

The title of this morning's sermon is, "*Christ Our Deliverer.*"

On Sunday mornings we're working our way through Luke's Gospel verse-by-verse, and we find ourselves at **Luke 9:37**.

Jesus has just come down from the Mount of Transfiguration, which we finished studying last week. And look what immediately happens...

**37 On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd met him. 38 And behold, a man from the crowd cried out, "Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child.**

So no sooner had Jesus descended from the mountain than He was confronted with this huge crowd that – more than likely – had been waiting for Him. This would've been a very chaotic scene as they're all trying to get His attention, and somewhere in the crowd is this distraught father who wants more than anything to reach Jesus and get His help. **Verse 38** says he **cried out** which he probably did for two reasons:

1. First, he had to yell over the crowd, hoping Jesus would hear him
2. Second, he **cried out** b/c he's so desperate

When He finally gets Jesus' attention it says he [**begged Jesus**] **to look at [his] son**, and notice he points out that it's his **only child**. No other Gospel identifies when a child is an only child, but Luke makes this point three times:

- First, the widow of Nain: **Luke 7:42 As [Jesus] drew near to the gate of the town, behold, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow**
- Second, Jairus' daughter: **Luke 8:42 [Jairus] had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying.**

The fact that this boy was this man's only child must've contributed to his desperation.

Look at **verse 39** to see his description of his son's torment...

**39 And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out. It convulses him so that he foams at the mouth, and shatters him, and will hardly leave him.**

I can't imagine what it was like for this father to have to witness this happening to his son on a regular basis. If you're a parent, you know how difficult it is to see your children suffer:

- He says the demon would make the boy scream...I'm not sure if in pain or terror, or both.
- Then the boy would start convulsing, probably like someone experiencing a seizure
- He would foam at the mouth
- The ESV says **shatters him**, which refers to the violent way the demon would throw him down

And in the father's estimation, the demon **hardly leaves him**, so he's rarely free from the demon's torment.

And there's one more thing that makes the whole situation even worse for the father. Look at **verse 40**...

**40 And I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not."**

Let me get you to look back at **verse 1**, so I can show you why this was so discouraging for the father...and this will also help us understand why Jesus was so frustrated with the disciples...

**1 And he called the twelve together and GAVE THEM POWER AND AUTHORITY OVER ALL DEMONS and to cure diseases,**

So to be clear, the disciples had **power and authority to cast out demons**. Now look at **verse 6**...

**6 And they departed and went through the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.**

Although it doesn't say they cast out demons, we can assume they did that too with the power and authority Jesus gave them.

The news of them doing this spread everywhere. Look at **verse 7**...

**7a Now Herod the tetrarch heard about all that was happening...**

The miraculous work of the disciples even reached the highest levels of government in the land.

So...

- Everyone knew what the disciples were doing...
- Everyone knew they were able to cast out demons and heal diseases...

That's **WHY** the father brought his son to them in the first place...he knew they could help!

- He's been dealing with this excruciating situation, and he finally has his son in front of these men that he's heard so much about.
- He feels hope for the first time in who-knows-how-long, and they try, and try, and try...but they can't help him.

It must've been devastating!

I wanted to come up with a comparison that I thought might help us understand how the father was feeling...

Imagine you have a child with a terrible disease. You finally get your child to a team of physicians who are famous for helping people with this condition, and the doctors try to help, but they can't do anything about it.

That's what it was like for this father! He's got to be feeling even worse than he did before, b/c now his son's situation seems even worse is: "*They can cast demons out of all these other people, but not my son. He's beyond help.*"

It seemed hopeless...unless He can get him to Jesus...and he did!

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And here's what we would expect...

We would expect Jesus to quickly help the boy. Considering all he and the father have been through, of course that's what He's going to do.

Nope.

Look what He does first...

**41a Jesus answered, "O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you and bear with you?"**

Before Jesus helps the boy he first delivers this strong rebuke.

