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| **Help My Unbelief**  *Promise: when we are weak, He remains strong – strong to save* Pastor Timothy A. Duesenberg Isaiah 50:4-10; Ps 116:1-9; James 3:1-12; Mark 9:14-29 (17th Sunday after Pentecost, Pr. 19), 9/15/24)  *Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, “I believe; help my unbelief!”* – v. 24  **Lead In –** In the notes of The Lutheran Study Bible the Gospel Reading is summarized with these words: “Jesus descends from the Transfiguration and meets a defiant demon, an anxious father, an astonished crowd, and despairing disciples.” Defiance. Anxiety. Astonishment. And despair. These words could easily describe many of our situations today as well. And given encounters with unmitigated evil in our times, as disciples of our Lord Jesus we too can quickly give in to despair…   1. **Coming to Grips with the Demonic**    1. Although possessions might be rare, activity is not!    2. How else to explain some of what goes on?    3. From the first days in the garden to our last day on earth! 2. **Christ’s Authorized Agents Run into Trouble**    1. There had been trouble enough with the authorities…    2. Were the disciples ever really able to do exorcisms?    3. From the get-go the father had been headed to Jesus! 3. **The Emphasis in Saving Faith is the Object of Faith**    1. The father has anything but perfect faith, but he does…    2. The humble plea for help with his unbelief…    3. When trust in self is stripped away, even for disciples...   **Final Word –** I have a question for you as I close. If you were in a boat that capsized and was quickly being swept to a steep waterfall, would you rather be the man who very confidently grabbed on to a floating log, or the man who fearfully slipped his body into a small life-ring at the end of a rope thrown to him by a rescuer standing solidly on the riverbank? The amount of confidence each man has doesn’t really matter. What matters is the object of one’s trust, even if it is held by one with little trust. The man at the end of the life ring is the one who will be rescued. Do you remember when Peter took a few steps on the sea in coming to Jesus? He began to sink when he took his eyes off Jesus. But when he cried out in despair to Jesus, our Lord reached down and rescued him. … For the baptized believer I can’t think of no better confession than **“I believe Lord, help my unbelief.”** He will help our unbelief. He has promised to.  **Jn 8:44** [The devil] was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.  **1Pe 5:8** Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.  **Jn 10:10** The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.  **Ge 3:4-5** But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”  **Re 12:17** Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. And he stood on the sand of the sea.  **Re 12:11** And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. | **Mark 9:14-29 ESV**  *Jesus Heals a Boy With an Unclean Spirit*  14And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and scribes arguing with them. 15And immediately all the crowd, when they saw him, were greatly amazed and ran up to him and greeted him. 16And he asked them, “What are you arguing about with them?” 17And someone from the crowd answered him, “Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a spirit that makes him mute. 18And whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able.” 19And he answered them, “O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me.” 20And they brought the boy to him. And when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. 21And Jesus asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?” And he said, “From childhood. 22And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.” 23And Jesus said to him, “‘If you can’! All things are possible for one who believes.” 24Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, “I believe; help my unbelief!” 25And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.” 26And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, “He is dead.” 27But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. 28And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?” 29And he said to them, “This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.”  **Ps 2:1-3** Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying, “Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.”  **Mk 6:13** And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them.  **Lk 10:17-18** The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!” And he said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.  **Ro 10:17** So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.  **Ep 2:8-9** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. |