

Luke 9:37 And it came about on the next day, that when they had come down from the mountain, a great multitude met Him. 38 And behold, a man from the multitude shouted out, saying, "Teacher, I beg You to look at my son, for he is my only boy, 39 and behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly screams, and it throws him into a convulsion with foaming at the mouth, and as it mauls him, it scarcely leaves him. 40 "And I begged Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not." 41 And Jesus answered and said, "O unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you, and put up with you? Bring your son here." 42 And while he was still approaching, the demon dashed him to the ground, and threw him into a convulsion. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. 43 And they were all amazed at the greatness of God. But while everyone was marveling at all that He was doing, He said to His disciples, 44 "Let these words sink into your ears; for the Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men." 45 But they did not understand this statement, and it was concealed from them so that they might not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this statement.

This morning's passage of scripture is fascinating on so many levels. There are so many parallels for us with what has occurred before and what the future holds. It is fully relevant to us today. This day. And by us I mean 20 or less struggling saints in Tonopah Nevada struggling to hold together some form of presence of God in this world that surrounds us.

I'm always listening to news events that continue to unfold to us where the world is at in relation to what this book portrays as a normative goal for earth dwellers.

We live in a fallen world with evil exploding all around us. We can't turn on the news for even a moment without a sad reminder that this world is in turmoil. It is ruled by Satan and sin increasingly enslaves the pitiful dwellers of this world.

Two stories this week stood out to me. Different stories may have stood out to you, but I am me and these stuck in my brain as telling of our current illness.

It's as if we are looking at a thermometer taken from a sick person's mouth and trying to understand the condition of the condition by the number on the thermometer.

There is a red line that indicates normal and the silver mercurial fluid that tells us where we're at. For me this week, it was two stories that stood out as opposed to hundreds that could be mentioned instead.

The school shooting in Saugus California just a few miles from where I graduated high school and lived as a teenager 50 years ago. Senseless murders including an attempt at self murder. And similarly, a story that talks about the sad degeneration and degradation of the city of San Francisco where you can hardly drive anywhere without seeing feces on the sidewalks.

Both of those stories are telling of a greater degeneration that is sweeping our country. Would anyone argue that we are ascending. Am I a pessimist if I say that our nation is spiraling downward, not upward?

As I approached this passage I was thinking of the limits of my faith. I battle with doubts that our post modern society that has dismissed God and His book and put them and us in a category of lunatics and dangerous, is even reachable.

The situation here, although not as dangerous, seems equally as impossible as the situation in a moslem country. The deck is stacked hopelessly against God and His people and our orders to reach them.

Even in Tonopah. I'm discouraged that there isn't one single young family that is hungry to know God and His book, even if it means listening to some old guy with white hair. When I was a new believer, I sought out the guys who could teach this book. I didn't care what color their hair was. Where are those folks?

I'm not trying to depress you, I'm only setting the stage for a similar scene when Jesus and Peter and John and James came down from the mount of

transfiguration to find the scene we will see this morning.

The mountaintop and the valley picture two opposing worlds so close together, and so far apart.

37 And it came about on the next day, that when they had come down from the mountain,

That's our setting. We walk by faith, and not by sight, but the disciples had gotten a glimpse of the future. We can only read about it and try to picture what it might have been like. They saw Jesus in shining glory having a conversation with Moses and Elijah who were also shining in glory.

They got a glimpse of what the Authority to Reign of God, the Kingdom of God will look like. Just a glimpse. Seconds? Minutes? We don't know. But soon it was over. Moses and Elijah and the glory departed. The cloud descended, the voice spoke, God spoke in the cloud, and then it was over.

And the next day, it's time to come down from the mountain top. Don't you hate that. Any of you that have had a mountaintop experience, your heart just wants it to not end. We can sympathize with Peter. Lord, we don't want to go back down. Let's build a cabin right here. 3 cabins. We want to stay up here on the mountain.

But down to the valley they must go. Neither Matthew or Luke give us any information about the trip back down, but Mark does. Mark was amanuensis to Peter and perhaps had questioned Peter, or simply listened to Peter, one of the 3 on the journey tell of that trip.

Mark 9:9 And as they were coming down from the mountain, He gave them orders not to relate to anyone what they had seen, until the Son of Man should rise from the dead. 10 And they seized upon that statement, discussing with one another what rising from the dead might mean. 11 And they asked Him, saying, "Why is it that the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" 12 And He said to them, "Elijah does first come and restore all things. And yet how is

it written of the Son of Man that He should suffer many things and be treated with contempt? 13 “But I say to you, that Elijah has indeed come, and they did to him whatever they wished, just as it is written of him.”

