

Message Transcript

HELP MY UNBELIEF | THE KINGDOM REVEALED

CHAD LUNSFORD | AUGUST 23, 2026

Well, Traders Point how are we doing today? How are you guys feeling? Good? It's so good to see you. I'm so honored to be with you here at Northwest those of you at the other campuses and joining us online.

Man, so honored to have the opportunity to share this weekend, what a privilege just before Pastor Aaron is about to return. And like all of you, I'm so ready, so excited for Pastor Aaron to be back up here in the house. And I get the privilege of sharing. It's next weekend. He's going to be back with us next weekend. Man, I can't wait to have our pastor back. And at the same time, I'm so glad that he's been able to have time away to replenish and get ready for the next leg of his ministry and leadership journey.

Here in just a second I'm going to invite us to just share some honor. I'm certain he'll watch this message later on. He may be watching it right now. Man, I just want him to know how much we love him. He loves God. He loves his family. He loves this church so well.

The Scriptures say the one who preaches and leads well is worthy of a double honor. I think he's one of the best lead pastors on the planet right now. So, come on. With all we've got at all of our campuses can we thank God for our lead pastor? Come on. Love you Pastor Aaron. Can't wait for you to be back. One of my favorite things about Pastor Aaron taking time with sabbatical is he's really modeling well for the rest of us what it looks like to lead. So, when he's stepping back, what he's saying is, "God, the church is Yours and I trust You this summer to take and do great things." He's saying to our elders, our executive team, our staff, he's saying to us, as a church, "Hey, I'm going to take a step back and spend time with God. And I trust you guys to keep moving forward."

And it's been a banner summer. We've seen record numbers at youth camps. And God is doing incredible things there. Hundreds of people all summer long getting baptized. Do you know just a couple of weeks ago over a three-week period we saw 370 people step into the waters of baptism? Absolutely remarkable. We never want to take that for granted. God is doing something special. Just a few weekends ago Plainfield campus started Saturday nights. And in just a couple of weekends Downtown is going to start Saturday nights. And, also, September 20 we have the incredible privilege of watching our seventh campus open in Westfield. Who is ready for a Westfield location? Come on. Can't wait for that.



Well, today we are continuing in our year-long series through the gospel of Mark. We're going to be dropping in today to chapter 9. If you have a Bible you're welcome to open up to Mark, chapter 9. If you don't, don't worry. We'll have it up on the screen as well.

Hey, before we dive into the passage today, I really want to set the stage in a couple of ways. The first thing I want to do is ask us a question. And it's this: What's the biggest challenge in your life right now? What's the biggest challenge in your life right now? It doesn't have to feel that big to you, it's just the biggest thing in your life.

Maybe it's the thing that is consuming your thoughts. Maybe it feels overwhelming. You don't know what to do. Maybe for some of you, if you're being honest, you're even beginning to question, "Is God with me in this challenge?"

Undoubtably, for some you're jumping to a relationship. Maybe there is hurt in a marriage. Maybe there is an estranged friendship. Maybe there's a parent and there is tension with your child or as a child there is tension with your parent. Others of you are thinking about your job or your career or your finances. Maybe for you it's a mental or emotional health concern. Maybe for you there is deep grief and you're having trouble moving forward. Maybe someone is battling an addiction. Maybe you're grappling with sin and it just kind of seems to keep coming back up in your life. Maybe for you there's a physical ailment and you're just not sure of what the future holds.

What's your biggest challenge today? And do you believe that God can move in your life? What's your biggest challenge? And do you believe that God can move in your life specifically in that challenge?

And I know for some of you I might be touching on a very open and raw wound. But here's the thing. Whatever your challenge is today, I believe it's exactly where God wants to meet you. So, if there is an open wound, I'm just going to invite you, to encourage you, to invite Him in and let Him speak to you. The second thing I want to do is, here in a moment, I'm going to show us an image. And I think it can help us understand our passage today. We're going to look at two stories. At first glance, it will seem like they have nothing in common. But as we dig into the stories, you're going to see what happens in the first story changes everything for the second story. What happens in the first story changes everything for the second story.

