

Prayer:

Slide # 1

Theme: *Christ the King*

Outline:

- Chps. 1-2 The Advent of the King. (Proving His LEGAL right to the throne by His genealogy.)
- Chp. 3 The Forerunner of the King and the King’s baptism.
- Chp. 4 The Test of the King. (Proving His MORAL right to the throne by not yielding to temptation; and exhibiting His kingdom resume.)
- Chps. 5-7 The Pronouncements of the King. (Proving His JUDICIAL right to the throne as seen in the wisdom of His kingdom teaching.)
- Chps. 8-10 The Power of the King. (Proving His PROPHETICAL right to the throne by fulfilling prophecy.)
- Chps. 11-12 The Rejection of the King.
- Chp. 13 The Parables of the King.
- Chps. 14-16 The Revelations of the King.
- Chps. 17-20 The Instructions of the King.**
- Chps. 21-23 Formal Rejection of the King.
- Chps. 24-25 The Predictions of the King.
- Chps. 26-27 The Passion of the King.
- Chp. 28 The Resurrection of the King.

The OT promised Israel a coming Deliverer/King that would one day come and reign from David’s throne forever. John the Baptist went before the King saying, “**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!**” (Mt. 3:1). He prepared the way for the King who was to be received with repentance. Jesus then began His ministry with the same message saying, “**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!**” (Mt. 4:17).

Sadly, the people of Israel, led by their religious leaders did not repent. They were amused by the miracles, but they were fickle and did not commit to Jesus as the Messiah.

A major turning point in the book of Matthew comes in Matthew 12-13. In chapter 12 the religious leaders accused Christ of doing supernatural miracles by the power of the devil. Then in chapter 13 we see that Christ via parables shows that the kingdom for now is being put on hold.

As we come to chapter 16 the ultimate question is put forth when Jesus asks, “**Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?**” (Matt. 16:13). This is the ultimate question on which everything stands or falls. The answer was that while seeing Jesus as some important prophetic figure the nation missed the reality of WHO Jesus really was as the divine/human Messiah.

But Peter under inspiration got it right saying, “**You are the Christ, the Son of the living God**” (Mat. 16:16). Jesus then said, He would build His Church on this truth (Mt. 16:18). Building on WHO He is as the divine Christ, Jesus then said He must go to Jerusalem and be killed and then raised the third day (Mt. 16:21). Jesus then spelled out what a true saving faith commitment to Him involves, saying, “**If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.**” (Mt. 16:24). And Jesus then promised a kingdom reward to all who become true followers of Him (Mt. 16:27-28).

To affirm what He was saying was true Jesus promised that some of His disciples would see Him in kingdom glory before they died (Mt. 16:28). Six days later Jesus took Peter, James, and John upon the mount of transfiguration where they had a preview of Christ in His kingdom glory. On the way down from the mount he warned them to tell no one of this vision until after His resurrection (Mt. 17:9) which was followed up by a discussion about Elijah coming first and how that correlates with the coming of John the Baptist (Mt. 17:10-13).

And that brings us down from the mountain to where the other 9 disciples were at with the scribes, crowds, and a man in distress over his son.

All 3 synoptic gospels (namely Matthew, Mark, and Luke) place this setting right after the mount of transfiguration (cf. Mt. 17:14-21; Mk. 9:14-29; and Luke 9:37-43) with Mark giving it the most extensive treatment.

Life is not all mountain-top experiences. There are mountain-top experiences of spiritual exhilaration, but that is consistently followed by coming back down into the valley of human tensions and struggles. Like Peter we would like to remain on the mount, but then we have to come down and face life in the valley. Life, mostly, is lived in the valley.

Coming down from the mount of transfiguration they found the other disciples engaged in dispute with the scribes; a man seeking help with a demon possessed son; the nine disciples both answerless and helpless as to what to do; and the curious crowd milling around.

And that is where we pick up the narrative at Matthew 17:14. From Matt. 17:14 through chapter 20 we have Jesus laying out ministry principles for His disciples that will serve them well after He is gone. The first principle is that not only are we saved by faith, but we must then live by faith. A spiritually empowered life is a life of faith that expresses itself in prayer. That is the great lesson in Matt. 17:14-21.

Matthew 17:14–21 (NKJV)

14 And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying,

This man came very humbly with great reverence and respect kneeling down before Jesus and saying...