Don't tell anyone what you saw until I come back from the dead. Rather matter of fact. And of course the disciples are trying to get their heads around what coming back from the dead might mean. Which leads to a question about Elijah.

Squirrel! Don't ask me how I know this. I'm an expert at the squirrel thing. The Elijah discussion is a squirrel chase. It misses the point. Jesus is coming back from the dead. That means He must die. They dismiss that idea and go on an Elijah chase. *“Elijah does first come and restore all things. And yet how is it written of the Son of Man that He should suffer many things and be treated with contempt?”*

Forget about Elijah and get your heads engaged with what I keep telling you. The Son of Man must suffer many things and be treated with contempt. They, like me, were putting off the depressing truths until they must face them face to face. That's their mind set.

We don't want to think about suffering, we want to talk about future glories. Elijah and Messiah and Glory. We can't fit a suffering Messiah into our systematic theology. We want to talk about glory. And down, down, down the mountain they go, into the valley of suffering.

Vs. 37: And it came about on the next day, that when they had come down from the mountain, a great multitude met Him.

Matthew calls it "the" multitude. Same multitude. They can't get enough of the Jesus show. Miracles, food, hope for national glory, Messianic world dominance. Hope for a better now and now. No thought of spiritual truths.

Mark gives us perhaps a deeper insight; 14 *And when they came back to the disciples, they saw a large crowd around them, and some scribes arguing with*

them. 15 And immediately, when the entire crowd saw Him, they were amazed, and began running up to greet Him.

Disciples. Scribes. Crowd. The scribes are arguing with the 9 disciples that were left in the valley without Jesus. That's part of the picture.

And it says that when the crowd saw Jesus, they were amazed. That word that is translated **amazed** is only used 4 times, and always in a sense of seeing something other worldly. It's not the common word for amazed.

It is used again, in the garden, when Jesus is praying and great drops of blood were falling from Him. It's used a third time when the disciples get to the empty tomb and see the angel dressed in white. And then it's used when the disciples are gazing into the clouds that have just received the Lord up into glory.

Why does Mark use **that** word here? We can't be dogmatic, but some theologians believe that Jesus, when He returned from the mountain top, had perhaps some afterglow, something similar to Moses when He came back down the mountain and his face shown.

Something about Jesus and the 3 disciples appearing when they did caused the multitude to be frighteningly amazed. The word has the component of shock and awe and fear about it. What was it? We can only speculate, but it opens up possibilities for someone painting this scene.

The story has a quality about it that we've heard our parents and co-workers say before. I can't leave you for 5 minutes! It's like, you guys wait here quietly while I go up the mountain to pray, and I'll come back soon. Just hang out for a couple of days, I'll be right back.

And when Jesus shows up, there's this scene of pandemonium. The disciples are quarreling with scribes. The multitude is out of control. A demon is beating some poor kid to death. And the kid's dad is desperate.

Really! God's glory at the mountain top revealed. In the valley, Satan is causing pandemonium. The disciples have failed. Satan's having a grand old time.

The disciples at both ends failed. The ones up the mountain mess up and God tells them to shut up. And the ones down in the valley can't handle a demon and are having a fight with the religious experts. What can possibly go wrong? Everything, apparently.

The bigger issue is this. These guys have only got about 6 months left and Jesus is going to be gone. Not up the mountain and back in a day or two. Gone to heaven. This is looking bleak. If everything collapses in on itself over a couple day period, what happens when Jesus goes back home? To His Father in heaven.

Vss. 38 And behold, a man from the multitude shouted out, saying, "Teacher, I beg You to look at my son, for he is my only boy, 39 and behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly screams, and it throws him into a convulsion with foaming at the mouth, and as it mauls him, it scarcely leaves him. 40 "And I begged Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not."

Again, Mark gives us information in greater detail that adds even more color, as if Luke's account weren't colorful enough. Mark says;

15 And immediately, when the entire crowd saw Him, they were amazed, and began running up to greet Him. 16 And He asked them, "What are you discussing with them?"

He asked them, What are you . . . Who is the them and the you? In verse 14, the antecedent is 14 *And when they came back to the **disciples*** Jesus addresses the disciples.

