

more than SUNDAY

Part 3: Fragile Faith
Scripture: Mark 9:14-29
March 15, 2026

Group Discussion Questions

1. Think about a recent situation where your faith felt tested (stress, conflict, fear, uncertainty, etc.). How did you respond in that moment, and how might you respond differently after reflecting on this passage?
2. The father honestly prayed, “I believe; help my unbelief.” What does it look like for you to bring your doubts or struggles honestly to Jesus instead of hiding them?
3. The message emphasized that faith grows through struggle. What current challenge in your life might God be using to deepen your dependence on Him?
4. The disciples failed because they relied on themselves instead of depending on Jesus. Where in your life do you tend to rely on your own strength rather than seeking God’s help first?
5. Prayer was described as a posture of dependence on God. What is one practical step you could take this week to become more intentional about prayer?
6. The sermon highlighted the importance of going to Jesus through community as well. Who in your life can you talk to honestly when your faith feels fragile?
7. When your faith feels weak, how can reminding yourself about who Jesus is (the object of your faith) help shift your perspective?
8. The father acted even with imperfect faith—he still came to Jesus. What is one step of faith you may be hesitant to take right now that requires trusting Jesus despite uncertainty?

More than Sunday: Part 3

Fragile Faith

Mark 9:14–29

Faith That Goes Beyond Sunday

Many churches use the phrase “more than Sunday.” The idea behind that phrase is simple but important: following Jesus is not limited to an hour-long gathering each week. Instead, it is a daily walk of trust and dependence on Christ.

Moments of powerful spiritual impact can happen during retreats, conferences, or special church events. For example, student gatherings or retreats often create powerful moments where young people sense God working in their lives. Leaders invest tremendous effort into these weekends, and it is encouraging to see the fruit that comes from them.

One particularly encouraging outcome of such events is when students respond by taking steps of faith—such as requesting baptism. Seeing many people step forward with that desire is a wonderful reminder that God is at work.

But after those moments, an important question always remains: *what happens next?*

When the Spiritual High Fades

Experiences like retreats or special church events can create a spiritual “high.” Faith feels vibrant and alive. Yet eventually Monday arrives, and daily routines return.

For students, that means school schedules, social pressures, distractions, and temptations. The excitement of the weekend fades, and real life presses in again.

In many ways, this experience is familiar to all believers. Most Christians can remember a moment in their faith journey when they felt deeply encouraged or renewed—perhaps during a retreat, a camp, or a meaningful church service. But afterward, everyday life returned with its usual pressures.

Consider some common scenarios.

You may leave church on Sunday feeling encouraged and determined to trust God more. But by Tuesday you find yourself anxious about finances or decisions you must make.

Maybe a powerful worship moment reminded you that God is in control. Yet later in the week, a conflict at work or a tense conversation at home shakes that confidence.

You might hear God's promises and feel secure in them, only to face a difficult medical appointment or receive troubling news that stirs fear about the future.

Sometimes the struggle is not dramatic at all. Instead, it is the gradual weight of everyday responsibilities and challenges that makes faith feel fragile.

In those moments, belief and doubt can exist side by side. Confidence mixes with uncertainty, and faith may feel weak.

This is precisely why believers need a more-than-Sunday faith—a faith anchored deeply in Jesus Christ.

From the Mountaintop to the Valley

The story in Mark 9:14–29 illustrates this tension beautifully.

Just before this event, Jesus took three of His disciples—Peter, James, and John—up a mountain where they witnessed the ****Transfiguration****. In that moment, Jesus revealed His divine glory. His appearance became radiant, shining with brilliance.

Moses and Elijah appeared with Him, speaking and encouraging Him as He prepared for His mission that would ultimately lead to the cross.

It was a remarkable mountaintop experience. Yet it did not last.

After revealing His glory, Jesus descended the mountain and returned to the ordinary struggles of life.

When He and the three disciples arrived, they encountered a chaotic scene. A crowd had gathered, and the remaining disciples were arguing with the teachers of the law.

Jesus asked what was happening.

A desperate father stepped forward and explained the situation. His son was suffering from a spirit that caused severe convulsions, robbed him of speech, and repeatedly threw him to the ground. In dangerous moments, the spirit even attempted to throw the boy into fire or water.

The father had brought his son to the disciples hoping they could help.

But they had failed.

A Father's Honest Struggle

After describing the situation, the father makes a desperate appeal to Jesus:

"If you can do anything, take pity on us and help us."

Jesus responds with a striking reply:

"If you can? Everything is possible for the one who believes."

The father's statement reveals uncertainty. He hopes Jesus can help but is unsure whether it is truly possible.

Earlier in Mark's Gospel, another man approached Jesus with a different question. A man with leprosy said, *"If you are willing, you can make me clean."** That man believed Jesus had the power but wondered if Jesus would choose to act.

In contrast, this father seems to believe Jesus might be willing but questions whether He is able.

Yet Jesus makes it clear that **He is both willing and able**.

Faith does not require perfect confidence. Even weak or hesitant faith, when placed in Christ, is enough.