15 “Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water.

Exactly what this man’s level of understanding about Jesus was we can’t be sure, but he did come kneeling down to Him and calling Him “Lord”. Lord literally means “Master” which was sometimes used as a polite address. However, after the resurrection when used in reference to Christ it invariably has the idea of sovereign authority or God-Master.

Note he did think Jesus could potentially do something to help his son which is why he looked to Jesus. He asked Jesus to have “mercy” on his son.

Mercy is the idea of compassion, sympathy, or pity that is extended towards the undeserving.

The man then explained that his son was an epileptic who often fell into the fire or into the water. Mark 9 explains that this man said his son had “**a mute spirit**”, meaning a demonic spirit, that would seize him and throw him down causing foaming at the mouth, gnashing of teeth, and the son becoming rigid as if in a seizure (Mk. 9:17-18).

The word “**epileptic**” (Gk. seleniazomai) literally means “**moonstruck**” which was a word the ancients used to describe mental disorders they thought were somehow caused by the influence of the moon (in other words some alien force). However, in context we see the cause in this case was clearly a demon (cf. Mt. 4:24).

Slide # 2

This was not the physical disorder of epilepsy but demonic oppression, as is clearly shown in v. 18, Mark 9:25, and Luke 9:42. It is incorrect to say that the Scripture here associates the physical disorder of epilepsy with demonization. The term used was literally, “moonstruck” and any similarity of condition is not a medical diagnosis but descriptive of a malfunction. Here the malfunction was spiritually induced, not physical. – **Ed Glasscock**

The implication is that this demon often tried to kill this young man by causing him to fall into the fire or by drowning him in water. Undoubtedly, he had many wounds and scars. Satan and his demons are destructive. They never work for the good of people but rather for their destruction. This is in contrast to Jesus Christ whose ministry was always benevolent.

The apparent suicidal tendencies described in verse 15 show the destructive influence of demons. - **HCSB**

Recall in Matthew 8 when Jesus allowed the demons to go into a herd of swine that suddenly the entire herd of about 2000 pigs then ran violently over a cliff and into the sea and all perished. Demons are miserable creatures and those they possess are miserable. They often bring about suicidal tendencies or harmful effects. Their influence is consistently destructive. They are indeed cruel task-masters.

Luke 9:38 tells us that this was the only child this man had. It was a pathetically desperate situation.

The man explained to Jesus...

16 So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him.”

This must have been an embarrassment to the disciples and perhaps explains the context of them arguing with the scribes as seen in Mark 9:14.

Slide # 3

Mark 9:14 (NKJV)

14 And when He came to the disciples, He saw a great multitude around them, **and scribes disputing with them.**

We are not told specifically what they were disputing with the scribes about, but the context would argue (no pun intended) that it probably had something to do with their efforts to heal this demon possessed son.

About a year earlier Jesus had sent the disciples out to the lost sheep of the house of Israel with the authority to cast out demons.

Slide # 4

Matthew 10:5–8 (NKJV)

5 These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: “Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans.

6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

7 And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’

8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, **cast out demons**. Freely you have received, freely give.

As they went out, they were very successful on that mission (cf. Mk. 6:13; Lk. 10:17). But now about a year later they were unsuccessful in casting out this demon. They were helpless to do anything about this particular situation.

17 Then Jesus answered and said, “O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me.”

Jesus begins with a general broad sweeping statement indicative of the whole of Jewish society which at present was also influencing the disciples.

Faithless is the idea of being without faith or unbelieving, and perverse means “twisted” in the sense of distorting the truth. The problem was not a lack of evidence but a willful unbelief that twisted (or perverted) it (cf. Mt. 17:17; Lk. 9:41; 23:2; Acts 13:8, 10; 20:30; Phil. 2:15).

The great issue in life is about FAITH.

Slide # 5

Hebrews 11:6 (NKJV)

6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Everything starts with faith. Salvation begins with faith. Pleasing God starts with faith. Knowing the truth of Christ starts with faith. Spiritual empowerment begins with faith. Without faith we cannot please God and we can't serve with power.

It was a lack of faith that resulted in Israel wandering in the wilderness for 40 years (cf. Num. 14:11, 22-23; Deut. 1:32). Even Moses at one point faltered in unbelief. It was because of unbelief that Moses struck the rock twice contrary to God's instructions and because of this he could not go into the land of promise (cf. Num. 14:11-12).

