



## “The Healing of a Shattered Boy”

Luke 9:37-43

October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2018

We are going to be in Luke Chapter 9 this morning and the title of the message is *The Healing of a Shattered Boy*, where we will be reminded of the cruel reality of the demonic realm. Even greater still is the power that is found in Jesus Christ the Messiah. This will be put on display for us in our passage this morning in a majestic way.

As I was thinking about this portion of Scripture, I was thinking about a family that has been blessed with several children. One of their little ones had some serious health struggles during the first several years of his life. He had a very weak respiratory system. He was in the emergency room repeatedly. At one point, he even spent some time in the intensive care unit.

The doctors were giving him some steroid treatments to help bolster his respiratory system and to get his lungs strong. It was during that time that this little one-year-old would wake up in the middle of the night screaming, not crying but screaming. This child could not be consoled. The parents noticed that the child would be staring at something in the room that was not there.

It was so hard because his parents could not comfort their child, so they shared this with their doctors on one of their visits. The doctor informed them that one of the possible side effects of steroid treatments was hallucinations, so potentially this child could have been seeing things that were not in the room. This could have been scarring him and, thus, the inconsolable screaming that the child experienced.

This was so hard for the parents because what could they do to comfort him, other than hold him and try to see him through those episodes? This is a very difficult thing, especially when it is not you who are suffering, but your little one.

This morning as we enter the Gospel of Luke Jesus returns from the mountain high experience of His transfiguration, where His glory was revealed, and He had communion with the Father, Moses, and Elijah. And coming down from that brief but glorious retreat, He encountered a scene of astonishing sorrow and distress.

A young child was experiencing something horrific and terrifying. It was not the result of the side effects of a medication that was ultimately supposed to do that child good. Instead, the child that Jesus encountered was being assaulted by a dark spiritual force.

When we open the pages of Scripture we must remember that it gives us a window into the world that we live in and reminds us that God tells us through Scripture that there is more in this world than we can see with the human eye.

There are spirits that are around us. Namely, there are angelic beings who are servants of God, servants of righteousness. There are also demonic beings, fallen angels filled with malice and hatred. They are capable of harming people in a whole array of ways.

There is a lot of evil in this world, and not all the evil that we see is simply human evil. There is spiritual warfare taking place at all times in this world. As a result, we need to be sobered by this. We need to understand and perceive this.

As we look at stories like the one in front of us today, we must understand that we are being given by God a glimpse into real things. We need to rejoice that greater is He who is in you, if you are in Christ, than he who is in the world—Satan and those who serve him.

Let's see this majestic display of the glory of Jesus as we enter in to this text. Luke Chapter 9 and Verses 37 through 43:

**<sup>37</sup>On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd met him. <sup>38</sup>And behold, a man from the crowd cried out, "Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child. <sup>39</sup>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. <sup>40</sup>And I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not." <sup>41</sup>Jesus answered, "O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here." <sup>42</sup>While he was coming, the demon threw him to the ground and convulsed him. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. <sup>43</sup>And all were astonished at the majesty of God.**

Once again, we see the ministry of the Messiah leaving people amazed and staggered. In this text, it uses the language of *astonishment*. The people were astonished when they saw the power of Jesus over that demon.

It is my prayer that that same astonishment will stretch forward into Southern California this morning—into a little town called Bellflower where a group of people called Bethel Grace are gathered together. I pray that there would be that same level of awe as we see our Messiah, our Savior, doing His work.

I pray that we would look to this and see the glory of Jesus to redeem and to restore and that we will see that Jesus desires to use His people, people like you and me, to be instruments of such redemption. I think all this is here the text for us to observe.

Once again, the account we just read stops at the point where it says that the people were astonished at the majesty of God. While that is going to be the bottom line, we must see that there is a lot in this portion of Scripture for us to be astonished and sobered by, to see

with clear eyes that we might have a Biblical worldview and that we might serve in Jesus' Name where people are being harmed in this world.