This is the sort of language we'd expect for really serious sin...not being unable to cast out a demon!

So why the strong words?

- We actually already read the answer!
- When Jesus sent out the Twelve, not only did He give them power and authority to cast out demons, He also TOLD THEM to cast out demons. This was part of WHY they were sent out.

It's a little clearer in Matthew's gospel: **Matt 10:8a [Jesus said], "Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, CAST OUT DEMONS."** They were commanded to do this, so when they didn't, it was disobedient.

The word for **twisted** is *diastrepho* (pr: dee-ah-streff-oh), which means, "*distort, turn aside.*" It's the same word used in **Acts 13:8** to describe **Elymas the magician [who was] seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith.**

This is fitting, b/c when Jesus sent out the twelve, He put them on a path – to cast out demons – and by failing to cast them out they turned aside from that path.

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After the rebuke, I want you to notice some words from Jesus that are pretty uncharacteristic. He said, "**how long am I to be with you and bear with you?**"

- There are different times Jesus rebuked the disciples for lacking faith, but this is the only instance I could find of Him saying something like this.
- They've been with Jesus this long, but they still aren't doing what He wants.

This made me ask a question about myself: considering how long I've been with Jesus, is there anything I'm still not doing that He wants?

And this brings us to Lesson 1...

## LESSON 1: WHAT ARE WE NOT DOING THAT WE SHOULD BE DOING BY NOW?

Listen to what the author of Hebrews said to his readers...

**Heb 5:12 For though BY THIS TIME YOU OUGHT TO BE TEACHERS, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God.**

The author of Hebrews says by this point in their relationships w/ Christ, they should've been doing some things they weren't doing...in this case, teaching.

For some of us, maybe this completely applies:

- Maybe some of you should be teaching by now, but since teaching is a gift and you're not better or worse if you do or don't teach, I'm hesitant to push this point.
- I will say this though:
  - If you're a husband, you should be teaching your wife...you are to be to your wife what Christ is to the church.
  - If you're a father you should be teaching your children: **Eph 6:4 says Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.**
  - If you have a family, you're the spiritual teacher - pastor or shepherd - of that family and they need your instruction.

Gentlemen, I know you're tired...

- I know most – if not all of you – work hard throughout the week...
- I know you have plenty of other responsibilities pulling on your time...
  - But this is the greatest responsibility God has given us as fathers and husbands.
  - What I'm doing behind the pulpit right now is important, but what I do in my home throughout the week with my family is even more important.

In **1 Tim 5:8** Paul said if you don't take care of your family you're worse than an unbeliever.

- This verse means even unbelievers take care of their families physically and financially...which means this is the bare minimum.
- As Christian husbands we're called to a higher standard.
- So here's what I'd ask Brothers:
  - How are you taking care of your family SPIRITUALLY?
  - Are you praying and reading the Word with your family regularly?

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Back to Jesus' words...

The question I asked myself when looking at His rebuke to the disciples is: “When the Lord looks at my life, what am I not doing that I should be doing by now?”

- For some of us, maybe we’re right where the Lord wants us:
  - Maybe we’re doing exactly what He wants us doing.
  - If Jesus spoke to us He would say, “I’ve been with you all this time – or in other words: you’ve been a Christian all this time – and you’re right where you should be...you’re doing what I want you doing.”
- But maybe for others of us, Jesus would say, “I’ve been with you all this time – or you’ve been a Christian all this time – and you still can’t...or you still aren’t...”

Let me conclude this lesson by saying this...

- As our children grow up, we expect more of them.
- God has children too, and as we grow up, the Lord expects more of us:
  - By this point, Jesus thought the disciples should’ve been able to cast out this demon.
  - By this point in our Christian lives are we doing everything the Lord thinks we should be able to do...or would Jesus be frustrated with us like He was with the twelve?

