April 21, 2024

Sermon 31

Mark 9:14-29

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Last week, Joseph walked us through the text on the Transfiguration of Jesus, and the Transfiguration of Jesus is such an amazing passage of Scripture, such an amazing text. In it, there’s this moment where the Father speaks from Heaven, and He says,

*“This is my Son, listen to Him.”*

It’s this moment where the real person and identity of who Jesus is, is reaffirmed from Heaven, by the voice of the Father. Then, you have this incredible interaction between Jesus with Moses and Elijah. What’s crazy is I had this thought; this is the first time Moses has physically stepped foot in the Promised Land. Think about that? He was kept from entering in, and God took him. So, he’s there with Jesus, up on this mountain, having this conversation, and these three disciples have an experience like nobody else has ever had, really, at that point. Moses had had a similar experience, but the experience that these disciples have is just amazing. And they come down off the mountain, and we’re going to pick up tonight in the next section, when they come down off of the mountain.

I shared something with our interns and our staff at Snowbird this week, as I was preparing this sermon. Week before last, Cherokee County schools were on spring break, so we went and rented a house at a lake in Florida. It’s a great spot. It’s not a tourist town. It’s a town that’s probably about the size of Andrews, with one small grocery store. Everybody on that lake is retired. They thought we were crazy because we were playing in the water. The kids were out there playing in the water and the people were like, “It’s too cold.” I thought, “It’s really warm here. Have you ever got in the Nantahala River?” We were having a big time and it was wonderful. We played in the water all day, ate ice cream, and cookies, and doughnuts. We just vacationed. We unplugged the phone and just enjoyed being there. It was so good and so needed.

We came back and had an awesome service Sunday night. Then, Monday was the worst day of my life, it felt like. It wasn’t the worst day of my life. I walk that back, but it felt like it that day. It was just one of those days. Do you have those days? The reality of living in a broken world. It wasn’t that I had a flat tire, and I found out the transmission had to be… I’m talking about Satan was attacking, people were falling from the faith, we were getting testimonies and reports of infidelity and adultery in marriages of people that we care about. It was one of those days where the weight of ministry is overwhelming, just overwhelming. There was a point in the day where I couldn’t help but think of the contrast from the week before to where I was that day.

We’ve all had these experiences to where we have a mountaintop experience. Where does that come from? It comes from the Transfiguration passage, what we saw last week. A mountaintop experience to where you then come from a really high point in life to a really difficult season or time. And I know some of us, in this church, are probably right now in a difficult season, a difficult time in life, and there’s hope for us in Scripture, but the text, the passage we’re going to read tonight, has specific and practical hope for us living in a fallen world, living in a broken world, where Jesus is the One we need to continually turn our eyes towards, turn our hearts towards, turn our minds towards, and be confident in His provision for us.

So, Mark 9, and we’re going to begin in verse 14, and we’re just going to walk through this passage down to verse 29. Mark 9:14 – The setting, the context, is that they’ve come down off of this mountain, Jesus with the three disciples that He took up there.

*When they came to the disciples…*

So that would be the other 9 disciples. So, Jesus and His three disciples have had this incredible mountaintop experience. They’ve been up there for quite a while, a few days or whatever, and they’ve come down the next day, and…

*…they saw a great crowd around them, and scribes arguing with them.*

So, they’ve come down off the mountain and the setting is that Jesus and His three disciples are walking up, and there’s a big crowd, and the 9 disciples that He left are there, and there’s a big crowd around them, and there’s an argument. There’s chaos. There is a lot of noise, and chaos, and it’s loud, and it’s confusing. People are yelling, there are accusations flying around, and it’s a very intense scene.

*15 And immediately all the crowd, when they saw him, were greatly amazed and ran up to him and greeted him.*

So, when the crowd sees Jesus, they are greatly amazed, and they ran up to Him, and greeted Him. One writer said that the crowd is making accusations against the disciples, and they are making accusations against Jesus in His absence. So, they all come running over to Jesus, and He says,

*“What are you arguing about with them?”*

So, there’s this mob, and there’s this accusatory tone to what they’re doing. The disciples are sort of being ganged up on, the nine of them. In just a bit, we’re going to see what was causing this, but this mob is around them, and they’re screaming, and they’re yelling, and it’s pure chaos. They are screaming at Jesus’ disciples, and they are basically accusing them of being impotent in their power to do anything about sin and evil. Because the scene that Jesus is walking into is a very intense scene in terms of spiritual warfare. So, what they’re doing is they’re saying what maybe you have felt at times in your life, “Your God is not really real. He doesn’t have the power to do anything. Who do you think – do you really believe this? You say you’re a Christian, but there’s no power that’s evident of God in your life.” That kind of thing. So, what’s happened is that the disciples have kind of been ganged up on, and they see Jesus coming, and they just go running over there to Him. Jesus is here and He will make everything right.