As we look in to this text, I want us to see three astonishing realities that are brought to us as Dr. Luke laid out the story for us. I pray that our hearts will be gripped with the realities that we see here. First, I want us to see and be affected by:

### **1. The Cruelty of the Demonic Realm (37-40)**

We see this very, very clearly portrayed for us in this portion of Scripture. That malice is such that a demonic being is perfectly willing not only to assault grown men and women, but also to attack children.

We see this laid out before us as this father came pleading with Jesus for sake of his child who was under such demonic oppression. We see this father crying out in Verse 38 where Luke says *behold!*

**<sup>38</sup>And behold, a man from the crowd cried out, “Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child. <sup>39</sup>And behold, a spirit seizes him...**

The word *seize* in the Greek is *Lambano* and has the nuance of one being handling another being. This demon was handling this child.

Dr. Luke gave us the very compact telling of this story. This story is also included in Matthew and in Mark. The Gospel of Mark especially goes in to all kinds of vivid detail. He told different elements of this story, so when you put them all together you have different pieces of the puzzle.

What we know is that this demon would handle this child and the child would gnash his teeth. Sometimes he would utterly grow stiff. There were times when this demon would take the child and throw him down, sometimes throwing him in water and at other times throwing him in fire trying to destroy him.

It is a harrowing reality that we see here in this text. The father said in Verse 39:

**<sup>39</sup>And behold, a spirit seizes him and he suddenly cries out. It convulses him so that he foams at the mouth, and shatters him**

I think that we can understand that metaphorically. The demon was crushing his very personhood. You must wonder by the way this child was being thrown about if he also experienced fractured bones and dislocated joints. Certainly, there would have been scars from the fire burns. We see the utter cruelty of the demonic realm given to us in this passage of Scripture.

There is another detail that is given to us in Verse 39 where it says that the demon would hardly leave him. That word *hardly* got ahold of me because it would seem to me based

on what he said that there were times when the child seemed to be okay and back to his normal self.

However, those moments were very brief, then suddenly the attacks would come again as the father and the mother wept and were grieved over what was happening to their only child. So, we can understand how this father came and pleaded with Jesus. He begged Jesus to please look upon his son.

The first thing we must see here and be staggered by is the cruelty of the demonic realm. It exists. It is still present here on this earth. As we get in to the closing portion of this morning's message, I'm going to speak of some of the ways Satan seeks to afflict and attack people like us, even people in the church.

But for now, I can't move on from this passage without thanking God for the fact that He has given us a sure defense. Reading portions of Scripture like this and being reminded of the dark realities in this world, we have got to study what is called the full armor of God that is laid out for us piece by piece in Ephesians Chapter 6 and Verses 10 through 20.

People who are going to be filled with the Spirit, walking with a Biblical worldview, are going to take that portion of Scripture very, very seriously that we might walk in the power that the Lord has given us to be free from and shielded from these kinds of attacks.

The first thing that we see in this text is the cruelty of the demonic realm. Moving on, we see something additional. We see:

## **2. The Intensity of the Lord's Response (41)**

Jesus was up on the mountain with three of His disciples. Nine were left down in the valley below. This father came looking for Jesus, but He was not there and had commissioned His disciples to go out and do the ministry He was doing.

The father approached Jesus' disciples and they could not drive out the demon. They could not get it done. So, the man told Jesus this. Then did you get Jesus' intense reply to him? What did that trigger? Verse 40:

**<sup>40</sup>And I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not.” <sup>41</sup>Jesus answered, “O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here.”**

Whoa! If there was ever a time that Jesus seemed to express some exasperation, I wonder if you would agree with me that that seems to be the time!

**<sup>41</sup>Jesus answered, “O faithless and twisted generation...**

It is an intense reply that we see coming from the Messiah right here. Once again, thinking about the fuller picture from the details that are provided also by the Gospel of Mark, what we know also know that Jesus came down from the mountain and He encountered this scene.