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Speaking of Jesus’ frustration, how do we understand – or accept – Jesus saying something that might look harsh and impatient? At the end of **verse 41** He said, “**how long am I to be with you and bear with you?**”

- He basically said, “*How long do I have to keep putting up with you!*”
- You can read it as many times as you want, but you can’t get around that this is what He said!

The way we accept Jesus’ words is by remembering that rebuking people is loving:

- The world says you tolerate everyone and everything...if you say something is wrong then you’re a hateful bigot.
- But the Bible says it’s loving to tell people the truth...even when it’s hard to hear.

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The bigger point I want you to notice though, is it was difficult – we could even say a trial – for Jesus to keep putting up with the disciples’ failures. It didn’t come easy to Him...even though He was God in the flesh.

He’s so exasperated He even makes a statement that reveals How much He wants His earthly mission to be over! He said, “**HOW LONG am I to be with you and bear with you?**”

- He knew the answer to this question. It was rhetorical. He said this to express His frustration.
- He sounds like parents who’ve had a long day with their children.
  - As parents we know even if we feel this way we probably shouldn’t say it to our children.
  - Jesus said it to the disciples though!

And this brings us to Lesson 2...

## LESSON 2: EVEN JESUS WAS EXASPERATED AT TIMES.

Let me be clear about what I am saying, and what I'm not saying by this lesson...

I'm not saying Jesus sinned. I'm not saying it's a sin to be exasperated. Actually, I'm saying the opposite. It's NOT a sin to be exasperated, and we know that b/c Jesus was exasperated.

To understand Jesus being exasperated, we only have to think about His humanity:

- There are moments in the Gospels when Jesus looks very divine:
  - Take for instance the Transfiguration we just studied.
  - Take for instance His power and authority over demons...which we're about to witness when the boy is brought to Him.
  - Take for instance the miracles He performed, or the wisdom He demonstrated that we know could only belong to God.
- And there are other moments He looks very human. For example:
  - **John 4:6** says He was tired and fatigued...He needed to rest...
  - **Mark 11:12** says He was hungry...He needed to eat...
  - **John 19:28** says He was thirsty...He needed to drink...
  - **Luke 19:41** says He cried...He experienced sadness, grief, hurt, everything we experience.

If Jesus didn't die on a cross, what would've happened some number of years later? He would've died some other way, perhaps a natural death associated with old age:

- He had a physical body just like ours that would wear down.
- I did some research to see if there are any verses that discuss Jesus being sick and I couldn't find any, but since He was human we can assume He was susceptible to disease and sickness.

**Heb 2:17a says he had to be made like his brothers IN EVERY RESPECT, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest**

Since it says **made like [us] in every respect**, this would include illness.

More importantly for this discussion, it means He had the same limitations we have - not just physically, but - mentally and emotionally:

- We often think of the physical limitations Jesus experienced as a Man, but He also had mental and emotional limitations.
- Just as Jesus could get tired physically, He could get tired mentally and emotionally.
- Think of everything He had weighing on Him at this moment:
  1. First, and most obviously, the failure of the disciples in being unable to help this man's son

2. Second, the weariness from having to continually face demonic opposition
3. Third, grief associated with this poor father's situation...other people's suffering weigh on us too...especially when we have the heart for others that Jesus had.

There were a number of factors contributing to Jesus' exasperation.

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I hope you can see the lesson for us...

We have mental and emotional limits too:

- We can reach points where we feel like we can't take anymore.
- I think I've stayed fairly busy throughout my life, and experienced stressful situations like others, but I remember back in 2013 experiencing some moments that were unlike anything I'd ever experienced before.
  - I don't want to go into all the details, but I'll simply say I didn't feel normal.
  - I started having anxiety attacks.
  - Basically I didn't feel like I had anything left mentally or emotionally.

Some people can handle more than others – and maybe some people could've handled what I couldn't handle in 2013 – but nobody – not even Jesus Himself - with His human limitations – had an infinite emotional and mental output to keep going and going and going without ever becoming exasperated.

And there's only one question when that happens...

