

DEVOTION FOR THOSE SUFFERING WITH CANCER

Faith

Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24)

The context of this passage is found in the story of the healing of a boy with an evil spirit (Mark 9:14-32). Right before that is the account of Jesus Transfiguration. During the Transfiguration Jesus talks with Moses and Elijah about His upcoming death and resurrection. When this ends Jesus as well Peter, James and John come back down to rejoin the other nine and a large crowd.

What Jesus encounters is a man arguing with the nine disciples. The gist of the dispute is found in verses 17-18: **A man in the crowd answered, "Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not."**

After reprimanding the nine disciples for their failure to help, Jesus turns His attention to the father with the possessed son as found in verses 20-22: **So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth. Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has he been like this?" "From childhood," he answered. "It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us."**

Jesus assures the man that **"Everything is possible for him who believes"** (V. 23). AND, Jesus heals the demon possessed boy. (VV. 25-26).

To better understand the man's response it is important to know what he has all been through and the frustrations of his efforts have brought about. We, too, may have been through many frustrating procedures and treatments in addressing our cancer. Sometimes it may seem like there is no one who really knows what needs to be done. No one understands our feeling. Our faith can take a hit during times like that. It is at a time like this that we can utter the same cry as the man with demon possessed son.

Sometimes we don't get what we want. The Apostle Paul had "a thorn" in his flesh. What exactly that thorn was is not known. We do know that it was a great aggravation to Paul, so much so that Paul pleaded with the Lord to remove it. God's answer was: **"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." 1 Corinthians 12:9**

We don't know what God wants for us physically but, we DO KNOW that His will for us is to have faith in Christ as our Savior and to go to heaven for eternity. Our faith does not depend on our worthiness but on Christ's merit. Even a little faith in Jesus and His saving work is enough to save us. The distressed father of little faith enjoyed the same benefits as the famous people of faith in Hebrews 11. We can get that faith. We just need to ask for help from Jesus. He hears every request.

Prayer:

Dear Lord, thank you for bringing me to faith in your perfect Son, Jesus. Forgive me when my trust in you falters. Through every experience in my life including my cancer, help me to grow closer to you in the faith that you have instilled in my heart. Through your Word and Sacrament continue to grow my faith each and every day. Amen.