Instead of surrounding this father and child, persevering with them until they could figure out the solution, do you know what the disciples were doing when Jesus encountered all this? They were off arguing with the scribes. They were in the midst of some kind of dispute or disagreement.

We have to imagine what the scene might have been like for the disciples. They were trying to cast out the demon but were not getting it done. You can just imagine the scribes and Pharisees were gloating over their inability to complete the task.

As we are going to see next week, the disciples still had some pride living in their hearts. They did not like the fact that the scribes were talking a little smack, if I can add a little vernacular in to the occasion. So, the disciples began disputing and arguing and disagreeing with one another.

When Jesus came down, He saw the nine disciples off arguing with the scribes while the man was left there in his desperation for his child. Jesus was like: O, twisted and faithless generation. I think that adds some understanding to what Jesus said.

I think of parents who see their kids behaving in ways that are beneath their potential. The parents just groan inside over it. They think *how long will I put up with you*, but all the while knowing full well the answer to that question—*forever; I will endure with you forever*.

This is our Messiah and He measured His words. He wanted it to be known that what was happening here with the disciples and the scribes and the fact the issue was not being dealt with was not good. So, we see the intensity of His reply.

Now looking at what Jesus said in Verse 41, I think that there are three things that become clear as we see how Jesus responded. The first thing is that it seems that Jesus absolutely expected that His disciples should have succeeded. They should have gotten the job done.

Look back at Luke Chapter 9 and Verse 1 when Jesus them out:

**<sup>1</sup>And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases.**

Question: That word *all*, how much does that include? Does that include the demon in view here? Based on how Jesus replied, it seems that He expected that the disciples should have been able to handle this situation.

The second thing that I see here is that Jesus was truly grieved that they could not and did not cast out that demon. It grieved Him. Notice with me the word in the emphatic position of Verse 41 where it gives Jesus' reply. I draw your attention to the word *O*. That is the English word *O*. That is a translation of the Greek word *O*. The meaning of the word is *O!* Jesus was expressing His grief at the situation.

Third, what becomes evident is that the problem at its root and core was with the disciple's faith, or lack thereof. *O*, faithless and twisted generation, how long, how long, how long? They were perhaps intimidated by a demon that Jesus gave them power over. There was an issue with their faith. They were not believing what they ought to have believed about the power of God and dependence in the working of God to handle this situation.

I look at this and see that it triggered something in Jesus, and I wonder if we can see something in the disciples that is also characteristic of men and women of the Kingdom of God. Maybe there are some things that we know that we ought to wade into; things that we ought to involve ourselves in, but we get intimidated and the knees start knocking.

We say things like: No, no, no, this is over my head when Jesus might say that you have the power of the Holy Spirit working through you. You are a child of my Kingdom. You might not have all the solutions, but at least you can go into that situation and say: I may not know all the answers, but I know the God who created heaven and earth and I will pray with you and ask Him for His power to be released in to this situation for your good.

So often we neglect even to do that in our timidity. We just tell ourselves that the situation is over our heads. Sometimes I do that, and I can't use the excuse that I am only five foot six, because we are talking about things of spiritual significance.

We must be people who enter in by faith and at the very least say: I am going to pray with you and for you and ask for God's power to be activated by faith that you might be released from the spiritual torment that you are experiencing.

Is it possible that Jesus would look at us from time to time and say: *O*, faithless and twisted generation? We must see the intensity of the Lord's response and ask Him to activate us in faith that we might be more involved than we are.

We not only see the intensity of the Lord's response, but moving forward we also see:

### **3. The Majesty of the Savior's Power (42-43)**

The good news is that where the disciples failed, Jesus was still able to succeed. Even where brothers and sisters may falter, we can call upon the Name of the Lord. Jesus is faithful to us.

