
BREAKING DOWN BELIEF

Study Notes from the Message on January 8, 2017

Mark 9:22-24 NLT

“Have mercy on us and help us, if you can. What do you mean, ‘If I can’? Jesus asked. ‘Anything is possible if a person believes. The father instantly cried out, ‘I do believe, but help me overcome my unbelief.’”

Disbelief, or “unbelief” is part of the fabric of our culture. We tend to only believe in what we can see and even then we don’t trust what we see. For Jesus this must be a sad truth about His creation.

I am no different. I do believe in everything the Lord has promised. I believe He is authoring a great purpose for my life. However, while in the midst of this life I have doubts that are sprung by confusion, selfish desires and expectations and disappointments. I think this must have been in the mind of the father in Mark’s account of him desperately wanting his son to be healed (**Mark 9:14-29**). He believed in a spiritual realm – he understood his son was possessed by a demon. He believed that Jesus could *possibly* heal him. As I read this his faith in Jesus’ ability was certainly diminished when His disciples could not perform the miracle in His absence – his faith was left with, “*If you can*”. Then, here is the place where most of us stumble in our faith – Jesus said, “**Anything is possible if a person believes**”.

Oh how I want to believe this statement! For the countless parents who have test results pending for their child, who are on the cusp of learning the medical calamity that awaits them – I want to believe that *ANYTHING* is possible.

- Then I read **Isaiah 55:8-9**. What do you think I discovered?
- So what *do* I know about God and His ways (**Jeremiah 29:11**)? What is the significant piece of information in this passage for me to believe that anything is possible?
- How do I know this? Because I *believe* in the truth of scripture. Look at the passage in **James 1:17**. What is this truth?
- I also read **James 1:13-15** about temptation and its origin. When I want something good, I define *good* on my terms and I am often tempted to go after it on my own. This verse straightens out my perspective a bit. What did I learn?

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- The Father not only wants us to have the very best of life He wants us to experience Joy. How do we get joy? Belief! John 16:24 explains it best. After reading this passage what does Jesus say about how we receive complete joy in our life?
- What do you think it means to ask for things in the name of Jesus? Maybe we should examine the verses leading up to **John 16:24**. Let's start with verses 19 through 23. How does Jesus define "JOY" in verse 22?
- His comparison in verse 20 to how people of faith mourn over the suffering of the Savior to how the world will react is telling. What does it tell you?
- In this world we build up wealth and treasure that tends to define us in every aspect, including our spirituality. When you read Matthew 6:21 where do you define your treasure and what is it?
- If we are concerned about the strength and integrity of what we believe maybe we should examine our heart. "*Anything*" becomes anything our heart desires. What does Psalm 37:4 tell you?
- To me the greatest verse that defines one's salvation speaks of "belief in our heart" about the resurrection (Romans 10:9). Read Psalm 28:7 and share your impressions of what it means to believe.

Psalms 145:19

"He grants the desire of those who fear him; He hears their cries for help and rescues them."