Verse 17,

*17 And someone from the crowd answered him, “Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a spirit that makes him mute. 18 And whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able.”*

“I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able.” So, consider the story, the situation, the scene, is that as the chaos builds, and the crowd comes running over to Jesus, the disciples come running up, Jesus has this interaction with the disciples, and this man comes running up, and Matthew tells us that the man falls down kneeling before Jesus, and he says, “Here’s the situation. My son is under attack from a demon.”

Now, we’re going to unpack this a little bit. “My son is under attack from a demon.” What’s happening is that the demon is throwing him down, and it’s making him mute to where he can’t talk, and it’s making him deaf to where he can’t hear, and he’s unable to communicate and express himself, and it’s thrown him into the water, and it’s thrown him into the fire. Basically, it’s tried to kill him, and there’s a principle that starts to surface right here that is true. We saw this back in Mark 5, if you remember, when Jesus went and cast the demons out of the man in the tombs. Remember that story? This man is living in the graveyard and he’s cutting himself. Do you remember this? They’ve chained him and he breaks the chains. He’s cutting himself. – Listen, what Satan wants to do, first and foremost, is to attack those who bear the image of God. Theologians will say this, that he wants to attack the imago Dei, the image of God. So, Satan wants to attack those who bear the image of God. That’s his goal.

Now, you understand that Satan is powerless against Jesus. We should rejoice in that. They are not in some sort of cosmic battle of something like good versus evil, Jesus versus Satan, and sometimes Satan gets a shot or two in. Satan is under the authority of the boot of Jesus. Jesus is Lord. Say it, church, “Jesus is Lord!” (“Jesus is Lord!”). Okay. Jesus is Lord. Satan is not in this cosmic battle with Jesus. What Satan does is he attacks those who bear the image of God. That’s you and me. And specifically, he attacks that part of our image-bearing nature that reflects the glory of God. So, he attacks marriages, he attacks sexuality, - listen, listen, listen – he attacks gender, he creates confusion. Don’t think for a second that what’s happening in our world right now is not anything less than an all out assault on our sons, and daughters, and grandsons, and granddaughters. We’re living in a world, right now, that celebrates – there are over 50% of school districts in this country right now, where if your child goes to the school counselor and says, “I’m struggling,” – and it could be depression, or anxiety, or fear – the stuff that kids have just got to work through, right? Adults, do you remember it? You’re just dealing with stuff, right? And you need to be guided, and taught, and instructed, and sometimes you might need your hind end wore out. You know? Sometimes you need to learn how to deal with problems. Sometimes you need care, and you need somebody to help you navigate through a difficult season of life. And right now, there are a lot of places in our society where a child will be celebrated if they go in and agree to have body parts removed, in public schools. Breasts cut off. Gender reassignment will be celebrated by government officials, and Hollywood, and professional athletes, and your child will be applauded, but their life will be ruined. There is no coming back from it. What is that? It is the spirit of Babylon. It is Satan at work in our society, right now, and the target is our sons and our daughters, and we should be angry, and we should be freaked out about it.

Do not make a mistake about what’s happening in this story. Satan is attacking the image of God. He’s rendered this boy mute. The father is completely freaked out. As a parent, have you had a situation where you just wish you could bear the burden for your child? They’ve been bullied at school; they’ve been hurt by a boyfriend or girlfriend; they got cut from a sports team – whatever it is – and you think, “I wish I could just carry this weight for them.” But there are times where, as parents, we go, “Nope. They’ve got to carry it, I’ve got to help them, and they are going to grow stronger through this.” This is not like that. This boy is being destroyed physically and spiritually, and this dad is completely undone. He’s desperate, he’s desperate, and he runs up and he throws himself down at the feet of Jesus. Satan is at work.

