



Help My Unbelief

1st Monday in Lent

“Teacher, I brought you my son; he has a spirit that makes him unable to speak; and whenever it seizes him, it dashes him down; and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid; and I asked your disciples to cast it out, but they could not do so. . . .’ Bring him to me.’ And they brought the boy to him. When the spirit saw him, immediately it threw the boy into convulsions, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. Jesus asked the father, ‘How long has this been happening to him?’ And he said, ‘From childhood. And he said, ‘From childhood. It has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if you are able to do anything, have pity on us and help us.’ Jesus said to him, ‘If you are able!—All things can be done for the one who believes.’ Immediately the father of the child cried out, ‘I believe; help my unbelief. . . .’”

Mark 9:17-24

Truer words have never been spoken—“I believe; help my unbelief.” There is always that little edge of doubt, of question, of wonder. Is God really up to this challenge? Am I just fooling myself to hang on to this promise? This father, though, was desperate. Watching your child suffer and being helpless to make things better is a heavy burden to bear. The helplessness, the frustration, and the anger wear on you. Why should *my* child suffer like this? What did *he* ever do to deserve this? Why couldn’t it be me and not him?

He had tried everything that anyone had ever suggested, but without any success. This was just one more in a long line of “last resort” efforts, but it was worth a try. Desperation will prompt you to do things you never dreamed you would. *If you are able to do anything, have pity on us and help us*, he pled with Jesus. It almost appears that Jesus took offense at his conditional request. *‘If you are able!—All things can be done for the one who believes.’* To which the father in all honesty replied: *Lord, I believe; help my unbelief,*” and he committed his child to Jesus’ care. Sometimes that’s the best you can do. Turn it over to the Lord and trust, as best you are able, that the Lord will do what is right for you and for the one you love.

Prayer: *Are we weak and heavy-laden, cumbered with a load of care? Precious Savior, still our Refuge—take it to the Lord in prayer! Do thy friends despise, forsake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer! In his arms He’ll take and shield thee, thou wilt find a solace thee.*

Joseph Scriven, c. 1855