- How do we handle it when we become exasperated?
- Do we let it cause us to sin?

If we look at Jesus' example, I see two practical applications for us...

First, regardless of how exasperated He was, He controlled Himself.

- He didn't fly off the handle...while His words to the disciples were strong, they were not wrong.
- We all get exasperated at times, but:
  - It's not an excuse to mistreat those around us...
  - Say mean things to people...
  - Take it out on family or friends.
  - Make sure if we're struggling, everyone around us is going to struggle too.

Second, Jesus continued to obey His Father...we'll see in a moment He called the boy to Himself and helped him. In other words:

- Jesus didn't stop serving God.
- He didn't discard the call on His life.
- He kept fulfilling His Father's will.

The application for us is when we get exasperated, it's not an excuse to stop doing obeying God. We still have to ask ourselves:

- *What does God want me doing?*
- *How does God want me serving Him?*

Maybe the best way to serve God is by resting, but it might also mean continuing to serve Him in some other way...and I say that based on Jesus' example.

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Despite any exhaustion or exasperation He was experiencing, He was instantly ready to help this man. Look at the rest of **verse 41**...

**41b Bring your son here.” 42 While he was coming, the demon threw him (the son) to the ground and convulsed him. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father.**

This account is a testament to the validity of Scripture, and in particular the reality that it's written by God and not by man:

- If man wrote this you would see some epic struggle between good and evil, with Jesus battling to cast out the demon. We know that's how man would describe the account, b/c that's what man does in movies depicting demon possession and exorcisms.
- Instead, you get a few words saying **Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit**. That's it. Reminds me of Mitch's communion devotional last week that **Gen 1:14** simply says **Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens**. That's all you get regarding the creation of the stars!

What you actually notice is the LACK OF DRAMA.

- There's no attention drawn to it.
- Jesus isn't a showman.

There is one beautiful addition though...

At the end of **verse 42** notice the words **and gave him back to his father**.

- It could just say **Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the boy**, but you get this description of what took place.
- There are no wasted words in Scripture, and this reveals the tender nature of our Savior.

The account is interesting, b/c:

- At the beginning when Jesus speaks to the disciples, how does He look? He looks almost unkind or harsh.
- Then you see this very compassionate side of Him.

Something similar took place back in **Luke 7**. Briefly look at **Luke 7:13**...

The context is the widow of Nain's only child died. They're carrying him through the town in a coffin.

**Luke 7:13 When the Lord saw her (his mother), He had compassion on her and said to her, “Do not weep.”**



Jesus reached out, touched the coffin, brought him back to life, and look at **Luke 7:15**...

**7:15 And the dead man sat up and began to speak, and JESUS GAVE HIM TO HIS MOTHER.**

It wasn't enough for Jesus to simply touch the coffin and raise the boy from the dead. He also took the time to personally return him to his mother:

- Think about all she had been through...
- All she'd lost:
  - First her husband and now her son.
  - She has no other children.
- Think about how much she must've been grieving...

And then Jesus **presents** her son back to her...and it creates a beautiful, tender moment in the Gospels...and Jesus did the same thing with the father of the demon possessed boy.

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And I think Jesus' behavior with these parents was prefigured in the OT when Elijah raised the widow's son...

**1 Kin 17:23 [says] Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper chamber into the house AND DELIVERED HIM TO HIS MOTHER.**

Then we see Jesus do the same thing twice in Luke's Gospel.

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We've already seen Jesus cast out demons a few times in Luke's Gospel – which is why I didn't draw more attention to the exorcism itself...I didn't want to repeat what I've taught previously. But there is something about this exorcism that makes it unique, and it's this...

Jesus cast out the demon **AFTER** the disciples failed some number of times:

- You see the grip this demon had on this boy, and even the Twelve Apostles couldn't do anything about it!
- This account is a testimony to the power of Christ to deliver when nobody else can.

And this brings us to Lesson 3...