This is not an epileptic seizure that’s medical by nature. It looks like epilepsy, it looks like an aggressive seizure, but the text tells us that it’s a demon that’s doing it. We have to be careful here, too, that we don’t think that just because somebody has a physical condition that they are controlled by a demon. Right? Can we agree to that? There is a real thing called epilepsy. There are real members of this church who have to take medicine for seizures. That doesn’t mean that Satan is doing that work. We live in a fallen world, and sickness, illness, cancer, disease, and brokenness are real.

But the text tells us that what is happening here is that a demon is controlling this boy, and the demon wants to destroy the boy. It’s tried to throw him into the water and it’s tried to throw him into the fire. The boy is convulsing, he can’t communicate, so it’s a really intense scene.

Let me read verse 18 again, because there’s one more thing I think we have to point out in 18.

*“And whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able.”*

That’s important; we’re going to come back to that. The disciples were not able to do anything with this. Here’s what’s interesting about that. They have been successful at doing this in the past. Remember, Jesus has sent them out at one point, and He’s said, “I’m going to give you power to cast out demons, to heal sickness and disease,” and now they don’t have the power to do it, and there’s a principle right here that’s important. There’s an observation and a principle, and it’s this. When you see the power of God at work in your life, it’s easy to get comfortable, and presumptuous, and forget that it’s a dependence on God that’s carrying you through that. And all of a sudden you go, “What happened? What’s wrong?” Dependence and reliance on the Lord is something that has to be brand new in your commitment tomorrow morning, when you wake up. You can’t live in the victories of yesterday. The disciples had seen God do powerful things through them. Y’all, they had cast out demons before, and now they can’t do anything. This one’s too strong for them. This one is overwhelming them. So, you have this situation with the disciples, where we know they love the Lord, we know they’re faithful, we know they believe, but they’ve hit a wall, and they can’t get over it, and they can’t tear it down. They’re at a dead end. They don’t know what to do, and they’re freaking out. They’re starting to unravel. The crowd is getting around them, and jabbing them, and yelling at them. And some of those boys are probably like me; I am not good in a verbal debate. Some of you can articulate your argument and you are gifted at communicating. Some people like to debate. I do not like to debate, because as soon as I start losing, which is really fast in any debate – I can be 100% right, debating somebody who believes in the tooth fairy, and I will lose my cool, and they will win that debate, by debate rules. I don’t know where the disciples are at, but they’re at this point where they just run to Jesus, because they can’t do it. This man says, “I asked your disciples to cast it out but they weren’t able.” So, now this man is not only losing hope that there’s any salvation for his son, he’s losing faith, period, because the messengers of faith have failed. It’s a principle that people are paying attention to how we live our lives. It’s a small principle there that I think is worth noting. So, he’s losing his faith because they are not able to do and display the power of God.

Verse 19,

*19 And he answered them, “O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me.*

Right there, in that phrase where Jesus says, “O faithless generation,” the word ‘O,’ is not in the Bible very much, but it’s this expression – I wrote down,

Jesus’ answer that comes in verse 19 is one that the Church today needs as much, or even more, than the disciples did then. In verse 19, Jesus’ response is very emotional and intense. The word, ‘O,’ is rarely used, and is spoken from a deep, emotional state.

Hendricksen says this,

By means of exclamation, Jesus expresses His pain and indignation.

So, Jesus is expressing pain and indignation. He says, “O faithless generation,” and He’s not just talking to the disciples; He’s talking to everybody. He’s saying, “Where’s your faith?” This is an expression of emotion from Jesus.

*20 And they brought the boy to him. And when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth.*

It’s an intense scene. The boy is rolling around because the demon has been triggered in the presence of Jesus. This will happen sometimes. You’ll see this in Scripture, where when Jesus shows up and something changes in the behavior of the demon, because the demon is triggered by the presence of Jesus. If you’re a Christian, you’re a child of God, the Holy Spirit lives in you. That’s a promise of Scripture.

