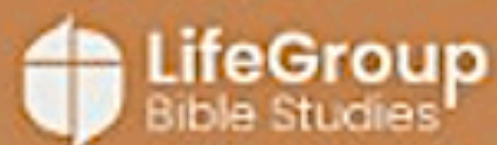




THE STORY
OF JESUS
IN THE
GOSPEL
OF MARK



FALL 2025
SPRING 2026

No Perfect Faith

- None of us has perfect faith
- Mark 9:14-29
- Scribes were experts in the Mosaic law.
- Scribes followed meticulous procedures for making copies of the Torah to be sure it was done perfectly.

No Perfect Faith

- The scribes doubted He was Messiah; the disciples were confused about what His being the Messiah meant; but the crowd was amazed at Him.
- When Jesus asked the disciples what they were arguing about, a man from the crowd answered – a father who had brought his demon-possessed son to the disciples, but they could not cast it out.

No Perfect Faith

- The father described the demon – it made his son mute and caused seizures. He fell to the ground, grinded his teeth and foamed at the mouth, then his body went rigid.
- The Bible does not say every time someone has a seizure it's a demon. In Scripture "epilepsy" is listed as a disease (Matthew 4:24). But in this case, it was a demon. The disciples were not able to cast it out, but Jesus did easily.

No Perfect Faith

- The man asked Jesus, “If you can do anything,” and Jesus responded, “If you can!” How could you use the word “if”?
- Jesus responded that all things are possible for those who believe.
- Jesus previously linked healing to faith (Mark 5:34, 36).

No Perfect Faith

- The disciples had shown a lack of faith so many times up to this point.
- A biblical definition of faith is not just about our intellectual belief; it's trust.
- This is what the disciples were missing – putting their trust in Jesus.

No Perfect Faith

- The man responded with a unique and beautifully human statement – “I believe; help my unbelief!”
- He was admitting his faith was far from perfect.
- He admitted he needed Jesus to help him with his unbelief.

No Perfect Faith

- It was a very raw, very humble statement, and Jesus immediately healed his son.
- Jesus said faith the size of a mustard seed can move mountains (Matthew 17:20).
- It's about the act of choosing to put your faith in Jesus, which this man did, and Jesus healed his son.

No Perfect Faith

- When the demon left his body, he was limp as if dead, but Jesus took him by the hand and “lifted him up,” and “he arose,” another instance of Mark using language that points to resurrection (Mark 2:12; 5:42).
- The disciples asked Jesus why they couldn’t cast it out; they had been able to do it before. Jesus had even given them authority over unclean spirits (Mark 6:7–13).

Opposite of the World

- Greatness in the kingdom is the opposite of the world
- Mark 9:30-37
- Along the way, Jesus taught them again about His death and Resurrection, but they still didn't understand.
- They only imagined the resurrection of all humankind at the last judgment (John 11:24)

Opposite of the World

- Jesus asked what they had been discussing among themselves along the way.
- They didn't answer because they had been arguing about who was the greatest.
- But He knew anyway – whether supernaturally or because He overheard them.

Opposite of the World

- Calling over the Twelve implies there were other disciples from His wider circle around, too, but He was specifically speaking to the Twelve (His chosen ones).
- They would have expected to become His leadership team in His kingdom, which they still imagined to be a political reality.

Opposite of the World

- This is why they were arguing about who was the greatest among them.
- They were imagining who would hold what rank in the kingdom – they were focused on their status.
- The disciples would have already had ideas about who was the greatest based on the world's standards.

Opposite of the World

- In response, Jesus told them that in His kingdom, the idea of “greatest” is different than the way the world thinks of it.
- In His kingdom, whoever wants to be the greatest must be the servant of all and the last of all.
- He set a child before them as an example of what it meant to be the least, because, in their culture children had no value.

Opposite of the World

- Children were considered the property of their fathers.
- But Jesus took this child into His arms as a shepherd cares for a lamb.
- He told them whoever received the child (meaning showing him hospitality, caring for him) received Him.

Opposite of the World

- “Greatness” in the kingdom of God is upside-down from the world. It’s about humility, not pride; serving, not being served.
- Success in the kingdom of God is not about how much money you make or your social status.
- It’s the way you love and care for the least of these.

Build Up One Another

- Disciples are supposed to build one another up
- Mark 9:38-50
- After the discussion of the true definition of greatness, John told Jesus that they saw someone casting out demons in His name and tried to stop him because he wasn't one of them, those following Jesus from place to place.

Build Up One Another

- Jesus told them not to stop others from doing mighty works in His name.
- Even if they weren't part of their group, "the one who is not against us is for us" (verse 40).
- We are on the same team.

Build Up One Another

- Jesus said whoever even gave the disciples a cup of water because of Him was part of their team and would receive their reward in heaven.
- But on the flip side, whoever caused lowly believers (including children) to stumble would be punished.
- A millstone is a massive stone used to crush grain.

Millstone



Build Up One Another

- The word Jesus used here actually refers to a larger stone that was so heavy, it would take a donkey to pull it.
- In Jewish culture, death without a burial (like this) was considered the worst kind of death.
- But even this kind of death would be better than what those who cause a believer to sin will endure.

Build Up One Another

- Jesus continued with His intense imagery – if your hand, foot, or eye causes you to sin, cut it off.
- In the ancient world, it was routine punishment to cut off a thief's hand, but Jesus was telling them to do this to themselves.
- Because it's better to go to heaven missing a hand than to burn in hell.

Build Up One Another

- But Scripture tells us that when we are resurrected, we will rise with perfected bodies, and we will be changed in an instant (1 Corinthians 15).
- Jesus wasn't disputing that fact about resurrection.
- He was making an intentionally hyperbolic statement not meant to be taken literally.

Build Up One Another

- He had just finished teaching them that it's the inside that matters when it comes to righteousness (Mark 7:20–23).
- Jesus was saying to cut anything out of your life that causes you to sin.
- That might mean cutting out of your life certain friends who are bad influences, cutting out going to certain places, or cutting out certain old habits.

Build Up One Another

- In the next section Jesus talks about salt and fire while connected it to the idea of keeping ourselves from sin.
- The line about being “salted” with fire makes a transition from talking about the fires of hell to this new section about “saltiness.”
- Suffering in this life, which can refine us and make us more like Him, like salt does.

Build Up One Another


- Salt not only adds flavor, but it also preserves food. It protects food from rotting.
- This is one of our roles in the world – to protect people from rotting from sin.
- As ambassadors of His kingdom who share the Gospel with the world, we can be like the salt of the earth and keep people from rotting in their sin.

Build Up One Another

- All of this is connected to Jesus' teaching on faith and greatness in the kingdom.
- Jesus was telling them to quit arguing about who was the greatest and be at peace with one another.
- Instead of competing, they were to build one another up and keep one another from sinning.

Build Up One Another

- They were the body of Christ; they were the kingdom of God; they were the salt of the earth.
- As the Church, they were called to keep one another in the faith, to spur one another to love and good deeds, to hold one another accountable, to humbly serve one another, and to keep each other salty.
- We are to do the same.

The background of the image is a composite of two sky scenes. The top half shows a clear blue sky with scattered white clouds and bright sunbeams (crepuscular rays) shining down from the top center. The bottom half shows a sunset or sunrise with a bright sun low on the horizon, casting a golden glow across the sky and illuminating the clouds with warm, orange and yellow light. A semi-transparent white horizontal band runs across the middle of the image, serving as a background for the text.

IF YOU CAN BELIEVE,
ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE
TO HIM WHO BELIEVES.

~ MARK 9:23 ~