The image I want to show us is called The Transfiguration. It is a painting by the Renaissance master Raphael. He was still working on it when he died in the year



1520. For centuries this was considered the greatest painting on the planet. And there are two stories happening on one canvas. It's the only time that Raphael ever did this. And there is a reason why he put two stories on one canvas. For a moment let's look at the lower portion of the painting. It's the story of the demon possessed boy. And you can see, he's the one with the blue, torn robe. His hand raised in the air. And that's his father right there behind him, in green, holding him. Others in the painting are the disciples, teachers of the law, and then the many others.

And what we're going to learn in the story the boy is overcome by a demon. He has these extreme seizures and near death scenarios. If we were to ask the father, "Hey, what's the biggest challenge in your life right now?" Without even thinking about it he would say, "It's my son. My son. I don't know what to do with him."

Now, in the top portion of the painting this is what is referred to as the transfiguration of Jesus. Obviously Jesus is the One there glorious, in white, up in the middle. On either side of Him are Moses and Elijah. And you'll see them better in just a minute when we zoom back out to the full painting, but there are also Peter, James, and John. They are laying on the ground kind of on the mountaintop below.

Jesus takes the three up on a high mountain to pray with Him and suddenly He is transformed. Now, you don't have to be a fan of this painting or of the sixteenth century, a fan of the Renaissance. That's okay. That's not what I want to get out of this.

What I want us to see is Raphael's intent. In fact, let's look again at the full painting. There are two stories that we see on one canvas. And there is one important theological point that Mark is going to make in chapter 9. And it's this: What happens on the mountain above is pivotal for the challenges of a hurting world below

What happens on the mountain above is pivotal for the challenges of a hurting world below. Let me say it a different way:

Because of who Jesus is, every challenge in your life bows to Him
Because of who Jesus is, every challenge in our life must bow to Him. Because of who Jesus is, we get to see who He is up on the mountain, every challenge in our life will bow to Him.

As we get into the verses, you must ask yourself: Do I know who Jesus really is? And because of who He is, do I believe that He can move in my life. Not just in somebody else's life, somebody else's circumstances, do I think He can move in my life?



Now, we've set the stage. Let's jump into Mark, chapter 9. We're going to begin at verse 2. It says:

"Six days later Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up a high mountain to be alone. As the men watched, Jesus' appearance was transformed..." (NLT)

Now, the high mountain is likely Mount Hermon. That's where scholars think that He was. I did a little bit of research and it is, in fact, a very high mountain. Jesus and the disciples are probably about 9,000 feet above sea level when, suddenly, He is transformed. There is a metamorphosis or a transfiguration that takes place.

The veil was lifted and the true essence of Jesus was allowed to shine through. For a moment, Jesus slips back into eternity. We get to see His pre-human glory. And it's a glance ahead at the glory awaiting Him on the other side of the cross and the resurrection. It goes on in verse 3:

"... and his clothes became dazzling white, far whiter than any earthly bleach could ever make them." (NLT)

God was revealing to the disciples who Jesus really is. And here's the reality for all of us. We can often become comfortable with what we think about Jesus. We can become comfortable or even misconstrued with what others say about Jesus. And in the process we miss who He really is.

I love how the famous pastor A. W. Tozer says it. He says:

"What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us."

I agree. What comes to mind when we think about God is the most important thing about us. Because it puts us in proper alignment of who He is and who we are. But we know it's human nature to often miss the miraculous amidst the mundane things in life. We can see incredible things in front of us and just miss it. It reminds me of an experiment conducted by the Washington Post back in 2007. In January of that year a world class violinist, Joshua Bell, was performing a sold out concert in Washington D.C. It was two hundred dollars just for the cheap seats up in the balcony. And then two days later he stepped down into a D.C. Metro station. This time not wearing a tux, just wearing plain clothes, wearing a baseball cap. It was a little difficult to see who he was.

