

Sermon Discussion Questions

Sermon Title: “The Struggle of Faith” (2-25-2018)

Sermon Text: Mark 9:14-29

Theme: Following Jesus involves a struggle of faith that is strengthened by prayer.

Outline:

- I. Failing Faith (9:14-19)
- II. Doubting Faith (9:20-27)
- III. Praying Faith (9:28-30)

Discussion Questions:

1. How does this scene echo Exodus 32:1-12? What might the on the mountain/off the mountain theme teach us about following Jesus?
2. What characters are involved in this episode and do they relating to Jesus?
3. To whom does Jesus address “faithless generation” and why?
4. What do we learn from the boy’s father about the role of doubt in the life of faith?
5. How can the experience of failure and doubt build faith?
6. What practice does Jesus commend to persevere in faith?
7. St. Augustine wrote: “Where faith fails, prayer perishes. For who prays for that in which he does not believe?... So then in order that we may pray, let us believe, and let us pray that this same faith by which we pray may not falter.”¹ How does prayer strengthen faith? How have you experienced the power of prayer to sustain you through an experience of failure or doubt?
8. Where in the Gospels do we see Jesus praying in a moment of trial?
9. What’s significant about how Jesus heals the boy? Who might the boy represent?

Collect for the week:

The Second Sunday in Lent

Almighty God, you know that we have no power in ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

¹ Thomas C. Oden and Christopher A. Hall, eds., *Mark (Revised)*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 117.