In spite of all the signs and wonders that Jesus performed, in spite of it all this generation was still largely defined by being faithless and perverse.

Slide # 6

John 12:37 (NKJV)

37 But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him,

Jesus sometimes worked miracles apart from faith being exercised which is according to God's prerogative. But often He worked in conjunction with faith. Faith honors God and God honors faith.

When Jesus went back to His hometown of Nazareth we read...

Slide # 7

Matthew 13:58 (NKJV)

58 Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

Jesus' power always remains the same but in this case their unbelief hindered His working. God responds to faith. Jesus told the woman who in faith touched the hem of His garment, "your faith has made you well" (Mt. 9:22). Many times Jesus made statements like this. Lack of faith can definitely hinder the working of God.

The idea of **generation** is a contemporary race of people (here the Jews of Jesus' day) that were in general characterized by being faithless and perverse. Perhaps Jesus in characterizing this people was referencing a similar thing recorded by Moses in Deut. 32:5, 20.

Slide # 8

Deuteronomy 32:5 (NKJV)

5 "They have corrupted themselves; They are not His children, Because of their blemish: A perverse and crooked generation.

Deuteronomy 32:20 (NKJV)

20 And He said: 'I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end will be, For they are a perverse generation, Children in whom is no faith.

Yes, God can work powerfully anytime and in any way He wants but once the evidence is clearly put forth God expects people to believe. This was the situation back in Moses' day and it was the situation here in Jesus' day as well. They had experienced an abundance of signs and evidence and yet as a whole what characterized this generation was perverse unbelief.

Jesus was looking for faith! In the parallel text of Mark 9 we find this exchange between Jesus and the father.

Slide # 9

Mark 9:23–24 (NKJV)

23 Jesus said to him, "**If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.**"

24 Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "**Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!**"

There was some element of faith here and on that basis Jesus went ahead and delivered the child from the demon as the text goes on to say.

But at this point it is clear that the patience of Jesus was growing thin with this generation. They had more than enough evidence and yet so slow to believe. Therefore, Jesus said, "***how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you?***" How much more time did they need? How much more evidence did they need? It was disappointing! Jesus was patient but it was frustrating as expressed in Christ's rhetorical questions.

Christ then commanded the boy be brought to Him – the ONE Who could truly do something about the situation Who is to be the object of faith.

18 And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour.

Jesus' authority over the demonic world clearly shows His authority was of God. Only God has authority over the devil and his demons!

Matthew gets right to the point saying Jesus rebuked the demon and it came out of him. Mark gives a more protracted account explaining the boy had been afflicted by the demon since childhood indicating this had probably been going on for a number of years (Mk. 9:21).

Both Mark and Luke record that upon the command of Christ the demon convulsed the boy greatly (Mk. 9:26; Lk. 9:42) – so much so he became as dead (Mk. 9:26) – and then came out of him. It was traumatic to say the least.

19 Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why could we not cast it out?”

This was a good question since earlier in their ministry they had readily been able to cast out demons as seen in Mark 6:13. One commentator suggests that the answer is perhaps implicit in their question as their stress seems to be on what **WE** could not do.

No one ever really has power over demons except for the Lord Himself. If you are trying to do this within your own strength you will not succeed. They seemed to think at this point they could do it on the basis of their own efforts. Since they had done it earlier they just kind of assumed they now could magically make it happen. Thus, they had perverted faith to thinking somehow it was about them – forgetting this is really all about Christ's power working through them and that they were completely dependent upon Him.

In terms of spiritual power there are only 2 sources of higher power. There is Satanic power (as allowed by God) and there is God's power which of course is all powerful. But there are only these 2 sources of spiritual power. To overcome the power of Satan requires God's power. Within our own strength we cannot do it. To think otherwise is to have a twisted view of faith. True faith depends upon God alone for spiritual power.

Slide # 10**Matthew 12:28–29 (NKJV)**

28 But if I **cast out demons by the Spirit of God**, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.

29 Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, **unless he first binds the strong man**? And then he will plunder his house.

Christ's power over demons was a clear indication that He had the power of God working through Him – as He said He ***“cast out demons by the Spirit of God”***. Only if one has the power to bind the strong man of Satan can he then exercise power over demons and cast them out. And only God has this kind of power.