And for 45 minutes he played Johan Sebastian Bach concertos down in the subway. And as they watched the video, were they counting—1,097 people pass him by but only seven people stopped and listened.



And he was actually playing a 300 year old violin that was worth 3.5 million dollars (I hope he had good security standing by him). Here's my favorite part. Even though the violin was 3.5 million he only received thirty two dollars and seventeen cents in tips. Now, who put the seventeen cents in? Do you know what I'm saying? Like, this is kind of strange.

Well, seven years later Joshua Bell actually came back and this time he announced that there was going to be a free concert inside of Union Station. And this time the crowd was shoulder to shoulder in D.C.'s Grand Atrium. People knew who he was. They knew he was coming and the place was packed. I think it begs the question for all of us. If we don't stop to listen to one of the greatest musicians in the world performing some of the best music ever written on one of the finest instruments ever crafted, what else might we be missing? Especially when it comes to our understanding of God—understanding of who Jesus is.

And I don't want us to miss today what Mark is trying to show us in chapter 9. So, for a moment I want to back up to the Old Testament book of Daniel. And you'll see what Daniel is seeing ahead of Jesus' coming hundreds of years later. And what he writes and what Mark writes is remarkably similar. It says this in chapter 7, verse 9:

"I watched as thrones were put in place and the Ancient One," he's talking about Jesus, "sat down to judge. His clothing was," do you see it? "as white as snow, his hair like purest wool. He sat on a fiery throne with wheels of blazing fire and a river of fire was pouring out, flowing from his presence. Millions of angels ministered to him; many millions stood to attend him. Then the court began its session, and the books were opened." Daniel 7:9-10 (NLT)

The books were opened. Mark is making the connection that Jesus and the person that Daniel looks ahead and foresees is the same person. In fact, I want to jump ahead. So, we go back to the Old Testament and then jump ahead to the New Testament. The revelation that John is giving us of the end times. Now, remember, John is one of the disciples who is laying on the mountain looking up at the transfigured Jesus. In Revelation, chapter 1, he gets a picture of the end times. It says this, talking about Jesus:

"His head and his hair were," do you see it again? "white like wool, as white as snow. And his eyes were like flames of fire." Revelation 1:14 (NLT)

Daniel and John write hundreds of years apart and yet they have the exact same message: Jesus is the King. He's the One you are all looking for. He's not just a good, moral person. He is actually the Son of God.

You think back to the Old Testament again with Moses. You might recall reading that there were times when he would step into the Tabernacle to pray and the presence of God would be there. And he would come out glowing.



He was reflecting God's glory. Well, that's exactly what is happening here with Jesus when He's transfigured. In Hebrews, chapter 1, verse 3 says this about Jesus:

"The Son radiates God's own glory and expresses the very character of God." When it says that Jesus is the Son, it's saying He isn't merely a good guy. He isn't just a good moral teacher. He's not just a prophet. This Jesus is the Son of God. He doesn't, like Moses, reflect the glory of God. No, no. It radiates from within Him. He is God.

When it says He expresses the very character of God, what it is saying is this: You and I never have to wonder what God the Father is like. Everything that God the Father wanted to say, He says in Jesus. When He says, "I want you to know who I am," He says, "Look at my Son." It goes on in Hebrews, chapter 1:

"And he sustains everything by the might power of his command." Jesus sustains all life. Not one thing we see has life outside of Him: not the sun, not the stars, all biology, you. As He radiates God's own glory, He speaks and life is created. You and I, we have breath because of Him. It goes on to say:

"When he had cleansed us of our sins, he sat down in the place of honor at the right hand of the majestic God in heaven." (NLT)

When it says that He cleansed us, it's saying there is only One who could come and provide a solution for us. It was the Son of God. He was sent out of heaven and He would put on flesh and He would go to a cross and He would take His holy life and exchange it for our sinful lives and He would cleanse us and make us holy.

