

# A WORD ON WORSHIP

## OCTOBER 28, 2012

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### Mark 9:18-20

*"I told Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not do it." And He answered them and said, "O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him to Me!"*

The pandemonium that greets Jesus and the three disciples when they come off the mountain might give Peter new incentive to return to the place of glory to build those shelters, far removed from the noise down below. Coming back from the glory of the Transfiguration and into collapse of the disciples' failure to cast out the demon was not what anyone expected. How many times have we desired to retreat from life's failures or from a faithless generation? I am sure the disciples would understand the commercial that asks, "Want to get away?"

This episode is different from the other exorcisms we have already seen in the Gospel of Mark. The earlier encounters demonstrate the authority of Jesus over the demons but here Mark turns our attention to the failure of the disciples to cast out the demon and the father's need for faith. The disciples are just like us – beset by failure, eager to engage in arguments, undisciplined in our prayer lives, and more interested in learning technique instead of taking the time needed to walk closely with God. This incident shows us how feeble we all are when we are running on our own steam.

To their credit, the disciples want to learn from their failure. Their question to Jesus reveals their assumption that it is all about their technique. They thought it was all about their skills and power, so the only reason why something went awry had to be the result of poor technique. Power in our spiritual lives has nothing to do with the right combination of words or actions. There is no lamp to rub to get our magical three wishes. The answer Jesus gives His disciples makes it clear that spiritual power has nothing to do with secret lore, techniques or incantations. They had trusted in themselves and their power rather than in God.

Only when we, like the disciples, come up short in failure do we realize that we possess no power in ourselves. Those who belong to the faithless generation do not cast out evil. God does. The power belongs entirely to God and must be received afresh from Him through a life of prayer and self sacrifice. We cannot take a course to learn the ins and outs of spiritual effectiveness, as if the power of God is earned like a merit badge. Our attitude must be like the father in Mark 9:24: "I do believe; help my unbelief." It is only then we will be useful as healers and agents of comfort for those who suffer.

**Sunrise Community Church**  
*Come acknowledge the Lord in our midst*  
**EVERY SUNDAY BEGINNING AT 8:45 A.M.**

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