Mark 9 v 23, 24.
Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

We do not have to look very far in this world which we live in, or the society in which we are, to find the distressing and the discouraging effects of sin. All you have to do is go outside these walls and you will very soon come across the effects of sin. Perhaps we could say you don't even have to go as far away as that, just look at yourself and you will see the effects of sin.

It seems everywhere we turn, we see the distressing and the discouraging effects that sin has had on this world in which we live in. All you have to do is turn on the news. And every single report seems to be of some crime or some tragedy. Men and women are living in a state of total depravity. They're living in a state which is deplorable.

And all you have to do is look up the street corners in this land and you'll see people living in a deplorable state. Those who are wrapped by the addiction of drugs and alcohol. Those who have had their homes wrecked, marriages failed and they've been chucked out of their homes and they're at wit's end and all you have to do is look at such people and you see there's a man or there's a woman who's living in an awful state.

You know, in Mark nine, we see the awful effects of sin in this life. Everywhere we look we see the power of Satan working.

And in Mark chapter 9 we see this very vividly and very clearly. For in the passage before us in Mark 9 verse 14 through to 29, we have the account of a demon-possessed boy. His father brought him before the Lord. After having brought him to the disciples, He says there in verse 17, Master I have brought unto thee my son which hath a dumb spirit. And he goes on in verse 18 to say that, well I speak to thy disciples that they should cast him out and they could not.

And so he goes from the disciples to the Lord. And he comes to the Lord believing, well, here's one who can help me in my situation. Here's one who has power to cast out this demon. Here's one who can do what other people, what men cannot do.

You know, it's remarkable when you look at this chapter before us, that the Lord had been at the Mount of Transfiguration.

And as he was coming down the mountain, This father had brought his demon-possessed son to the disciples. On one hand, you have the glory of God being displayed in the person of Jesus Christ, and on the other hand, you see the power of Satan being displayed through the son.

But now the father brings the son to Christ, believing, well, the disciples couldn't do anything, but here's one who can. And what an awful state, what an awful condition his son was in. Verse 18 reveals to us that he was being torn apart, he was foaming from the mouth, his teeth were gnashing together.

Verse 22 says that the demon within him cast him into the fire and into the waters, so that he would even destroy him. Here's a father distressed over his child, believing that Satan was trying to destroy him. And while that is not what we aim to speak upon this evening, surely there's an aside here. An aside here for parents and for grandparents. Those concerned over their children and grandchildren.

Those concerned that Satan has a grip upon them. Bring them to the one who can help. That's what this father did. He brought his son to the Lord. You see, this father believed in his heart that Christ was the answer.

He believed that the Lord had the power to deliver. And so he brought his son to Christ. And this account is a remarkable account of the faith of this dear father. And yet it is also a somewhat unusual account. For we see in verse 24, the words that come from this man after hearing from the Lord that if he would only believe that all things were possible, this man cries out, Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.

What a paradox. On one hand it says, Lord, I believe. And the next breath it says, Lord, help mine unbelief. And surely that is how many, if not all of us in this meeting feel tonight. Yes, Lord, I believe, but I don't believe as I should.
Lord, I feel my weakness. Lord, I feel my failure. Therefore, Lord, give grace and give help for me to believe more. So as we consider these two verses, let us think upon believing yet unbelieving. For this man who brings his son, he was believing, and yet also he recognized, I am unbelieving.
Consider first of all with me the proclamation of faith. This man made a proclamation of faith. You see, it is abundantly clear that this man had a real and genuine faith in Jesus Christ. He cries out there in verse 24, Lord, I believe. There's a man who is willing to declare his faith.
A man who says, yes, I believe in Jesus Christ. And this is the only way that we can overcome our struggles in this life. It's the only way to face trial and temptation is to have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. If you're not to be overwhelmed and to be overcome by burdens and trials and distresses, you must have faith in the power of Jesus Christ. This man needed much faith for his situation.
He was afraid his son was about to be destroyed. He saw his son at that very time having been cast upon the ground. And he needed faith. And so he cries out, Lord, I believe. You see, faith is necessary in our spiritual walk with the Lord.
If we are to be overcomers, we must have faith. And surely that is why the Apostle John says in 1 John 5 in verse 4, this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Faith is the victory. Isn't that what the chorus of the hymn says? Faith is the victory.
Well, this man realized, yes, my faith is essential at this time. And he believed that the Lord was able. You know, we need to have faith if we are to live lives that are pleasing to God. And you know the verse well in Hebrews 11, verse six, that says, without faith it is impossible to please Him. For they that come to Him must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.
Without faith it is impossible to please God. And the Christian ought to be one who pleases God at all times. That includes in the valley. That includes the time when it is most difficult. That includes the time when everything seems to be weighing down upon you, and it seems to be so hard to go on, yet we ought to be those who aim to please the Lord, even in the valley.
This man said, Lord, I believe. He aimed to please the Lord there, even when it was most difficult. And faith is essential for all people He must have faith first of all to be saved, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ saving power. But you need faith to go on with the Lord, faith day by day, faith for every trial, faith for every hardship. Surely that is why when the Apostle Paul was writing to the believers in Ephesus, you know the account well about the Christian armor, how there are all these different facets which we are to take to us to help us in our spiritual warfare against the powers of darkness of this world.
In verse 16 of Ephesians 6, Paul speaks of taking the shield of faith. But there's an interesting phrase before that. He says, and above all, taking the shield of faith. See, Paul recognized the importance of faith. He says, yes, all these other items, all these other things, yes, the helmet, the breastplate, the sword, these are all vital, but above all, have the shield of faith.
You see, the shield is that implement that protects every part of the body. If the soldier does not have the shield, he is really unprotected. But when he has that shield held on his arm, he feels safe and secure. He knows, well, I can deflect any attack that comes my way. You see, faith is vital, especially when we're going through the valleys.
This man declared his faith in the Lord. Lord, I believe. Even though this is so hard, even though this is so difficult, yet, Lord, I believe. What can we learn from this cry that arises from this poor man's lips? Well, we can see that this declaration of faith was personal.
He says, Lord, I believe. This was something which he knew himself personally. He was sure who Jesus Christ was, and he addresses him as Lord. Is this not what I believe most, if not all, in this room can do tonight? Say, Lord, I believe in thee.
Lord, I believe that thou art the Lord. I believe thou art the one who has saved me from my sins. Lord, I believe. This was personal. This man was able to say this.