It goes on to say that (right now we can picture this) He's seated at the right hand of God. He's seated at the place of honor in heaven. The question for every one of us today is: Does He sit at the place of honor in your life? See, we all have to recognize that this life isn't about us. He's ultimate subject. He's the One who created us. He created all life.

And while the world may often treat Him as ordinary or common, they might talk about Him being a good, moral teacher, that's not what the Bible says. The Bible says He is holy. He is set apart. He is the Son of God. He's the Savior of the world.

And the opportunity we have today... Maybe you're here today and you've never placed your faith in Jesus. I want to invite you at some point in our gathering to say, "Jesus, I want to put



You on the throne of my life and I want to follow You as my Lord and as my Savior.” That’s what I’ve been praying all weekend that many of you would do. Now, that’s what’s happening up on the mountain—The Transfiguration. While that is taking place, there is someone with an insurmountable challenge waiting down below. It says this in verse 14:

“When they returned to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd surrounding them, and some teachers of religious law were arguing with them. When the crowd saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with awe, and they ran to greet him. Mark 9:14-15 (NLT)

So, Jesus and the three come down. The other nine disciples are there and they are arguing with the teachers of the law. There are many more gathered around. In verse 16:

“‘What is the arguing about?’ Jesus asked. One of the men in the crowd spoke up and said ‘Teacher, I brought my son so you could heal him. He is possessed by an evil spirit that won’t let him talk.’” (NLT)

Now, as soon as we jump into the second story, there is an incredibly important principle that I want to highlight for us. It’s very simple. So simple it might sound cliché. But it might be one of the most important things that many of us hear today. And it’s this:

When you feel outmatched by the hurt in your life, bring it to Jesus
So often we get weary carrying it on our own and we were never told to carry it on our own. When you feel outmatched by a hurt in your life, bring it to Jesus. Nothing is too strong for Him. Nothing is too big for Him. Nothing is beyond His reach. The Jesus we saw up on the mountain, full of glory, full of power, full of holiness that’s who He is and we must recognize that He actually has dominion over everything we see, including your biggest hurt. Including your biggest challenge.

Remember where we started today:
Because of who Jesus is, every challenge in our lives bows to Him
Regardless of how you answer the question: What’s your biggest challenge?
Because of who Jesus is, that challenge that you named is has to bow to Him.
We keep reading in verse 18:

“‘And whenever this spirit seizes him, it throws him violently to the ground.’” The father is still speaking, “Then he foams at the mouth and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid.”
Now, here’s what we know from reading the Scriptures. Every one of us is designed, created, to reflect God’s goodness. We are created in God’s image. And yet, this demon won’t let this boy speak or hear.



. Often he screams. He's thrown to the ground. He foams at the mouth. The demon tries to throw him into the fire to burn him, the water to drown him. What's going on? The demon is trying to destroy God's image in this little boy. And we just need to recognize that that is actually the enemy's plan for every one of us. To destroy, to pervert, to distract God's image in us. That's why it's important we do what we do. It's why we preach God's Word. It's why we share His truth. To push back the enemy in our lives and recognize what it is that he is trying to do. The father goes on in the second part of verse 18, He says: "So I asked your disciples to cast out the evil spirit, but they couldn't do it" (NLT) Now, as followers of Jesus (I'm talking about us) we need to know why those followers of Jesus couldn't do what they were actually sent out to do. We are sent out, as followers, to be Christ's ambassadors. To bring His light and His hope into the world. To push back the darkness in other people's lives. And if they couldn't do it, it's often possible that maybe we can't. So, why couldn't they cast out this evil spirit?