I left you guys in charge. What's going on? What are you arguing about with the religious traitors. Remember, the religion in Jerusalem was degraded. It was completely ruined. Worthless. The religious scribes are in the employ of

the enemy. In John 8, Jesus tells them they are murderers like their father, the devil. That's who the disciples are arguing with.

And these disciples are not ready to take on Satan. Which is why Jesus gets back to chaos. Anarchy. You guys hang out for a couple of days and stay out of trouble. I'll be right back. Sure. And Jesus comes back to chaos that they are not yet equipped to handle.

And the scene unfolds before Jesus; again, from Mark's gospel...

*17 And one of the crowd answered Him, "Teacher, I brought **You** my son, possessed with a spirit which makes him mute; 18 and whenever it seizes him, it dashes him to the ground and he foams at the mouth, and grinds his teeth, and stiffens out. And I told Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not do it."*

We need to combine all 3 accounts of the father's interaction with Jesus to get the full scene for our renaissance painting. What a masterpiece this scene would be. Mount Hermon in the background. The glory on top, the chaos in the valley. It would be a masterpiece painting.

Matthew 17:14 *And when they came to the multitude, a man came up to Him, falling on his knees before Him, and saying, 15 "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is a lunatic, and is very ill; for he often falls into the fire, and often into the water. 16 "And I brought him to Your disciples, and they could not cure him."*

I believe, and again, we can't be dogmatic, but we'll see as we go through the accounts what I believe is a dual diagnosis. We can make a case that the boy is an epileptic from birth, and that the demon compounds the other problems.

Did the scribes bring this case to Jesus in order to confound Him with someone who they believe is beyond help? We can't help but wonder. Why are they there, and why are they arguing with the 9 disciples. We can only wonder.

This is a dire case, and one where as far as we know, a single demon is causing heart breaking chaos for the boy and his father and his family. Difficult enough to try to meet the needs of an epileptic kid. But this demon is intent on destroying the poor kid.

Folks, that's a picture of our world. Satan rules the place, and the sadness is sickening. Pandemonium. Violence. Sadness. Sorrow. Anger and disputing between religious folk.

Yesterday, glory and peace. On the mountain top, unspeakable peace and joy and glory. God's world. In the valley, chaos. Sin. Sorrow. Violence. Confusion. Hopelessness. Degradation. Satan's world.

And Jesus response to Satan's world of chaos a day after the glory is perfect.

41 And Jesus answered and said, "O unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you, and put up with you?"

It's the perfect answer to Satanic religionists, shallow multitudes, and slow disciples. It's the cry of God in the midst of Satan's ruins. The helpless disciples are ineffective because they are unbelieving. And the scribes are not only unbelieving, they have perverted and distorted God in their man-made religion.

perverted diastrephó (dee-as-tref'-o) Definition: to distort, misinterpret, corrupt Usage: to pervert, corrupt, oppose, distort.

The outcry seems to be aimed at the religious scribes. They are the distorters, the turners of black into white, of wrong into right and right into wrong. Their religion is a worthless distortion of God's intent. It keeps people out of heaven.

Mt. 23:15 *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel about on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you*

make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.

They were there to destroy the causes of Christ, to damage His disciples, and to re-gain the multitude for themselves. It was an ugly scene, this situation in the valley. It still is an ugly scene. Nothing has changed. Satan is still about the same hellish business in our world today.

The situation in the valley is orchestrated by God to forever give us two opposing scenes. God's glory and perfection on the mountaintop, and Satan's degenerative chaos and sin, sickness and harm, hopelessness and degrading damage, violence and death, all the debilitating tragedy of a fallen world, in the valley below.

And Jesus throws up His hands and says; How long? *“O unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you, and put up with you?*

Bring your son here.” 42 And while he was still approaching, the demon dashed him to the ground, and threw him into a convulsion.

Mark says; *Bring him to Me!” 20 And they brought the boy to Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit threw him into a convulsion, and falling to the ground, he began rolling about and foaming at the mouth. 21 And He asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?” And he said, “From childhood. 22 “And it has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him.*

This attack is a direct result of the evil spirit seeing Jesus. The demons freak out when they recognize Jesus. This demon tries to destroy the boy. Slams him to the ground. Rolling around, foaming at the mouth.

And the Doctor, the Great Physician asks for his medical history. How long has this been happening? From childhood. Literally, all his life.