I remember one time when I was down at the river, at the Nantahala, and I was standing… Sometimes, just for comic relief in life, I will go stand at the end of the Nantahala River and watch people ride their boats through the rapid, because about half of them fall out, and they just look so dumb. It’s funny to me. Fun funny, not mean funny. Okay? So, people are falling out and it’s pretty comical. So, I remember there was this guy standing beside me, and he’s throwing ropes and doing these rescue ropes. When somebody falls out of their boat, he pulls them in. I don’t remember how this went. I just thought of this story. It was something like he’s swearing, and saying a lot of curse words, and he’s being real aggressive, and then all of a sudden he says, “Hey, man, I’m sorry. Excuse my language.” So, a little bit later we were walking… People in the world don’t apologize for their language to other people in the world. Are y’all tracking with this? I thought, “Where did this come from?” So, we were walking, and we were talking a little bit, and he said, “Hey, man, you’re a Christian?” I was like, “Yeah, I am,” and we got in this conversation. I said, “Why did you ask? Do you know who I am, or something? Do we have mutual friends?” and he couldn’t articulate it, but he said, “No, there was something… I was standing there…” Y’all, this is a little bit freaky, but like in a good way. He said, “All of a sudden, I just felt this energy…” and I was like, “*Whoo-woo-woo*…. I’m just messing with you, man. I’m just messing with you.” “I felt this energy … something …” and he was using funny language, the way he was describing it. “It was this energy, bro. It was coming off of you, man.” I said, “That’s Jesus, man! That’s Jesus,” and I started sharing the Gospel with him. And at one point, he was like, “Yeah, bro, that’s good for you. You need Jesus, but I need a little somethin’ else.” He was talking about smoking weed. But we had this fascinating conversation where eventually I circled back to that guy, some days or weeks later, and we sat down. I was like, “What was it?” and he said, “Seriously, there was something that happened.” What it was, was the Holy Spirit. The presence of God was real to him. I hadn’t said a word. I didn’t have a fish on my life jacket. Do you know what I’m saying? Don’t discount the power of the presence of God in your life around unbelievers. It’s real, y’all. When you’re walking with Jesus, and you’re spending time in the presence of Jesus, you’re going to have an impact in the world.

So, Jesus walks up, and when He walks up everything changes, but it’s important to understand that the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead, that led Him through temptation in the wilderness when He was confronted by Satan, the same Spirit that was with Jesus in His ministry, is the Spirit that we have. Listen to me, look at me. I don’t care what your confession is, if the Spirit of God does not dwell in you, is not at work in you, if you do not confess that Jesus is Lord, and the Spirit of God is not real in your life, you are not of Christ. The Spirit bears witness in the believer. Don’t believe a lie that you’ve made a religious confession. The Spirit of God at work in a person is going to bear fruit. You can say, “I’m a Christian,” all day long. We live in the Bible Belt, man; the Western North Carolina/Southern Appalachian Bible Belt. Everybody will say they’re a Christian, but they’re not. I’m not the judge; I’m just saying that Jesus said a whole lot of people are going to say, “Lord, Lord, we cast out demons in your name,” and He’s going to say, “I don’t know who you are. I don’t know what you were doing. It was trickery, it was wizardry.” I don’t know. Jesus shows up and the demons freak out, because His power is real, His light eradicates the darkness. His presence causes demons to tremble. “You say you believe there is one God. You do well,” James says. “But even the demons believe and tremble.” “But if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and you believe in your heart – believe into and unto Jesus – that God raised Him from the dead you’ll be saved.” Salvation comes through confession that Jesus is who He says He is. So, in this moment, you have this powerful interaction where the demon is freaking out. He’s completely losing control.

Verse 21,

*21 And Jesus asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?” And he said, “From childhood. 22 And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.”*

Have you felt that as a parent? “I would give my life today.” There’s not a parent in here who wouldn’t lay their life down today to know that God would save your child, put His presence and His Spirit in your child, and give them a life of fulfillment, and joy, and peace. Not a life that’s void of suffering, not a life that’s void of hardship, not a life that’s easy. I’m talking about a life that has meaning, and purpose, and value. Young men and young ladies, look at me. If you want purpose in this world, you’re not going to find it in travel softball. You’re not going to find it in an expanding number of friends. You’re going to find it in Jesus. As parents, we know this to be true. It doesn’t matter how popular you are at Andrews Middle School, or High School, or Murphy, or Robbinsville, or wherever it is. What matters is who Jesus sees you as. That’s what gives you value.

