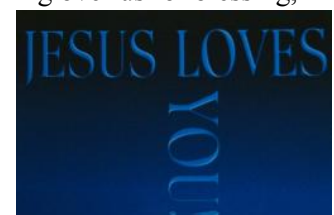


Jesus proved His love for us by dying on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins. And, on the third day He rose again and is alive forever. We still live in a fallen world, but we are not alone. He is here with us now, watching over us, and He dwells in the heart of every believer through His Spirit in us. In Jesus, we have victory over sin and death, and over all of the troubles of this world. **1 John 4:4**, tells us, “**You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.**”

We face a real enemy who seeks to undermine our faith and steal our peace and joy. We see this in today's Scripture and in many places in our Bibles and in our own life experiences. And, **1 Peter 5:8** warns, “**Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.**” There is a spiritual battle and the enemy is real. So we need to be alert and ready when the devil comes to tempt us. **1 Peter 5:9**, “**Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.**”

IV. Conclusion

By ourselves, we cannot defeat the enemy, but in Jesus we have the victory. Jesus loves us and He will never abandon us. He promises to be with all who trust in Him forever. He is watching over us for blessing, and not for harm. And He has already won the victory over Satan at the cross. Trust in Jesus. **(1 Peter 5:7)**, “**Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.**” His mercy is deep. His grace is sufficient. His love is without limit. We think we need so many things, but actually, our real needs are very simple. Trust in Jesus and in His love. Place your faith in Him. Receive His Holy Spirit. And experience the joy of the Lord and peace of Christ.



V. Closing Prayer