We don't get to understand why. Like the man born blind. When the disciples asked for a reason, the only reason is that God will glorify himself in that

person. Then the father says;

But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!” 23 And Jesus said to him, “‘If You can!’ All things are possible to him who believes.” 24 Immediately the boy’s father cried out and began saying, “I do believe; help my unbelief.”

This is the part we understand. I believe Jesus can do everything. He spoke and the worlds existed. Ex nihilo. Out of nothing. Believing Jesus can do something is never the problem. Believing He will do something is a bit more of a challenge.

I came across a good definition of faith as I studied. Our world throws that word around without really understanding what it means. It isn't some magic quantity that causes the gods to give you stuff. Which is how our world sort of talks about it.

Faith is trust *in* something. In the real believers view, faith boils down to believing God means what He says in this book. And when it comes to faith, talk is cheap. Here's the definition I liked.

“A conviction practically operative on the character and will.” “It is opposed to mere intellectual assent.” It is not just believing something and stopping there, it is acting on that belief. In other words, real faith is only valid when it causes you to act.

We must take a certain recognizable course of action on a particular question because we believe God wrote everything in this book, every word is true, and we are to live under it's authority.

Faith is small if what you know about the book is small. The more we read and study, the more faith we grow. Faith causes action when we believe God said it. Paul says; Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

Faith is a direct result of knowing the information, the facts about God that He

has revealed in His book. No facts, no faith. Truths learned, truths ingested equals faith in practice. Baby christians that don't know anything but goo goo and ga ga have baby faith. Mature christians that have read and studied and contemplated God's revealed truths, the words of this book, have a basis for faith that can move mountains.

Matthew tells us in his version of this story that the disciples later questioned Jesus about what had happened. In Mt. 17:19 *Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?"* 20 *And He said to them, "Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it shall move; and nothing shall be impossible to you.*

Remember that the disciples had been on journeys, 2X2, and Jesus had given them the authority to heal diseases and cast out demons. And they had been successful. They are curious about this time. Why were they ineffective. And Jesus says it was littleness of faith.

Their faith was small. Jesus was absent. The scribes were present. Their faith was insufficient. In Mark's gospel we learn more perhaps; Mk. 9:28 *And when He had come into the house, His disciples began questioning Him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?"* 29 *And He said to them, "This kind cannot come out by anything but prayer."*

Remember when Daniel had to pray for three weeks in Daniel chapter 10 while an angel who had been sent to give him the help he asked for was held up by a bigger angel who was a demon, and Michael the arch-angel had to be dispatched to overcome the demon in the way.

These disciples are no Daniels. We are removed still further than even these men. In the post apostolic age where the sign gifts have ceased after the church has been established, we don't go around ordering demons. We see insanity and we can only wonder at the demonic influence around us. We can pray, like Daniel did.

Vs. 42a But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father.

Notice three things in the order of events given by Luke the physician. Sometimes Luke breaks things down like a physicians mind does that the others don't notice.

1.) Jesus rebukes the unclean spirit. 2.) Jesus heals the boy, indicating to my overactive imagination that the demon was only a portion of the problem. And 3.) He gives him back to his father.

Sons were such an important component of those families in judaism at that time. Sons were imperative to keep the family name and property going. They would grow up quick and be a real help in whatever work the father was doing to sustain life. Sons were a blessing from God. Not that daughters aren't. Daughters grew up and gave someone else sons. It wasn't quite the same.

Luke is the only one that tells us this was this man's only son. It means so much more than we see at a quick glance when it says Jesus gave him back to his father. Jesus gave that father a full healthy blessing son where he had only known heartbreak and concern.

I love how Mark tells the story at this part with much more detail. Mk. 9:25 *And when Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering,*

Why is this important to the story. For all the same reasons that Jesus keeps telling the disciples and others not to tell the story until after the resurrection. Jesus didn't come to do tricks for shallow crowds.

Miracles don't make shallow crowds believe. Death and resurrection will make some in that crowd believe. The gathering crowd is the same crowd that will shout for His death when He refuses to be their political messiah. It's almost like Jesus is in a hurry to get this accomplished before the whole crowd gets there.

He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and do not enter him again." 26 And after crying out and throwing him into terrible convulsions, it came out;

The demons must obey the voice that created the worlds. That voice created them too. As holy angels who later followed Satan and become demons. He has ultimate power over them. They must do exactly what He commands.

Come out and do not enter him again. The demon does his last terrible convulsions and then comes out, never to return. But Jesus isn't done yet. The demon is removed, but I choose to believe the debilitating illness is still present. After the demon departed, the poor boy lays like he's dead. The people thought he was dead.

and the boy became so much like a corpse that most of them said, "He is dead!" 27 But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him; and he got up.

