

## **TOO LITTLE FAITH**

### ***Matthew 17:14-20***

Jesus rebukes his disciples for their little faith. He doesn't say that they have no faith but he implies that they should have had a little more faith than that. They had just failed in their efforts to do the work that Jesus had sent them to do, bringing healing to a sick child. Jesus attributes this failure to their little faith. You can you imagine the intense feeling of shame following the failure to heal the sick child. Why does Jesus criticise his disciples for the little faith? His criticism is not just directed to the disciples alone, but to the Jewish people as a whole. The disciples as well as the Jewish people had multiple spiritual advantages extended to them over the many generations and centuries of their existence: the Law of Moses, the promise of the Holy Land, the giants of faith in the Old Testament, and the covenants of God through Abraham, Moses, David, and the prophets, and the rest of the Old Testament scriptures. If anyone should have understood something of the character of God, it was Israel. Equally speaking, the spiritual advantage the disciples had with our Lord, they should have been better placed to heal the child. And yet time and again, even those who loved Christ and followed Him at significant personal cost – didn't understand who He was, or the Father who had sent Him.

In contrast to that would be the Canaanite woman we read about two days ago from the region of Tyre and Sidon who persistently pleaded with Jesus to deliver her demon-possessed daughter from great suffering. *Then Jesus said to her, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed at that moment (Matthew 15:28).*

Jesus wanted his disciples to grow in their faith; it is what he wants for all of us. In response to that desire of Jesus for a stronger faith within us, we could make our own the prayer of the father of the sick child that we find in Mark's version of this story, *"Lord, I believe; help my unbelief."*