

Life Group Notes
Sunday 15th January 2012 - Morning

Mark Amos:

The main point was simply based on the words of a man confronted with Jesus in Mark's gospel: 'Lord I believe, help me in my unbelief' (Mark 9:24). We focused on three of the people at the scene: The man himself, the disciples and Jesus.

Read the story in Mark 9:14-29.

1. The man: His response to Jesus ("Lord I believe, help me in my unbelief") seems to be a good one (though not perfect!). It declares faith, but also admits to the fact that faith is difficult. The man doesn't presume that you can size Jesus up in an instant to the point where you can say - 'sure I believe, I understand, I've got no questions; you go ahead and heal him'.
2. The disciples: Before attempting to heal the man's son it seems that they thought they had already sussed out what Jesus was all about. But their confidence was really knocked when they were not able to heal the man's son. They are surprised when things don't turn out as they hoped or expected. So the difference between the disciples and the man is that they keep thinking that they *have* got it. Whereas the man admits that he only has it in part.
3. Jesus: The principle character of the story of course. He should be our primary interest. Although Jesus pulls the disciples up for their lack of faith, and also the man to a certain degree, he seems to be saying that there are no stumbling blocks in the way of what he desires to happen to the man's son. Ultimately, all in the story are confused and lack faith; whereas Jesus exhibits perfect faith.

Questions

1. Are we like the man with the possessed son, or are we like the disciples?
2. Have we come to the point in our faith whereby we have become comfortable with our own understanding of Jesus?
3. How can we foster a new vulnerability and openness toward Christ?

Dorothy Dix:

God has already done it

Please read Genesis 22: 1-18.

Abraham was confident in God's provision. Although he could not physically see it yet, he obeyed; certain that God knew the end from the beginning. He believed that God's word could be trusted; God would never break his promise. Because he knew that God had a plan, Abraham believed the impossible that God would raise his son Isaac from the dead. Just as God spoke directly to Abraham, today we have direct access to God through the Holy Spirit, because of Jesus' death and resurrection. Let us remain filled with the Holy Spirit so that God can communicate His will to us. If we are convinced that God hears us when we ask anything according to His will (1 John 5:14), and that we have what we ask of Him (1 John 5:15) then it's a simple matter of BRT (believing, receiving and thanking) God for all that He has

made available for us. We are already blessed (Ephesians 1:3-6); God's blessings in Christ are not something to strive for but they already exist in the spirit, in heavenly realms. If we can see them in the spirit; we will see them in the flesh. Let us be expectant; God has already declared us blessed; He has met our needs before we even knew that we had them. While we wait on God, let us have an attitude that God can do the impossible. We cannot lose anything by living out 2012 with the confidence that God has already blessed us.

Suggested questions:

- 1) What is your attitude towards your hopes and desires for 2012; are you expectant or are you doubtful that anything will change?
- 2) How would your outlook change if you believed that, "if it's according to God's will, He has already done it"? Let us pray for each other to remain confident in all that God has for us this year.