This dad would have given anything for his son to be set from the bondage and dominion of sin. That’s all he wanted. I’ll lay down my life for my son not to be under the control of this demon. As parents, we’ve got to pray, and plead with God, and go to the cross every day, and trust that God’s going to give our children purpose and fulfillment through the plans that He has for them. That’s what’s happening. This man is so desperate. So, this man said,

*“But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.” 23 And Jesus said to him, “If you can!”*

What’s Jesus doing? Jesus knows *He* can. He’s drawing this man into a faith that has action. He’s like, “The disciples have faith. You have faith,” but what He’s doing, listen to how Kent Hughes says it,

Jesus is standing nose-to-nose with a man and challenging him to believe more deeply. The world is standing still; eternity is passing between them.

This is an intense moment. The man says, “If you can…if you can…just save him…just heal him,” and Jesus says, “If *you* can, I will act in a way that engages *your* faith.” So, He’s going to teach us a lesson, right here, about faith. All things are possible for everyone who believes.

*24 Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, “I believe; help my unbelief!”*

This is such a contrast to the disciples. The disciples, I think, came into this thing, and because they’ve been successful I think they didn’t take it seriously enough. They were presumptuous. But to this man, it’s real, it’s personal. He says, “I believe, Jesus! That’s why I’m here. But I have doubt, I have doubt.”

Let me explain something to you about the way doubt works. Doubt is not the opposite of faith. Doubt is not the opposite of faith. In other words, you can be a man or woman of faith and doubt be very real and present in your life, stronger at times than at others. You can doubt God’s will for your life, you can doubt God’s provision for your life. Biblical theology is on solid footing to say that. Saint Augustine said,

Doubt is never far from faith’s shoulder.

The opposite of faith is unbelief. An unbeliever doesn’t doubt Jesus, they just don’t believe. Do you know what I don’t doubt? Okay, I have to be careful how I say this; there are small ears in here. The guy who around December 24 somehow manages to hit all the chimneys – y’all know what I’m saying. I don’t doubt that; I don’t believe. Do you see the difference? A person who doesn’t believe doesn’t wrestle with doubt. Doubt is the believer’s problem. Don’t be scared of your doubt. In one sense, turn it on its head and let you affirm your faith. Doubt is real for you, because you’re not yet fully glorified, man. You got problems. I got problems. We got problems. We’re just a bunch of messed up people. And when you’re messed up, it creates instability.

There ain’t no way, if you could be invisible, and I could say that everybody in here is invisible to everybody else, so raise your hand if you had any moment of doubt in any part of your Christian life, even if it was towards yourself this week. Everybody would be raising two hands and two feet. I’ll tell you, I texted a buddy of mine on Thursday afternoon. I have a couple of guys outside of this church and outside of this ministry, and we hold each other accountable, and I texted him Thursday and said, “Losing the battle. SOS.” And he knew that what that meant was, “I’m losing the battle either in my mind or in my flesh.” Because doubt is real. So, it’s alright. We’re going to be alright, but we’ve got to figure out how to deal with it, right? We can’t identify the problem and not come up with a coping solution, right? How do we deal with doubt? What do we do with doubt? This guy says, “I believe!! Why do I still have unbelief?” That’s the way he articulates it. “Help me, though!! Because I clearly don’t believe enough or my son would be delivered! What’s going on?”

Here's where we have to go when we get to this point of doubt. There’s an illustration that I like to use. If you guys remember, about 20 years ago there was a tsunami that hit Indonesia. Remember that? It was devastating. It killed tens of thousands of people. You can go find this on YouTube – haha, the theology of YouTube – but there’s a video on YouTube of these divers who were right off the coast. They were scuba divers and were down doing some sort of a dive, and all of a sudden the tsunami goes through, and they described it like they were in a washing machine. The dude said, “Yeah, my mask was down here, and we got turned upside down, and we were like, ‘What is going on?!’” Then, all of a sudden it just calmed down, and they surfaced, and they were fine. But everywhere on the shore was devastation. But because they were in it and deep enough, they were sustained.

So, the picture for me is, when you get to that place of doubt, you’ve got to go headlong into the wave and go deep. You’ve got to go deep into the Word of God, deep into prayer, deep into intimacy and meditation with the Lord. You’ve got to go deeper. What happens with doubt is that we become unstable, or destabilized, in our faith. So, Jesus is going to address this.