### **LESSON 3: JESUS IS WILLING TO DELIVER US.**

The fact that the disciples themselves – who had been given tremendous power and authority – couldn't help boy, yet Jesus did so effortlessly – should really help us appreciate Christ's power in being able to deliver.

When we look at this account, what's the application for us?

- Do we see a lot of demon possessed people around us? And I'm not talking about that person you don't like at work, or your children when they don't get a nap.

- Is this teaching us that if we meet demon possessed people we should pray for Christ to deliver them?

Maybe...but I think the bigger application is...

If Jesus can deliver this boy from being possessed, He can deliver us from whatever might possess us.

We might not struggle with demon possession, but there are plenty of other struggles that can possess us:

- Could be struggles with anxiety...there are people who are possessed by different fears and anxiety...
- Could be struggles with depression...there are people who feel possessed by depression...
- Could be struggles with anger...some people are slaves to their anger...
- Could be struggles with lust...
- Could be struggles with deceitfulness...
- Could be struggles with gluttony...

And the list goes on.

So when I look at the effortlessness with which Jesus could deliver this boy – when nobody else could, not even the disciples – it reminds me of His power to deliver when nobody else can.

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I think we should take note of the father too...

There's a lot we can learn from. For example:

- He sought Jesus out
- He recognized the failure of others to help:
  - Interestingly, it was the disciples
  - In our lives it might be:
    - Friends...
    - Parents...
    - Spouses...
    - Your pastors...
    - God can and does use people, but our deliverance has to come from Christ.

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This man begged Jesus to deliver his son, and it makes me wonder if we begged Jesus for deliverance with the same desire and intensity this man demonstrated would the Lord deliver us?

I changed this lesson a few times:

- At one point it said, "Jesus desires to deliver us," but I didn't like that b/c I thought it sounded like He wants to, but is unable to...sort of like the disciples with this boy.
- So I changed it to express Jesus' willingness.

Let me say this clearly, and I don't mean to sound harsh:

- When we engage in habitual sin, or we're possessed certain addictions or struggles, the failure isn't on the Lord's part.
- The failure is on our part.

Often, this is b/c:

- We aren't as desperate and hopeless as this father.
- Maybe we haven't hit rock bottom yet.
- Maybe - if we're honest - we don't want to be delivered...we want to keep engaging in our sin.

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Another possibility is this...

- Maybe you struggle believing Jesus CAN deliver you!
- Maybe you want to have faith Jesus can help you...but you really wonder if He can.

Let me share something with you that I hope can encourage you...

- This father struggled with belief too!
- Listen to the parallel account...

**Mark 9:24 The father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!"**

The Lord helped this man, and I think like him, we also have to be honest about our doubts...does God already know what's going on in our hearts?

- If you struggle believing Jesus can deliver you, cry out to God like this man did.
- Ask the Lord to help your unbelief!

If we do that, we can trust that Christ's desire to deliver is no different today than it was 2,000 years ago.

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Let me be clear about what I am – and am not – saying...

- I'm not saying the Lord is going to prevent us from facing temptation. We do have to resist sin and the flesh as long as we're on this side of heaven.
- But I am saying that for the heart that cries out to God and begs for deliverance like this man did, deliverance is available. By God's grace the Gospel is at work in our lives, and we can be given victory over the struggles that seek to possess.

Paul explained the balance like this...

**Col 1:29 For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.**

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I'll close with this...

- The greatest deliverance Jesus offers is deliverance from the punishment our sins deserve.

- The greatest deliverance is from eternity in hell.

If you've repented and put your faith in Christ, then you've embraced this deliverance. If you haven't repented and put your faith in Christ, then:

- You're rejecting this deliverance.
- You're choosing to stay in your sins and experience the punishment those sins deserve.

Cry out to God for deliverance!

If you have any questions about anything I've shared this morning, Pastor Doug and I will be up front after service, and we'd consider it a privilege to be able to speak with you.

Let's pray.