Slide # 11**Jude 9 (NKJV)**

9 Yet **Michael the archangel**, in **contending with the devil**, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, **“The Lord rebuke you!”**

Even Michael the archangel dared not take on the devil all by himself. Rather he deferred to the LORD to put him in his place. This must always be the case. Only God has power over Satan.

This is why in Matthew 10:1 it specifically says that Christ (who is God) gave power to the 12 disciples over unclean spirits to cast them out. The source was Christ – not ultimately the apostles. They did it – but it was at Christ's instruction according to His delegated authority.

We should note that the casting out of demons in the NT is essentially limited to the gospels and the book of Acts. It is the activity of Christ alone and the apostles who were given this authority with the only other exception being when Christ sent out the 70 in Luke 10 on a special mission that was limited in scope. There is no indication that casting out demons would be normative in the Church after the apostolic age.

What is normative in the Church age as seen in the epistles is that faith in Christ sets a person free from both the penalty and power of sin and Satan. This is the great emphasis in the epistles which present the normative practice for the Church Age.

Slide # 12**Hebrews 2:14 (NKJV)**

14 Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death **He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,**

1 John 3:8 (NKJV)

8 He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For **this purpose** the Son of God was manifested, **that He might destroy the works of the devil.**

In Christ we find complete sufficiency as emphasized by Paul in the book of Colossians (cf. Col. 2:10). There is nothing lacking. ***“If the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.”*** (Jn. 8:36).

Yes, we as believers do wrestle with demonic powers but we cannot be possessed (Eph. 6:12). ***“He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.”*** (1 Jn. 4:4) We may be oppressed and sorely tempted but we cannot be possessed. God in His faithfulness does not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able (1 Cor. 10:13). God now lives in us and we are said to be the temple of God (1 Cor. 6:19). God and the devil can't live in the same house. When God moves in the devil is forced out!

The ability to cast out demons depends totally upon Christ's empowerment. That is the great issue in view. So when the disciples asked Christ why they couldn't do it – the answer in essence was they were not in faith depending upon Christ's power. Instead, they were trying to do it within their own strength. That is a lack of faith and a twisting of it!

Slide # 13

v. 19 Why could **WE** not cast it out?

v. 17 Bring him here to **ME.**

In short, the difference is found in the distinctive emphasis between WE (emphasizing the disciples trying to do it on their own) and ME emphasizing Jesus as the source of power.

It is never adequate to bring people to ourselves for our ideas; the true Christian evangelist must bring them to Jesus Himself.

– Liberty Bible Commentary

Even the apostles who had delegated authority as Christ's special representatives had to learn to rely upon Christ's empowerment to work through them. They were still learning this.

20 So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.

Here was the source of the problem – it was a lack of faith on the part of the disciples. The older manuscripts read "***Because of the littleness of your faith***". The sense here seems to be the poverty of their faith or its poor quality which made it ineffectual. This is shown to be the case in what Jesus goes on to say about having faith as small as a mustard seed.

The disciples did have a saving faith. In John 6:70-71 Jesus said of the 12 that only one of them was a devil which he spoke in reference to Judas. In John 13 Jesus said all the disciples were clean (saved) except for the one who would betray Him (Jn. 13:10-11). Peter speaking for the group said...

Slide # 14

John 6:67–69 (NKJV)

67 Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?"

68 But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? **You have the words of eternal life.**

69 Also **we** have come to believe and know that **You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.**"

So, they clearly had a saving faith, but when it came to service they still had a poor quality of faith (cf. Mt. 6:25-34; 8:26; 14:31; 16:8). In the area of ministry they were still depending upon what they could do. They had yet to learn that without Christ we can do nothing (Jn. 15:5).

As the cross is getting closer this was a very important lesson for them to learn. Christ had pretty much done everything, and they were largely observers. But soon Christ would be gone as He had been when separated from them on the mount of transfiguration, and then they would have to serve on the basis of FAITH. What an important lesson this is for all of God's children to learn. We have eternal life by faith (Rom. 5:1) and then we are called to "walk by faith" (2 Cor. 5:7).

Twice in Matthew we see Jesus telling people they had GREAT faith.

