

**Mark 9:14-29**

<sup>14</sup> When they came to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and the teachers of the law arguing with them.

<sup>15</sup> **As soon as all the people saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with wonder and ran to greet him.**

<sup>16</sup> "What are you arguing with them about?" he asked.

<sup>17</sup> **A man in the crowd answered, "Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech.**

<sup>18</sup> Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not."

<sup>19</sup> **"You unbelieving generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me."**

<sup>20</sup> So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth.

<sup>21</sup> **Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has he been like this?" "From childhood," he answered.**

<sup>22</sup> "It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us."

<sup>23</sup> **"If you can?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for one who believes."**

<sup>24</sup> Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"

<sup>25</sup> **When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the impure spirit. "You deaf and mute spirit," he said, "I command you, come out of him and never enter him again."**

<sup>26</sup> The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, "He's dead."

<sup>27</sup> **But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up.**

<sup>28</sup> After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, "Why couldn't we drive it out?"

<sup>29</sup> **He replied, "This kind can come out only by prayer."**

Good Morning First Baptist Members and Friends. Forgive me if I do not follow my usual pattern of getting you ready for the Word. I am concerned that my voice will not last and I want to bring you the message I received at 3:00 am.

We join the story of the disciples' struggle to drive out evil spirits from a child after it had been going on for a while:

***they saw a large crowd around them and  
the teachers of the law arguing with them.***

When Jesus asks what is going on the child's father speaks out:

***"Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed  
by a spirit that has robbed him of speech.  
<sup>18</sup> Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground.  
He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid.  
I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not."***

Jesus asks for additional clarity:

***<sup>21</sup> Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has he been like this?"***

The boy's father answers the question

***"From childhood," he answered. <sup>22</sup> "It has often thrown him into fire  
or water to kill him***

Then adds a bit more

***But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us."***

If you notice the beginning of this passage it says, "when they came to the other disciples" this is important because Peter, James, and John had been with Jesus on a mountaintop. They had seen Jesus with Elijah and Moses and it had been such a moving experience that Peter has suggested they build shelters and stay there. But Jesus leads them down the mountain and tells them not to share what they have seen or heard until after He has been raised from the dead.

With that as background will you join me at the intersection of?

**High Mountain Drive and Deep Valley Road**

**SHALL WE PRAY!**

**Father we your people have come to church to praise and worship you. We have come to celebrate the Lord's Supper in memory of the new covenant we have with you because of your Son Jesus the Christ. We have come to be filled with the power that only you can give so that we might be a transforming force in the world. Fill us, mold us, and make us into the people you desire us to be in the name of Jesus we pray. Amen and Amen.**

### **High Mountain Drive and Deep Valley Road**

I need you to think back over your life to what you might call a mountain top experience.

wedding, birthday parties, birth of a child, cruise, firsts

Can you remember a moment when you wished the experience would last forever? Some times church is just like that! It is a mountain top experience! We see and hear and feel so good that we just want to stay in the moment a while longer. The keyboardist is doing his thing, the drummer has found a groove, the choir has hit the right key, the praise dancing makes us want to dance, and the prayers have taken lifted higher and higher, a **High Mountain Drive** experience.

Now I need you to remember one of those backed up against the wall experiences.

car towed, driving on empty, kids losing their minds, unemployment checks stopped, another interview, and no offer

In those moments even if we are not church going, bible toting Christians, we call of the Lord. Those are the valley experience – the **Deep Valley Road** - of our lives.

Put a pin there and lets move on a bit further into the text.

For the note takers – write down **Father** – for we need to look at him.

Examine the facts:

son sick  
takes him to the disciples  
disciples can't do anything

hangs around – does not go looking for another church  
believes Jesus will show up  
waits to see what happens when Jesus shows up  
(at the church/place he felt lead to come to)

tells Jesus the whole story  
asks for help for his son  
asks for help for himself

When have you acted like this **Father**?

taken someone in need to church  
stayed with them until something happened

told Jesus the whole story  
asked for help with the trials in your life  
asked for help for another

Now write down **Disciples** – for they are us – in this story

some of us just want to have high mountain experiences  
some of us know we are suppose to be in the valley working  
but we can't do the work  
lack of knowledge  
lack of faith  
lack of prayer

We don't live on **High Mountain Drive** nor do we live in **Deep Valley Road**.  
We live somewhere in between. But if we keep living we will spend sometime in  
Deep Valley Road.

Diabetes patients are taught how to prepare for sick days. You need to know  
what to eat when your sugar drops and when it is high. You need to have the  
food prepared and nearby. You need to know how to adjust your meds and  
you need to have regular meds and emergency meds on hand.

Just as a diabetic needs to be knowledgeable and prepared for sick days a  
Christian needs to be prepared for **Deep Valley Road** days. I would like to

suggest that one of the ways you get ready is by keeping track of what you have asked God for and how God has responded.

The Challenge this week:

1. Write about a difficulty in your life.
2. Then write a prayer to God about the difficulty.
3. Then leave it alone and let God do His work.

Repeat the steps every time something is troubling you, your heart is heavy, and you can't rest. Write it down, write a prayer to God, and leave it alone.

You will begin to see how you are growing in your personal faith.

You will have a story to tell.

You will be ready for **Deep Valley Road**.

I will close with this illustration from Sermon Central.

*I was talking with one of the elder's wives. I asked about how they function in this over 1000-member congregation. I asked her how they oversee all the work. She told me that the elders meet **four times a month**. She said the **first week they pray** for the entire congregation by name. The **second week they look at some of the future directions of the congregation**, the **third week they pray for every work, ministry, and minister in the congregation**. The **fourth week they meet with various people in the congregation**. The eldership of over 1000 people who would be so busy with work that they realize that they must pray first and foremost of all. Spiritual leaders cannot guide a flock, members cannot have strong faith, and ministers cannot preach, if there is not prayer.*