Jesus tenderly takes his hand and healing and strength enter into him and he rises up not only devoid of the demon, but he is healed. He is a whole son, something this father had never had before. What a glorious thing.

43 And they were all amazed at the greatness of God.

Jesus comes down the mountain to a scene of chaos. We recall another mountaintop experience that was similar. Moses, up on the mountain with God, receiving the words of God, in Exodus 32; Fascinating parallel,

7 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, "Go down at once, for your people, whom you brought up from the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. 8 "They have quickly turned aside from the way which I commanded them. They have made for themselves a molten calf, and have worshiped it, and have sacrificed to it, and said, 'This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt!'"

Jesus goes up on the mount and is glorified, transfigured. While meanwhile, down in the valley below, Satan is cooking up all sorts of chaos with demons and false religionists, and weak faithed disciples. The scene is chaotic when Jesus gets there. Disciples arguing, demons thumping, crowds gathering to see the show. Satan is having a hayday without Jesus around.

Jesus shows up and puts everything right immediately. But the story doesn't end there. All three synoptic gospel writers have this story at exactly this time and also have the same conclusion at the end. This is a turning point. When we get to vs. 51 in this chapter, next week? Or the week after, Jesus resolutely turns His face towards Jerusalem. The time of His departure is near.

But the purpose of the gospel writers is this. He can't leave them for 2 days without Satanic pandemonium ensuing. How will He be able to leave them and go back to His Father? That's the point of the story of the mountaintop and the valley.

*And they were all amazed at the greatness of God. But while everyone was marveling at all that He was doing, He said to His disciples, 44 "Let these words sink into your ears; **for the Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men.**" 45 But they did not understand this statement, and it was concealed from them so that they might not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this statement.*

It's like He is saying; Listen to me. Ignore the multitudes, the crowds, the demons and the scribes and listen for one minute to these words. Let this sink in. ***for the Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men.***"

I was away for 2 days and everything went to pieces. Soon, I'm going to be gone, not for two days, but for a long journey away, in heaven with my Father.

I mentioned my previous colleague's cryptic saying he wrote on a chalk board before he left for Abq. He had a dark sense of humor that i love. He wrote, "No one is coming, it's up to us." And we laugh at that. We're in this ridiculous situation and we're all sitting around laughing, who's going to help

us get out of this mess. No one is coming, it's up to us.

That has a partial ring of truth for these disciples. But only partial, because in fact they will learn and understand later, after Jesus is gone, that someone is in fact coming. The Holy Spirit will come, and these 11 blockheads, minus Judas, will, with the Spirits help, turn the world upside down.

But at the moment, Jesus is trying to get them prepared for Him not being there to show up and turn chaos into order. The day rapidly approaches; ***for the Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men.***

Verse 45 tells us, at this point, they still cannot comprehend what He has just told them. Jesus not being there in the flesh does not compute.

45 But they did not understand this statement, and it was concealed from them so that they might not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this statement.

Mark adds to the statement. *9:30 And from there they went out and began to go through Galilee, and He was unwilling for anyone to know about it. 31 For He was teaching His disciples and telling them, "The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and when He has been killed, He will rise three days later." 32 But they did not understand this statement, and they were afraid to ask Him.*

God, in His wisdom, concealed this truth for later. He tells them plainly. Capture, death, resurrection 3 days later. None of it makes any sense to them, but it will. Very soon these men will be able to do battle with Him at His Father's right hand, and the Spirit indwelling and helping them. We have that same Holy Spirit helping us today.

Satan is still causing pandemonium in our world. Satan is still at war with the saints that truly belong to the Lord Jesus. Jesus is at the right hand of His Father in heaven. He sent the Holy Spirit to help the saints do battle, and we are in a long line of succession.

As the hour approaches for the Lord to return, demonic oppression and chaos will increase in this world. Scenes like the one the Lord came down from the mount of glory to will increase. We're already seeing the first little tremors.

In just a few more chapters away in Luke, Jesus asks a thought provoking question; "*when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?*" The kind of faith that is engaging Satan in the conflict?

After the Holy Spirit came at pentecost, these same blockhead disciples engaged Satan's world with Holy boldness. I said we are in a long line of succession to these men. If that's true, and we have the same book and the same Holy Spirit, what is our battle plan?