In 8:10 he told this to the Gentile centurion Who believed in Jesus' Lordship authority to heal his servant at a distance by just saying the Word. In 15:28 the Canaanite woman who worshipfully pleaded with Him as Lord to heal her daughter was told she had GREAT faith. In both cases they were dependent upon Christ to help them as only God can do.

But now here in 17:20 the disciples are said to have little faith in the sense of a poor quality of faith – a deficient faith. As I say, they had lost sight of their dependence upon Christ to empower them in this situation.

The great issue in life is FAITH. It is most basic to having eternal life. We receive Christ and thus eternal life by faith. But then it is basic to the life of faith that as a pattern of life we learn to walk by faith. We need to learn to walk by faith.

Slide # 15

Jeremiah 17:5–8 (NKJV)

5 Thus says the LORD: "**Cursed is the man who trusts in man And makes flesh his strength, Whose heart departs from the LORD.**

6 For he shall be like a shrub in the desert, And shall not see when good comes, But shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, In a salt land which is not inhabited.

7 "**Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, And whose hope is the LORD.**

8 For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, Which spreads out its roots by the river, And will not fear when heat comes; But its leaf will be green, And will not be anxious in the year of drought, Nor will cease from yielding fruit.

There is a great contrast here between the one who trusts in human resources and the one who trusts in the Lord. This is the great issue in life. What are you trusting in? First and foremost, this applies to true believers versus unbelievers. But there is application for believers as we too are prone to get off track in our faith walk and revert back to depending on the flesh. Here is the issue...

Slide # 16

Jeremiah 17:9–10 (NKJV)

9 "The **heart is deceitful above all things**, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?

10 I, the LORD, **search the heart**, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings.

The heart being deceitful has a tendency to look to man instead of depending upon God. This is our natural default position. And in the end God will search the heart and reward each person in accordance with their walk of faith. This is the great issue before God. Even the disciples were off track at this point and needed correction. They were still learning!

In correction Christ said, “***assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.***”

Obviously, the disciples at this point didn’t have faith even “*as a mustard seed*”. The mustard seed was proverbial for being the smallest of seeds in this culture. Even a very little faith, if it is real, if it is of the right quality is powerfully effective. Christ here emphasized QUALITY and not QUANTITY.

Faith depends upon what God can do in keeping with God’s will. In Matt. 19:26 Jesus said, “***with God all things are possible***”. That is the KEY! We can’t do it – but God can. Faith depends upon God and not self.

Mountain-moving faith is not faith in oneself, much less faith in faith, but faith in God. It is not faith itself, no matter how great, that moves mountains, but the God in whom the faith is grounded. Faith has only as much power as its object. – ***John MacArthur***

The saying about moving mountains was also proverbial referring to some impossible thing that only God can do (cf. Mt. 21:21-22; Mk. 11:23; Lk. 1:37; 17:6; 1 Cor. 13:2).

Never in the history of the world have any of the servants of God on command moved a mountain. Only God can do this. It is called “earthquakes”. In the Day of the Lord, He will really display this power.

Slide # 17

Revelation 6:14 (NKJV)

14 Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and **every mountain and island was moved** out of its place.

Revelation 16:20 (NKJV)

20 Then every island fled away, and the **mountains were not found**.

The hyperbolic and proverbial saying about moving mountains assumes it is the will of God in keeping with the directive of God. This is not a free check to just willy-nilly do all kinds of impossible things.

No, this assumes God has ordained it and now it is being acted upon by faith. For the apostles God had ordained for them to have power over demons unique to their specialized ministry. So in dependence upon Christ they should have been able to do these things – if they had the right kind of faith sourced in Christ alone!

Slide # 18

1 John 5:14–15 (NKJV)

14 Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that **if we ask anything according to His will**, He hears us.

15 And if we know that He hears us, **whatever we ask**, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

The thing is we don't always know what the will of God is in any given situation. Yes, we know the clear commandments in Scripture – such as it is always wrong to be immoral. But there are many things under the heading of “***anything***” that we don't know what God's will is. That is why James says we should say, “***If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that***” instead of saying we are going to make it happen (Ja. 4:15).

The proper sense is the balance we find in Daniel 3.

Slide # 19

Daniel 3:17–18 (NKJV)

17 If that is the case, **our God whom we serve is able** to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and **He will** deliver us from your hand, O king.

18 But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up.”

They had faith in God's ability, and they believed He would do it, but if not they were still going to be faithful.