The father then responds with one of the most honest statements in Scripture:

"I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief."

These words capture the experience of many believers. Faith and doubt often exist together. Instead of pretending his faith is perfect, the father openly admits his struggle and asks Jesus for help.

Jesus Restores the Boy

Seeing the crowd gathering, Jesus commands the impure spirit to leave the boy and never return. The spirit reacts violently, throwing the boy into severe convulsions before finally departing. The child collapses to the ground motionless, and many in the crowd assume he has died.

But the story does not end there.

Mark records that Jesus took the boy by the hand and lifted him to his feet. The child stood up—healed and restored.

After years of suffering, the father suddenly sees his son free from the oppression that had controlled his life. What had been years of fear and exhaustion turns into overwhelming joy.

Why the Disciples Failed

Later, when the crowd had dispersed, the disciples approached Jesus privately with an important question:

“Why couldn’t we drive it out?”

Their confusion makes sense. Earlier in Mark chapter 6, Jesus had sent them out in ministry, and they had experienced great success. They had healed people and cast out demons through the authority Jesus gave them.

But this time things were different.

The key difference was dependence.

Previously, the disciples relied on Jesus and His power. In this moment, however, they relied on themselves. Their self-reliance revealed itself in a simple but significant way: they had not prayed.

Jesus explained that this kind of spiritual battle could only be overcome through prayer.

Prayer is not merely a religious activity or routine conversation with God. It is an expression of dependence. When believers pray, they acknowledge that they cannot accomplish spiritual work on their own.

Prayer says, *“I cannot do this without you.”*

When prayer is absent, it often reveals something deeper—an attempt to rely on personal strength instead of God’s power.

Four Lessons for a “More Than Sunday” Faith

From this story in Mark 9, several important lessons emerge for anyone seeking to live a faith that extends beyond Sunday.

1. Faith Grows Through Struggle

Faith does not develop in a life free from difficulty. Instead, it grows through struggle.

The disciples struggled because they relied on their own strength. The father struggled with doubt and uncertainty. Yet both situations became opportunities for deeper faith.

Throughout Scripture, many faithful people experienced similar tension.

Abraham believed God's promises but wrestled with waiting for them to be fulfilled. Jacob spent years running from God before eventually wrestling with Him in surrender. Naomi questioned God's care after losing her family. David cried out in the Psalms wondering if God had forgotten him.

Even the apostle Paul experienced moments when God had to reassure him with the words, "Do not be afraid. I am with you."

These struggles did not disqualify them. Instead, they became moments where faith could grow.

The Christian life is not about achieving perfection. It is about **progress**—continuing to move forward in trust.

Just as a child learning to ride a bike must struggle before gaining balance, believers often grow through challenges that stretch their dependence on God.

2. In Doubt and Struggle, Go to Jesus

The father in this story offers a powerful example: when he struggled, he went to Jesus.

Many people do the opposite. When questions arise, they rely solely on their own reasoning or drift away from faith communities.

But the father brought his doubts directly to Christ.

Believers can do the same. Going to Jesus means turning to Him in prayer, even when He feels distant. It means turning to Scripture for guidance and encouragement.

It also means seeking support from other believers. The New Testament frequently describes the church as a family—a community meant to encourage and strengthen one another.

Faith was never intended to be lived in isolation.

3. The Power of Faith Is Found in Its Object

Another key lesson from this passage is that **the power of faith lies in its object, not its size.**

The father admitted his faith was weak, yet Jesus still healed his son.

This illustrates a crucial truth: the strength of faith is not determined by how confident we feel but by the one we trust.

An illustration helps make this clear. Imagine two passengers boarding an airplane. One boards with complete confidence, while the other boards with fear and anxiety.

Both passengers still reach their destination because the outcome depends on the airplane—not their feelings.

In the same way, believers may sometimes feel strong in faith and at other times feel uncertain or weak. But the power lies not in personal confidence but in ****Jesus Christ****, the object of that faith.

4. Self-Reliant Faith Is Powerless

The disciples' failure reveals the final lesson: **self-reliant faith is powerless.**

When the disciples depended on themselves rather than on God, they lost the power that comes from reliance on Him.

Prayer represents the opposite posture. It acknowledges that believers need God's strength for every challenge.

An illustration helps clarify this truth. Imagine having a powerful tool—perhaps a drill or another piece of equipment—but no power source. Without electricity or a battery, even the best tool becomes useless.

In the same way, believers are not meant to operate independently of God. Their true source of strength comes from Him.

Prayer connects believers to that power.

Moving Forward in Faith

Following Jesus is not about achieving flawless faith or living a life without struggle. Instead, it is about continuing to move forward in trust—even when faith feels fragile.

Jesus welcomes honest questions. He does not reject those who wrestle with doubt. Instead, He invites them to come to Him and find strength in His grace.

When faith feels weak, believers can respond just like the father in this story:

“I believe; help my unbelief.”

Bringing doubts and struggles to Christ allows Him to meet believers where they are, strengthen their faith, and guide them forward.

In moments of uncertainty, the invitation remains simple: bring those struggles to Jesus and rest in His grace.

