

Matthew 17 continued: Matthew 17:14-27

Vss. 14-21 – We get a great lesson here on the need for faithfulness and on the power of God. This young man was suffering from seizures that we know from the text were a result of demon possession. Not every seizure is like this. Most are medical, but some can absolutely be because of Satan. Even though the disciples had the authority to cast out demons, in this case they couldn't do it. Look at the reason they couldn't do it. How does Jesus' statement in verse 17 compare to His response to the disciples in verse 20? What is significant?

The disciples may have had the authority, but they were attempting it on their own, by their own power instead of trusting that God would heal this young man. Is it faith or the power of God that moves mountains? It's the power of God, but only when faith is present. Sometimes God utilizes His power without our knowledge, but in situations where we are involved, our faith must be present for God's power to be present.

Jesus was not trying to embarrass or criticize the disciples but was using this moment to encourage them to a stronger faith. Do you think this story is a picture of how the church engages in our world today? It just seems to me that people no longer see the church as a benefit. Perhaps it has to do with our lack of faith. I'm not accusing or offering criticism as much as I am trying to encourage you to search your heart. It's one thing to say that we trust God, but another to believe it.

Vss. 22-23 – Here, we see the second time Jesus predicted His death. What do you notice about this time compared to the first time in Matthew 16:21-23. The first time took place in Caesarea Philippi. This time was still on the way to Jerusalem, but in Galilee. What about the response from the disciples? Peter wasn't so quick to rebuke Jesus on this occasion. Let's look at Mark's account because he provides a bit more detail. **Read Mark 9:30-32.**

Vss. 24-27 – What was this tax? It was the temple tax. All Jewish males were required to pay this tax each year. It went towards the upkeep of the Temple. Interesting side note here: Matthew is the only one to record this event. Why? Because he was a tax collector and perhaps viewed this as a more significant teaching than the others. What do we see Peter doing here? He asked a question that put Jesus and the other disciples in a precarious position. But what does Jesus do? He uses this moment to announce His Kingship. If worldly kings didn't have to pay the tax, then why should the King of Kings? Don't you just love how Jesus took care of the situation. I like what J. Vernon McGee said in his commentary about the two major events found in Matthew 17. He said, "In the Transfiguration we see man restored to his original purpose. In the episode of the tribute money, we see man restored to his original performance. The fish obey the command of Jesus. Jesus used the fish to remind us that originally Adam had been granted this same dominion but lost it during the fall. Again, we see the power of God on display."