In our practice we have to leave room for “***But if not***”. That is not in opposition to faith but an honest admission that we don't always know what God's will is. Such an attitude is dependent upon God (has faith) but in humility admits we often don't know how God will lead.

Nothing that Christ authorizes His people to do will be impossible if they act in faith. James says we must ask in faith and that the person who doubts should not suppose he will receive anything from the Lord (Ja. 1:6-7).

Slide # 20

John 14:13–14 (NKJV)

13 And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

14 If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.

If it is truly for Christ's sake, for His glory, according to His will, – and we ask in faith, He will do it! But there is one more thing to consider here as brought out in verse 21.

21 However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.”

The older manuscripts do not have this verse, but it is found in the parallel passage of Mark 9:29. Evidently, some scribe seeing it in Mark 9:29 inserted it in the margin here in Matthew and as time went along it was included in the text. The consensus is that while it does not officially belong in Matthew it does legitimately belong to Mark 9:29 and hence it is a legitimate part of the story as one considers the full account as recorded in all the synoptic gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke.

Slide # 21

Mark 9:29 (NKJV)

29 So He said to them, “This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting.”

Note here in Mark that “and fasting” is also not included in the older manuscripts. So, what Christ said was, “***this kind does not go out except by prayer***”. This emphasis fits perfectly with the emphasis on faith. Faith and prayer go together because prayer is an expression of dependence upon God.

They had forgotten their dependence on God as the only source of spiritual power. The proof of their forgetting was their neglect of prayer. – ***John Phillips***

When it comes to FAITH, note these essential components...

Slide # 22

FAITH takes God at His Word.

FAITH is dependent upon God.

FAITH expresses itself in prayer.

Do you want to know what kind of faith you have? Look at your prayer life. The quality of your prayer life corresponds to the quality of your faith in terms of your walk of faith.

James says we have not because we ask not and says that in order to receive we must ask in faith (cf. Ja. 1:6-7; 4:2). But then he says...

Slide # 23**James 5:16 (NKJV)**

16... The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

God works mightily through prayer! In Matthew 7 Jesus said to ask, seek, and knock and it will be given you which in effect emphasizes prevailing prayer (cf. Mt. 7:7-8).

In Luke 11 Jesus said if a friend comes after hours because of his persistence he will receive – again emphasizing the effectiveness of persistent prayer (cf. Lk. 11:5-10).

In Luke 18:1 Jesus said, “***men ought always to pray and not lose heart***” and then spoke a parable about a wicked judge who did not care about a widow but because of her persistent cry for justice he responded. This illustrates that God responds to prevailing/persistent prayer.

Slide # 24**John 15:16 (NKJV)**

16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you and **appointed you that you should go and bear fruit**, and that your fruit should remain, that **whatever you ask the Father in My name** He may give you.

God has ordained that we bear fruit and that fruit happens in conjunction with prayer. We prayerfully depend upon God and then act upon our prayers.

What is accomplished through us for the glory of God is essentially accomplished through prayer. That is why Paul says to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17). We are completely dependent upon God and that is expressed in prayer.

Throughout the ages believers often have failed to receive God’s promised joy, freedom, forgiveness, guidance, fruitfulness, protection, wisdom, and countless other blessings simply because, like those disciples, they have not persisted in prayer. – **John MacArthur**

Slide # 25

Ephesians 3:20–21 (NKJV)

20 Now to **Him who is able** to do **exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think**, according to the **power that works in us**, **21** to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

This story in Matthew 17 illustrates what is so often the case today. The disciples of Christ are dispirited in the valley of weakness. Christ is absent, having gone on high to enter into His glory and some of His own have gone off with Him. Down below the believers seem powerless in the face of crisis not knowing why they lack power! And the reason is because they are so weak in their faith as is demonstrated in the poverty of their prayer life.

Want to be greatly used of God? Be a person of great faith. Be a person of great prayer. The one tells on the other! They go together.

The disciples asked, “Why could we not cast it out?” Jesus answered that it was because of their poor faith and their lack of prayer!

When we get to Heaven, do not be surprised if we learn these two things: (1) the consequences of not praying, and, (2) what happened when we gave up praying too soon. – **John Piper**

Jesus said...

“...assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.”

Believing prayer moves “mountains”!

God help us to be men and women of great faith expressed in great prayer!