Well, for a moment I want to jump to the end of this passage. Because after all of this takes place Jesus and the disciples are having a conversation. It says this in verse 28:

"Afterward, when Jesus was alone in the house with his disciples, they asked him, 'Why couldn't we cast out that evil spirit?' Jesus replied, 'This kind can be cast out only by prayer.'" Mark 9:28-29 (NLT)

This kind can only be cast out by prayer. Now, some of the versions you might be reading right now might say prayer and fasting. You see it both ways depending on the version. So, the question is, is Jesus saying that the disciples forgot to pray when they went to cast out the demon? Or were they supposed to sort of pause what was going on, go fast and come back? That's not it at all. We see in just a moment Jesus doesn't fast. He doesn't pray. In fact, He speaks right to the demon He's casting out with His authority. So, what is the point that Jesus is trying to make? This is really important for all of us who want to follow Jesus and be His ambassadors in our day in and day out lives.

Essentially what Jesus is teaching them is this: They had unbelief in their hearts. As they were stepping into this moment they didn't know if God could heal this little boy. Why? Why did they have unbelief? Because they weren't living a life of prayer. That's the point Jesus is trying to make. They weren't walking with God. They were kind of watching the show, but they weren't walking closely with God.



In fact, in another teaching that Jesus was having with the disciples in John 15, He gives us the answer. He says:
"I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit..."

If you and I desire to use our lives to push out the darkness in this world, Jesus says, "To do it you must abide in Me. Why? Because:
"...apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:5 (NLT)

See, the disciples were powerless because they weren't walking closely with God. They weren't living a life of prayer. And that's the invitation for all of us, to walk closely with God. And when we walk closely with God, our belief will grow. Watch and see His glory revealed in our lives and through our lives.

One of the ways to think about this is this: Unbelief grows when prayer is absent. When prayer is absent in our lives, when we are not living a life of prayer, unbelief can begin to grow. And when unbelief grows, man, we are separating ourselves from the vine.

Think about it like this. Years ago I was with a friend of mine out in Colorado Springs. It was late April. It was a beautiful spring day in Colorado Springs. And my friend happens to be an expert mountain climber. And he was like, "Hey, man. You want to go out for hike with me?" And I'm like, "Man, that would be great. Let's go for a hike."

And I had no idea what I was about to be in for. For the next two hours we drove out of Colorado Springs. And we didn't just drive out. If you've ever been in Colorado, we were actually driving up. And two hours later, we're pretty high in elevation. It's no longer a beautiful spring day. It looked like we were in the depth of winter.

By the time we got to this trail we were on, that I'm talking about, there were dozens upon dozens of feet of snow all around us. And as we got to this old mining trail that we were walking down he was like, "Alright, man. Come on." And I did not know what I was in for. Alright? I mean I thought a beautiful spring hike. For the next hour we walked on this mining trail through feet of snow. And we got to this one place and he stopped and he pointed up at this peak and he said, "Hey, man. Do you see that peak up there?" I was like, "Yeah, it's beautiful." He's like, "That's where we are going." And I was like, "Bro, this isn't hiking. This is now mountain climbing." I was like, "This is not what I signed up for." And he was like, "Man, we can do it." And I said, "Well, he's an expert. We'll see."



And for a little while we just kind of switched back up this mountain face. And we finally made it to the peak. And we were out of breath because the air is so thin. In fact, we were 13,500 feet up. We were up there.

Not to brag, but Jesus was only 9,000 feet so I think... I joked with the team this week. I think this is funny. I don't know if you will. But I thought it was funny to make a joke about that considering Jesus spoke and the mountain was created. But I'm like a big shot climbing up higher than Jesus.

So, we were 13,500 feet up trying to catch our breath. We were high fiving. We were celebrating, this was incredible what we'd done. I'd never done anything like this. And we started to make our way back down. In fact, I brought a photo along. This is one of the last photos because it just got so crazy after this moment. This is me with my hands raised. I didn't know what was about to happen.

As we were making our way back down, a deep snow and fog set in. So much so that we couldn't go back down the same way because we could no longer see the bottom. In fact, if we were just five or ten feet away from each other we could no longer see one another. And we had to get back up on the ridge and find a safer route.