*25 And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him…*

And I love this part.

*…and don’t you come back.”*

*“…come out of him, and don’t ever enter him again.”*

Don’t let me see you near this boy, again! That’s authority. It’s not just, “Hey, leave.” It’s, “Leave, and I better never catch you anywhere near him again.” That’s a moment of authority. Jesus is not just freeing this boy, but He’s freeing him for good. When Jesus saved you, He didn’t just set you free momentarily; He set you free eternally. Now, you’re at war with sin, you’re at war with the flesh, but you are no longer under its rule and dominion. Because the authority of Jesus to save someone is to say, “You’re free! You’re set free from this.” So, He sets this boy free. That doesn’t mean the boy’s not going to have struggles and battles.

*26 And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, “He is dead.” 27 But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. 28 And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?” 29 And he said to them, “This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.”*

What’s the lesson for us? Well, the disciples had made a mistake of growing comfortable in their faith, and become presumptuous. Maybe some arrogance or laziness. The boy’s father needed to go deeper. He needed to see more of what Jesus was capable of. And Jesus said, “Here’s the thing. What is going to unlock this is prayer, time spent with the Lord.” You spend time with the Lord, I spend time with the Lord, and I’m going to be strong. It’s that simple. It’s not that complicated. What happens when I spend time with the Lord in prayer is that it cultivates and creates a stronger dependence on God. I’ve got to live in dependency on the Lord. If you live in dependency on anything other than Jesus, you’re going to falter and fail in a very painful way. I’m going to falter and fail in a very painful way. But if I trust Jesus, and then spend time in His presence in prayer, I’ll live with confidence but not arrogance, humility but not fear. I’ll be steady, and stable, and when doubt appears right here, and starts to question in my ear and in my flesh, and I start to wrestle with my own thoughts, and my own fears, and my own instabilities, I’ll have confidence because I’ve been with Jesus, in His Word, going deep, in prayer, talking, listening, and communicating with God daily, every day, and He’ll strengthen me. “I believe Lord! Help my unbelief!” “Okay, I will. Let’s get in my Word and I’ll show you.” “I believe Lord! Help my unbelief!” “Okay, I will. But let’s talk. Let’s talk it out.” Have you ever had a relationship that was on shaky ground but then you had a good talking out and then everything was good? We’ve all had that happen. You get it settled. Talk it out. Jesus said prayer is critical in the life of the believer. We’ve got to go deeper and we’ve got to spend time in the presence of Jesus. And if we do, we’ll weather the storm. We won’t falter, we won’t fail. We may doubt, we may struggle, but we’ll be alright.

Let’s pray.

*Lord, thank you for the power displayed in the story that we saw tonight. I don’t know how to preach and teach a sermon that addresses demonic assault, in a gentle and soft way. Because we wrestle not against flesh and blood, and yet sometimes we just wrestle not. We just give in. We just bow to a power that should have no authority over us. And as Christians, when we align ourselves with the disciples’ situation, and we think about where they are at, we would say, “I know what that’s like to be presumptuous, to just go through the motions, and the moments, and then all of a sudden a thing happens, and we are at our end, and we don’t have the power in our own strength to deal with it.” It could be a bad attitude, it could be fear, it could be anger, it could be lust, it could be something that takes control of my mind, or my joy, or my peace. God, Satan wants to create chaos. We see it in this story. God, there are people here tonight, and right now in their lives there is the noise of chaos, and confusion, and disruption, and fear, and an unnerving, unsettled thought about the future, and what you will do is you will bring peace. Just as we saw a few passages back, when you spoke to a storm, and you said, “Peace, be still! Just calm down,” help us to see that you’re in control. Thank you for the lesson that you taught the disciples, and how at the end of that story everything is just calm. Thank you for that. And I pray that we would identify with the disciples. I pray that we would identify with this dad who wrestles with his own doubt and unbelief, though he confesses you as Lord. I pray for those here tonight who want to believe; they do believe but they feel so overwhelmed and overcome by doubt. I pray that you would strengthen our faith and help us to walk in confidence, confidence in you, the One whom we have confessed faith in. And we will thank you and praise you as you give us victory. We sing to you now because you’re worthy. In Jesus’ name, Amen.*