He was not in any doubt about who this was before him. He knew this was the Lord and he says, I believe. We can say I do believe. I will believe that Jesus died for me. That on the cross he shed his blood to save someone like me.
This man was able to declare faith in the Lord personally. You see, this is foundational. Our faith depends upon the person and the work of Jesus Christ. Our faith all revolves around his Lordship. Faith recognizes him as Lord of your life.
Faith recognizes here is one I have to depend upon. Faith recognizes I should not and I cannot depend upon self, but I must cast myself upon him. That's what this man did. Lord, I believe. Yes, this man's proclamation of his faith was personal, but notice also that it was particular.
For he didn't just believe him to be his Lord, but he also believed that he was able to help him particularly. If you look back at verse 17, you see the introduction of this man on the scene. One of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit. You see, the Lord had been atop the Mount of Transfiguration, and he came down, and verses 14 to 16 reveals, well, there's a vast multitude, and there seems to be this kind of hubbub, this mass of people, and they're all quarreling amongst one another. But out of the multitude comes this man, and he reveals to the master especially his own problem.
He says, Master, I have brought unto thee my son. Here's a man who realized, well, the Lord is able to help me in my own situation. I believe that this is the one who can help me in my hour of need. He had faith that Christ could do what the disciples could not. And he brings his son.
You know, it's often a good reminder that whenever we cry out to the Lord, we should do so particularly We shouldn't just speak in generalities and ask for very little or even perhaps nothing, but we should ask particularly about problems which concern us. That's what this man did. He didn't just come to the Lord and say, Lord, bless me and my family. He didn't just say, Lord, help me in whatever situation I might have to go through. No, he says, Master, I have brought unto thee my son.
It's remarkable that he had this faith that the Lord could help. Because of the awful state his son was in. Because in verse 21 we find that the Lord asks him a question. He says, well how long ago since this came unto him? And he said, off a child.
This man had known his son to be in this state all of his life. a long, long time, and yet it doesn't seem that this father had given up hope. This father still has faith the Lord can help with this particular situation. Surely there's encouragement for many in this room tonight. Oh, there's one who'd been in this state since a child.
And can't we bring that into our own situation, our own places tonight? Thinking maybe of loved ones, and you can say, well, they've been in this state since a child. They were shaping an iniquity, and sin did their mother conceive them. But this father brought his son to the Lord and asked for help particularly. You see, he knew here is one who can help.
Here is one who has power to deliver. He would have heard of how so many had been healed from their diseases. He'd have heard about the demoniac from Gadara, I'm sure. One who had been filled with demons. One who chains could not hold him, but he had been set free by the Lord.
And now this man comes to the Lord and says, Lord, help me and help my son. Is that not what we can do as well? Lord, I know what thou hast done. I know what thou hast done for me. I know what thou hast done for others.
So do it for someone else too. This man had particular faith. And so his proclamation of faith was personal. It was particular, but notice also it was public. This man publicly professed faith in the Lord's power.
For we come across it in verse 17, one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit. And this conversation continues between this father and the Lord Jesus Christ from verse 17 down through to the end of this passage. And the whole account still takes place with the multitude gathered around them. But this man doesn't seem to be ashamed of the Lord. He doesn't seem to think, well, just hold on a minute.