He could tell I was kind of nervous. I didn't know what I was doing. And he started to give me (I kid you not) avalanche training. I was like, "I thought we were going for a hike." Avalanche training was not on my Bingo card when I woke up today. I was like, "What are we doing?"

And we kept going and, man, it was getting bad. And I'll never forget that as we were walking and I'm trying to figure out what to do and not take any wrong steps. He turned around and he looked at me and he said, "Man, just walk in my steps. If you'll just walk in my footsteps we're going to get off of this mountain." And, spoiler alert. I made it off. I made it off alive.

Later on that evening as we were eating dinner and just sort of like reflecting on this wild adventure we had just been on—we got off track by a couple of miles. It took us a couple of hours longer to find a road. We had to hitchhike back to our car we were so far away—it occurred to me as we were reflecting on it: I didn't have to be an expert climber to get off of that mountain, I just had to know the one who was. I didn't have to be an expert to get out of that situation. I just needed to walk in his footsteps.

And here's why I share that. The invitation is the same for every one of us. You don't have to know how to get out of your challenge. You don't have to know how to move past your hurt. You don't have to have it all figured out. You just have to know the One who does.



And the invitation for every one of us is, "Would you just walk in My footsteps? Would you just walk close to Me?" That's what Jesus is saying when He's talking to the disciples. You're not walking in My power because you're not walking with Me. In fact, there are consequences to this in verse 19. It's an interesting verse. Some of you may not like it. But I think there is something important here for us. Verse 19:

"Jesus said to them, 'You faithless people!' He's calling out the disciples and the religious teachers. "How long must I be with you? How long must I put up with you?" It's strong language. "Bring the boy to me." (NLT)

Now, Jesus is rebuking the 12 disciples and He's rebuking the Jewish leaders. Why? Because after all of the disciples have seen, after all the religious leaders claimed to know, they are still full of unbelief in their hearts. And the reality is they needed rebuking. They needed correction because God has more for them than if they stay in that unbelief. And here's the reality. All of us, at times in our life, we need rebuking and correcting also. Because God has more for us. Now, it's popular in culture right now that if someone disagrees with you, well then they must hate you. And can I just say that a lie? In fact, that's a trick of the devil. Think about it. If the devil can make you think that you can never be corrected, you will always be prideful and arrogant and God can never teach you anything.

So, we're all walking around on pins and needles like we can't help each other out. Man, we're begging for a fall in our life. And the Scriptures says, "No, no, no. If you disagree with someone, that's not because you hate them. It's actually because you love them. The Scriptures say that in God's kindness He rebukes us because He has more for us.

Think about what Solomon says in Proverbs, chapter 3, verse 12:
"For the Lord corrects those he," hates? No, He corrects those He "loves, just as a father corrects a child in whom he delights." (NLT)

The Scriptures liken disagreeing with someone like a father who is coming alongside a child in whom he delights. Disagreeing with someone to share truth with them is actually one of the most loving things that we can do. Now, we do it following in the footsteps of Jesus. Right? Who not only shared truth but He also was full of grace. Always full of grace and truth because He wanted to share biblical righteousness with people because it was true and it was for their good. We need correcting in our lives. And God invites us to come alongside others. It's the equivalent to saying, "Hey, I see a cliff up ahead and I want to warn you before you get there. Not because I hate you. No, because I love you."



It goes on in verse 20:

"So they brought the boy. But when the evil spirit saw Jesus, it threw the child into a violent convulsion, and he fell to the ground, writhing and foaming at the mouth." (NLT)

Pastor Aaron will often remind us that when there is a resurgence of the Holy Spirit, there is often a resistance of unholy spirits. And you see it right here. As the evil spirit saw Jesus, it tried one more grasp for power in this boy's life. Verse 21: "'How long has the been happening?' Jesus asked the boy's father. He replied, 'Since he was a little boy. The spirit often throws him into the fire or into water,' now remember fire and water, we're going to come back to that in a moment, 'trying to kill him. Have mercy on us and help us, if you can.'" Mark 9:21-22 (NLT) "Would You have mercy on us and help us if You can?"