Let's look at what it says as we see the majesty of His power. Verses 41 through 43:

**<sup>41</sup>Jesus answered, “O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here.” <sup>42</sup>While he was coming, the demon threw him to the ground and convulsed him. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. <sup>43</sup>And all were astonished at the majesty of God.**

These verses show Jesus taking three steps in the restoration of this child. The first step was the glorious rebuke. It says that Jesus rebuked the demon, the unclean spirit. He went with a strong authoritative statement of shock and command.

By-in-large Christians are to be people of gracious speech. There is a gentleness that ought to be about the tone of what comes out of our mouths. But gentle speech is not befitting of every single situation. Sometimes there needs to be rebuke released in the presence of great evil.

We first see the rebuke that Jesus provided, then we see Jesus healing the boy. Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and He healed the boy. When it says that Jesus healed the boy, I would have to understand that Jesus healed him indeed!

We can understand that this was a child that had scars and when Jesus came and provided His healing power, those scars were healed. I wonder if there were not only the physical wounds that this child bared, but also the emotional ones.

I wonder if Jesus came and provided His healing upon this child in a way that was whole, not only healing him physically, but also giving him strength where there was fear before. Jesus healed him!

Oh, I pray for the power of Jesus to be released into our lives that we might be truly and honestly healed through and through. We got to keep the faith and keep believing what Christ can do in the lives of those who are afflicted. We see it put on display for us for us in this passage.

The third aspect of what Jesus did was to provide a joyful reunion. It says at the end of Verse 32 that He gave the boy back to his father. I look at this and I rejoice for that man. It was his only child and it was only his child, if you follow me. The demon was not there anymore. It was his child and it was his child only, back to the boy that he had known prior to this affliction.

I read this, and I think of the great reunion to come. Scripture teaches that someday Jesus Christ is coming back to this world in power and glory. He is going to come with the shout of loud command and with the voice of the archangel. The dead in Christ are going to rise first. The rest of us are going to be resurrected in our new and everlasting bodies.

The Bible says: Therefore, we will be with the Lord forevermore. This is an expression of us together with Christ. Can you imagine that the time is coming when we are going

to get to see one another no longer touched by sin? No longer under the temptation of dark spirits that lead us astray and want to do us harm.

We are going to see one another, and we are going to see each other whole and complete, purified in every way made perfect like Christ. Then that is going to be our eternal reality as our hearts are filled with everlasting joy and peace and love that knows no bounds. It is going to be a reunion that is going to be awesome!

In the meantime, we still have some warfare that we are a part of. Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the powers and the authorities of this dark age that we are living in. Therefore, Christians need to be prepared for spiritual warfare.

What strikes me as I read these accounts of Jesus casting out demons is that those demons still exist, and they are in the world somewhere right now. They don't like Christians. They don't like anything that God has made. They want to deface the image of God in everything that they can. They attack Christians and they attack churches too.

Praise God that, once again as was said at the beginning, greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world. So, we understand Biblically that demonic possession is not something that a Spirit-filled Christian is going to face. However, we know from the pages of Scripture that Christians and churches can be attacked spiritually. Demons do their thing against us.

We must be warned that Satan exists, and he wants to ruin churches like ours. What we see as we look through the pages of Scripture, even as we move from the Gospels into the epistles which deals so much with church life, is that there seems to be a shift from encounters like the one we read throughout the Gospel of Luke to other more subtle ways that Satan constantly works at to undermine and to work against Christians.

There is a statement in Ephesians 4:26 and 27 that is spoken to Christians to the church. It says:

**<sup>26</sup>Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, <sup>27</sup>and give no opportunity to the devil.**

What we find is that one of Satan's key tactics against the body of Christ is emotional and relational torment. He loves to see a Christian festering in anger and bitterness. That is one of the tools that he uses. This is something that Satan is at work with.

He uses broken relationships, chronic envy, seething bitterness, paralyzing anxiety, selfish ambition. He uses all these kinds of things, and Satan is active and looking for a foothold. This depicts him as something like a mountain climber, trying to find his place where he can just set himself up on a cliffside that is the church where he can dig in and do his work.



