

INTRO

- Share about a time when you were nervous going into an exam, interview, or big moment. How did you feel “prepared but uncertain”?

READ

Mark 9:14-29

Big Idea: Prayer is not only for the certain—it is the ongoing act of dependence on Jesus that enables faith to grow, even amidst doubt.

REFLECT & RESPOND

In this story, a desperate father brings his tormented son to Jesus and the disciples. When the disciples are unable to help the boy, Jesus's return from the mountain of transfiguration prompts a conversation with the father and the disciples that reveals how to handle our faith, doubt, and prayer.

The father's words to Jesus reveal both his faith and doubt, but both his faith and doubt are directed toward Jesus.

Q: Why do you think the father's words—"I believe; help my unbelief"—resonate so deeply with people?

Q: How does this passage encourage you to pray honestly, rather than pretend you have it all together?

In v.23, Jesus shifts the focus from the *amount* of faith to the *object* of faith—Him. The father's weak faith was still enough because it was placed in Jesus.

Q: What difference does that make in how we understand prayer?

Q: Why do you think the disciples were unable to help the boy in this moment, especially since

they had been given power over evil spirits and had previously succeeded (Mk 6:7, 13)?

It seems that Jesus' response in v.29 is a reminder that God's power is never automatic or to be taken for granted. Rather, it flows from dependence on God, and prayer is the posture and practice of that dependence.

Q: Is there an area where you've been slipping into independence (like the disciples)? What would it look like for you to practice prayer as dependence this week?

Faith grows through dependence on Jesus; doubt grows through independence from Him. Prayer is not only for the certain—it's the daily act of dependence that grows our faith, even amidst doubt.

PRAY

- Begin by reciting the father's words as a prayer: "I believe; help my unbelief!"
- Focus on bringing any doubts, uncertainties, or fears you have to Jesus.
- Pray for a renewed sense of dependence on God's greatness and goodness in your life.