

May 13, 2007

**The Beautiful Confession**  
**Mark 9:14-32**

What do you do when you come to those places in life where it is obvious that you don't have the answers/strength/resources/faith for life?

The perfect tension between the two imperatives of the Gospel, constantly at work at the same time.

- The Law of God – The Law represents our powerlessness because every time we attempt to perfectly live out the Ten Commandments we are frustrated by our inability to keep it.

This is the work of the Law – it diagnoses our problem, yet it can't remedy it.

We need the Law of God:

- It is an ambassador of conviction and frustration that constantly reminds us that we can't satisfy God... strength – 'a school master'
- It is that inner announcement that we need Jesus.

We all, at times, fall into the trap of what is called, 'legalism.' Legalism is the deluded idea that we can satisfy God by living by rules on a merely external level with no regard for the reality of our motives and inner conflicts.

- The Grace of God – The Grace of God is availed to us by the Cross of Jesus. Because Jesus died for our sins, complete payment has been made on our behalf – this makes it is possible for a Just God to Forgive our sin – and this is Grace,

because at the Cross the force of the Law's inability to save us is abolished.

**Romans 3** – Jesus died to demonstrate God's Justice (Law) – vs. 24 – We “are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.”

### **Ephesians 2:14-15**

This means that our inability is met with God's Mercy – through Jesus.

And just as legalism is a very real temptation for the believer, 'license' is as well. Paul warns against using the Grace of God as an excuse for sin. We lie to ourselves when we act as though God's Grace is an invitation to live without regard for righteousness, which only reveals that the Law has not done its job in us. We experience God's Grace when we come to terms with how desperately we need it.

Jesus inquires as to the boy's malady. I love this. It isn't that Jesus doesn't know, but in His questioning He does something important with our friend – He takes him to the edge of his own hope. He causes him to consider his own inability – in other words, He helps him to diagnose the problem, but He also helps him to see his inability to remedy it. So He applies Law and reveals the man's need for Grace.

Then Jesus assures him that the boy can be healed if his dad believes – that sounds too easy, doesn't it?

How would you respond?

'I believe, but I don't believe.'

What a beautiful confession – our friend tells the Creator of the Universe that he has his doubts – that it is not clear to him that even Jesus can heal his boy. There’s a part of him that will believe it when he sees it – but not before. And it isn’t because he doesn’t trust Jesus – it is because he is weak, and trusts Jesus with his weakness.

What makes this man’s words so unique is that they form a Confession. In a way, his confession of faithlessness is a confession of faith.

The moment he admits his unbelief, he articulates true faith – God-given faith.

Our friend’s path is a good one for answering that question, ‘What do you do when you come to those places in life where it is obvious that you don’t have the answers/strength/resources/faith for life?’

- He sees his life for what it is (i.e. he doesn’t run or stick his head in the sand)
- He articulates his desperate need (i.e. he admits his inability)
- He admits his very weakness (i.e. he confesses his lack of faith – he tells the truth)
- He looks to Jesus (with no premonition as to what Jesus will do)

This is Faith – Looking to Jesus

Looking to Jesus when we don’t have the answers (and we generally don’t)

Looking to Jesus when doubts persist (and they will)  
Looking to Jesus when what we know doesn't seem to align with  
what we see happening  
Looking to Jesus when our hearts are dry and our love for Christ  
has grown cold and we don't think we can face the One who is  
eternal, but who entered time and space to give Himself.  
Looking to Jesus, knowing that He has not left you alone