We must watch out that we don't let this anger and bitterness fester. Rather, we must say: *Lord, it is all about Christ in me moving these things out of me, so that I can be relationally pure in the body of Christ.* Don't give the devil a foothold is the word to churches!

Satan also seeks to tempt us into various forms of immorality and sin. Did you notice here in this text that that demon was called an *unclean spirit*? I don't think it is simply talking about the fact that in the Jewish system, it was ceremonially unclean. That is not what it is talking about.

It is talking about the heart of its very character—it is morally foul. And demons want to tempt Christians in to sin and sear their consciences so that forms of humor and behavior that should be utterly shocking and that we should be totally sensitive to and grieved by, people just shrug their shoulders and say that it is not that bad.

Unclean spirits want to work against your conscience to make it so that you are numb in relation to the things that you should be shocked by. We have become such a sexually perverse generation. God designed sexual intimacy to be safe, holy, glorious, wonderful, pure, and joyful in one context.

That context is within the marriage bond of one man and one woman. It is pleasing to God there, and it is holy in God's sight. When taken outside of that context, it is absolutely destructive. We have seen the ravages of sexual immorality across this land of ours, and we as a nation, and I fear we in the church, have become numb to the atrocity of it. STD's? What's the big deal, just use protection people say.

Sex outside of marriage has led to the fact that people get diseased and die. That should break our hearts. Whereas if sex was practiced as God has designed it, that would not—that would not—be an issue!

Demons and satanic activity work with the sinfulness of man also to tempt people into such behavior, and they become numb to it. Millions and millions and millions of women go through the torment of having lives removed from within them. As a society, we have become use to that. It is horrendous, and you don't think that demonic realities are true in the day we are living in?

We as Christians should be shocked by such things and say: Lord, You are the judge. I don't want to be the judge of other people because I am cut from the same fabric as everybody else, but, Lord, give me a renewed desire for purity and holiness and help me to be shocked by anything that is less than Your standard.

Satan is still at work in the world. But greater is He who is in you than he who is the world. Our God is an awesome God. Understand this, the Christian faith is not just about you being found in Christ. It is that and you need to be happy about that. In Christ we are righteous in God's sight.

Christianity is not just about you being in Christ. It's about Christ in you, the hope of glory transforming you so that you are a new creation. Christianity is not just that someday you will get to go into the Kingdom of God. It is that and you need to be happy about that. But Christianity is about the Kingdom of God coming into you and shining in and through you with new power to make things new. Isn't it? Christ in you, the hope of glory!

So, every single morning our prayers need to sound like: Lord, there is so much beauty in this world, but it is afflicted by sin and Satan, so, Lord, fill me with Your Spirit—the very Spirit of Jesus so that I may be renewed day by day in holiness; that I may walk in newness of life.

The bitterness will not conquer me. Bitterness is like drinking battery acid and thinking that the person that did you wrong will be affected by it. Pray for healing of that relational sickness that afflicts so many of us. Satan is at work in those things too.

Marriages that are held hostage by bitterness can be filled with the love and grace of God. Chronic envy can be healed and replaced by the desire for the advancement of your adversary. Life draining addictions can be defeated and replaced by healthy desires. Seething resentment can be cooled and replaced with kindness. Long term guilt can be dissolved by an understanding of God's grace. Paralyzing fear and anxiety can be broken and replaced by holy boldness and trust in God.

We can become new. Jesus desires us to become new. He wants us to walk in newness of life. This is not something that you can do on your own. This is something that comes relationally. The relational dynamic of Christian living and joy and peace and love and holiness needs to be greatly, greatly emphasized because we don't bear fruit unless we are abiding in King Jesus. It is then that we bear fruit. We need to be connected to the Christ day by day, day by day, day by day. We need to say: Lord, I want You to work in and through me and to make me holy and pure and to have conquest over the dark spiritual forces that fill this world.

I pray that Jesus will give us eyes to see that we are agents for the Kingdom of Light here and now. Let's close in a word of prayer.