Here's what I recognize. Some of you are right there today. You showed up with an, "If you can," in your own heart. "Jesus, if You can in my marriage." "Jesus, if You can in my job." Or, "If you can in my health." "Jesus, if You can would you please move in the lives of my children?" Or, "Would You help me with my loneliness?" "Would You help me with my mental health?" "My drinking?" Or, "My drug problem?" "My grief?" "Jesus, if You can would You please come alongside of me?"

When I asked here earlier about your biggest challenge and I asked if God can move in your life, if you're being honest, some of you were like, "I don't know." But you are here and you showed up with an, "If You can, Jesus, would You please help?"

And look at how Jesus responds, verse 23:

"'What do you mean, 'If I can?' Jesus asked. 'Anything is possible if a person believes.'" (NLT)

Anything is possible if a person believes. In fact, let me just pause in this story for just a moment and talk about this verse. Probably one of the misunderstood and most misused verses in the Scriptures.

Let's talk, first, about what Jesus is not saying. He's not saying that if you believe that He's required to do what you ask. You hear me? He's not saying, "If you believe, whatever you ask I'm going to do it."

Consider the Apostle Paul. Right? One of the greatest on the planet to ever live. Had extreme faith, extreme belief. He wrote half of the New Testament and we know that he actually had a chronic physical ailment. And it says this in 2 Corinthians, 12:



"Three different times I begged the Lord t take it away. Each time he said, 'My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.'" 2 Corinthians 12:8-9 (NLT)

Surely if God was going to move in somebody's life who had belief it would be the Apostle Paul.

Now, we know that God does move in our life, it's just often not the way that we want or the way that we ask or the timing that we would expect. Jesus is not saying if you believe hard enough that He'll do whatever you ask. We can be certain that He is always diligently working in our life. What Jesus is saying (let's just take His words at face value) is that anything is possible for a person who believes. Let me say it a different way:

My belief or unbelief impacts the release of God's power in my life
My believe or unbelief impacts the release of God's power in my life. If I come to God hardhearted, proud, arrogant it's likely that He's going to withhold His power from me. But if I show up with a heart that says, "God, I know who You are, and I believe You can," we can be 100 percent certain God will move in a way that is for His glory and for our good. It doesn't mean that He's always going to move in the way that we want, but He will move in our life. So, let me ask you again: Do you believe that God can move in your life and in your circumstances? And do you believe that God is good? Do you think He is worthy of your trust? If He's God, if He can move, and if He's good let me just say clearly that you can trust Him with your whole life. The big things and the small things.

In fact, it goes on in verse 24:

"The father instantly cried out, 'I do believe, but help me overcome my unbelief.'" (NLT)

And I love the father's response because I think it sounds a lot like mine sometimes. You? "I do believe but would You please help me overcome my unbelief." He had some faith and he has some doubt. And immediately all of us can relate because we often can feel that way too. Maybe you're there today, "I've got some belief but I've also got some doubt." Here's the amazing thing. That response, "Help my unbelief," was enough.

In fact, in Matthew 17, Jesus says, "If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you can move mountains." So, this little bit of faith the father has is enough. Verse 25: "When Jesus saw that the crowd of onlookers was growing, he rebuked the evil spirit, 'Listen, you spirit that makes this boy unable to hear and speak,' he said, 'I command you to come out of this child and never enter him again!'" (NLT)



I love that because the father had just a little bit of faith—a faith that would say, “I believe but would you help my unbelief?”—all of the glory and power that we see in Jesus on the mountain is released in this little boy’s life.

Listen. Jesus had authority over this demon and Jesus has authority over the enemy’s plan for your life. You don’t have to walk afraid wondering if the enemy is out to get you. He is out to get you, but Jesus promises to walk alongside of you. He has authority. Every challenge in your life has to bow to Him.