There's others here and they won't think like I do. There's others here and they don't believe in the Lord's power. He doesn't think that at all. But with all around him, he says, Lord, I believe. What a challenge that is for all of us.
You know, we often sing the hymn, I'm not ashamed to own my Lord or to defend his cause, maintain the glory of his word, the honor of his cross, and yet do we actually mean it? I'm sure each and every one of us, if we're actually truthful and honest with ourselves, we could say there are times, yes, I have been ashamed. Yes, there have been times when I could have said something, I should have said something, but I didn't say something. But here is a man who amidst the vast multitude that was gathered, shouts out, Lord, I believe. This man's faith was real and visible.
And yet it could be said about many professing believers in this day in which we live, that it is not visible. Well, we can often feel, well, I need to be reclusive and not let anyone else know that I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. I don't want to be ostracized. I don't want to be thought of as, well, there's that Bible basher or there's that person who believes in that book. And so we say nothing. But this man proclaimed his faith publicly. He openly confessed belief in the Lord Jesus Christ. So I see the proclamation of faith. But notice, secondly, the plea for faith. See, while this man expressed a very clear and genuine faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, at the same time with great honesty and sincerity, he presents a seeming paradox.
For in one breath he says, Lord, I believe. And then in the next breath he says, help thy mine unbelief. Here's this man's plea. Lord, help thou mine unbelief. Yes, Lord, I do believe.
But, oh, I should believe so much more in thee. Lord, I feel my own weakness. Lord, I feel my own failures. Oh Lord, I really should believe more and I need help to believe more, so Lord, give me the strength, give me the grace to believe more. Is that not something each of us sought to cry day by day?
Lord, help thy mine unbelief. Unbelief is the great sin of the unconverted. Unbelief is the sin of natural man. See, man in his blindness and in his darkness does not believe in God. The Word of God speaks of how the Lord was grieved when he saw the hardness of the hearts of men, and that was caused through their unbelief.
Unbelief will bar men and women from entering into heaven. John 3 verse 18, he that believeth not is condemned already because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. Unbelief is an awful sin. Unbelief bars men and women from heaven. But you know, unbelief is also something which affects the child of God.
The believer suffers from this too. Even the greatest and most eminent of saints suffer and have suffered from unbelief in the Lord. Think about Abraham. He had unbelief in his heart. He went down to the land of Egypt when there was famine, and he didn't believe that, well, the Lord can keep me and my wife safe, so I better lie about Sarah being my wife and say that she's only my sister.
Abraham had a lack of faith. What about Sarah when the Lord came and said, well, Sarah, about this time next year, you'll be burying a child. And she laughed within herself. There is a lack of belief. What about Moses, whenever he was confronted by the Lord at the burning bush, and he was told, well, Moses, you have to go before Pharaoh, and you have to say all of these messages I'll give to you unto Pharaoh, and you're to deliver my people.
And what did Moses think? Well, I don't believe I am the man, Lord. I don't believe I am capable. I don't believe that, Lord, that you have the right man. There's a lack of faith.
What about the disciples? How many times did the Lord have to say to them, O ye of little faith? Remember whenever the disciples were in the ship in the midst of the storm, and they were going to go to the other side, the Lord had said to them as much that he would bring them to the other side, and yet they cried, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And the Lord had to say to them, how is it that ye have no faith? What about when the disciples were on the boat another time and they saw the Lord walking to them on the water?
Peter stepped out, yes, in faith. But then whenever he saw the waves coming towards him and the wind was howling, he began to sink. Why? Because of a lack of faith. What about when the Lord spoke to the disciples in Matthew 16 about being wary of the leaven of the Pharisees?

And they began to question and murmur among themselves what this was about. And the Lord said to them there in Matthew 16 verse 8, O ye of little faith, why reasoned ye among yourselves? And he mentions to them about the feeding of the 5,000, the feeding of the 4,000, events which had only just happened. He says, well, how can you not believe? You've seen my power, even very recently. It's the unbelief as a common malady, even for God's people. And this father realized, yes, I have unbelief in my heart. Therefore, Lord, help my unbelief. Forgive me for my unbelief. Help me to believe more, O Lord.

So he recognized that the Lord needed to give him faith. That's what the disciples realized in Luke 17 and verse 5 when they cried, Lord, increase our faith. See, faith is given by the Lord. It can only be received from Him. Isn't that what Paul said in that well-known verse in Ephesians 2, verse 8? For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God. Faith is given to us by God. Therefore, we should ask the Lord, give me more faith, give me greater faith, give me stronger faith. See, this father in Mark chapter 9 realized he had come to the one who could increase his faith.

Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief. We should follow his example and go to the only one who is the giver of faith. Is that not why the apostle wrote in Hebrews 12 verse 2, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith? He is the one who has given us faith, and he is the one who will perfect our faith. See, true faith can only be received from the Lord.

He is the source of faith. He is the substance of our faith. Yes, he's also the sustainer of our faith. And this man realized, well, I need my faith to be built up. I need my faith to be sustained. Therefore, I will cry to the Lord, Lord, help thy mine unbelief. He realized his faith wasn't perfect. He realized here's a fault in my life. Here's something I need help with. He knew this when he was approaching the Lord.

Whenever he was crying out to the Lord for mercy, Lord, my faith, it's not what it should be. You see, whenever we come to the Lord in prayer, we ought to ask in faith. James said in his little epistle in James one in verse six, but let him ask in faith. Nothing wavering for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and toss. James realized we cannot hope to obtain favor from God if our faith wavereth like the waves of the sea.

See, the waves of the sea have no stability. They're so changeable. They go this way and they go that way and the wind blows them and the wind draws them, but that is not what our faith is to be like. Our faith is to be established and sure, fixed upon the Lord. Therefore we ought to cry like this man, Lord, help thou mine unbelief."

Yes, I see the proclamation of faith and the plea for faith, but notice thirdly with me, and very encouragingly, the possibility through faith. You see, if we have faith in God and approach Him with faith, then we can have great confidence that the Lord will do great things. What was it that made this man cry out in this manner in verse 24, Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief? Well, it was the words of the Savior in verse 23, where the Lord said to him, if thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. There's a tremendous promise for us.

If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. There the Lord was saying to this man, if you would but only believe. That's how it can be read in the original Greek. If thou could but only believe, then all things would be possible to thee. You see, the Lord doesn't ask for much from his people.

He just asks us to believe in him. If ye could but believe, all things are possible. And what a tremendous promise the Savior provided this man with. Here he is with his son, who'd been in this condition from a child. The Lord says, if you would just believe, all things would be possible.

Is that not a promise we can take for us today? If we would only but believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. Is that not encouragement to pray on this evening? Is that not encouragement for us to pray on for our families?

Is that not encouragement to pray on for the open air ministry? Is that not encouragement to pray for all missionary work. That if we could just believe all things are possible. What treasures, what answers, what joy awaits us in this promise? And yet on the inverse, we could also say, well, what must we have missed out on because of our unbelief?

If we had only but believed in the Lord, what might he have done already? Now, when the Lord said, there all things are possible, it's not to be taken that literally anything that we could conceive of asking, the Lord would answer. but rather it's what you ask in faith and according to my will, that I will answer." So that is important to understand. That's why John said in 1 John 5 and verse 14, this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us.

And yet that is still an encouraging verse. That is still a verse that is given to show us the power of God and the power in prayer. That if we ask anything that's according to God's will, well He hears us and He will answer according to His will. And here this man comes, having heard the promise, if you believe all things are possible in the Lord. And then this man comes and says, Lord, I believe. So he took this promise of God and said, yes, I believe this promise is true. And he prayed believing. You see, if we would but only believe the Lord is able to do mighty things, exceeding abundantly above all that we could ask or think. See, where there is faith in the power of God, there is great possibility. Here's a verse that shows the possibility through faith, if you would only believe, all things are possible.

That was the theme of the Lord's when he spoke to the disciples in a similar situation when he said, if you would have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say to this might and remove, hence to yonder place. There's what faith the size of a grain of mustard seed can do. How small must our faith be in comparison? What need there is for us to say, Lord, increase my faith, that we might see the possibilities of faith in thee? You see, the possibilities with faith are unlimited.

All things are possible. There is nothing impossible with God. And yet there are times when we do not believe in God as we should. And that's what was recorded was the sin of the children of Israel in Psalm 78 and verse 41, where it said there that they turned back and tempted God and limited the Holy One of Israel. They limited the Lord.

They limited his power, they limited his promises, and they didn't believe, well, God is able. They didn't believe in the possibilities of faith. And what a different attitude Abraham had when he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith. See, Abraham was fully persuaded that what God has promised, he was also able to perform. He believed in the power of God, and he believed in the possibilities through believing in God.

What about the great chapter of faith, Hebrews 11? That shows the possibilities through faith. There we have a plethora of characters who had faith in God, and great things were accomplished through their faith in God. The end of the chapter goes through a whole realm of things that were accomplished by people who are unnamed. It says that through faith they subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in the fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

There's the possibilities through faith. All those different problems, all those different situations, all conquered through faith. Oh, if we would but believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." What a promise is given to us by the Savior in this verse. If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

May that be ingrained in our minds even this evening as we pray, that we would pray in the spirit of faith, believing that what God has promised, He is also able to perform. May we cry out, Lord, I believe. Help thou mine unbelief. May the Lord bless these words to our hearts

Amen.