Look at how king David said it in Psalm 23:

“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,” even though I’m walking through some hurt, what does it say? “I will fear no evil, for you are with me...” Psalm 23:4 (ESV)

If you are a follower of Jesus today, that is a promise for you. Whatever you are walking through, you don’t have to fear any evil because He is with you. And if you think back to the boy, do you remember what the demon was trying to do to destroy God’s image in him? He would often throw him in the water to drown him and in fire to burn him. This reminds me of another promise in Isaiah 43. If you are a follower of Jesus, this promise is true of you. He’s saying this to Israel. It’s true for us as followers of Jesus:

“When you pass through,” do you see it? “the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through,” do you see it again? “fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.” Isaiah 43:2 (ESV)

If you are a follower of Jesus this is a promise for you. Whatever you are walking through: number one, I will be with you. Number two, it will not consume you. It doesn’t have the last word. No, no, no. It actually has to bow to Him. And this is how the story ends, verse 26:

“Then the spirit screamed and threw the boy into another violent convulsion and left him. The boy appeared to be dead. A murmur ran through the crowd as people said, ‘He’s dead.’ But Jesus took him by the hand and helped him to his feet, and he stood up.” Mark 9:26-27 (NLT)

He stood up in his right mind. He stood up and he could speak. He stood up and he could hear. He was set free because the father had just a little bit of belief. Because of who Jesus is up on the mountain, it changes everything for us in whatever valley we find ourselves. And the invitation today is this: If you feel outmatched by the hurt in your life, there is an invitation. Would you bring it to Him? Because of who Jesus is, every challenge bows to Him.



Now, our belief or our unbelief impacts the release of God's power in our lives. So, may I ask it again? Do you believe that Jesus is God? Do you believe that He can move in your life? And even if your response is, "I believe but help my unbelief," it's enough.

Here's what's going to happen. In just a moment I'm going to pray. And there is going to be an invitation. At every one of our campuses there are going to be prayer teams stationed around the rooms and the front of our auditoriums are going to be open. Because I want to give us an opportunity to respond.

In fact, right now, at all of our campuses would you stand up to your feet? I want to give us an opportunity to stand up and be ready. Because here's what I know. So often when it gets late into the service, we're thinking about what is next. But can I just say that there is power in this moment right here.

Each and every Sunday this is the most important moment, because it's the moment when you're going to decide whether you're going to have belief or unbelief and whether you're going to continue to carry that thing you've been walking with the past week or the past month or the past year. Or, it's going to be the opportunity for you to come and lay it at the feet of Jesus.

When we come forward to an altar, what we're saying is this, "Jesus I don't have what it takes, but You do. And I'm choosing to leave it with you." And that's the opportunity for every one of us here in just a moment. Are you going to walk out and continue to carry that thing as though you've got it? Or are you going to recognize only He can carry it. And if you give it to Him, every challenge in your life bows to Him.

Can we pray together?

So, God, what a privilege it is to come together today. Your Word says that where two or more are present in Your name, You are there. So, we know Jesus that You are here just like You were with that boy and that father. You are here in our presence through Your Holy Spirit.

And just as that father taught us, if we feel outmatched by the hurt in our life we can bring it to You. And You promise to move. You promise to be with us. You promise that that challenge will not overcome us. That you are strengthening us. You desire to move in our lives. So, God, as we sing together in just a moment at all of our campuses as we pray as we respond it's a declaration of who You are. We see that You are God. We see all of Your glory all of Your holiness all of Your majesty.



And at the same time You came down to put on flesh. You understand the pain and the hurt we encounter. And so it's an opportunity for us to say we don't have what it takes. But You do. We're giving it over to You. It's in Jesus' name that we pray. Come on, at all of campuses we say: Amen. Amen.

Church, right now, come on. Let's lift our voices in worship. Let's respond to His goodness. Come on.

