

▼ **Focus, Faith, and Fulfillment - Part 1**

Rocklyn Clarke Sr. - Sunday February 11, 2018

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- **Read the Passage: Matthew 17:14-27**

▼ **Understand the passage.**

- ▼ Jesus was frustrated that his disciples lacked faith to cast out the demon.
 - Parallel accounts: Mark 9:14-31; Luke 9:37-45
 - Jesus clearly expressed his frustration with an unbelieving and perverse generation.
- ▼ This is reminiscent of the language used elsewhere in the Bible:
 - Moses in Deuteronomy 32:5 from the song of Moses (Deut 31:24 - 32:47) as he predicts the future apostasy of Israel.
 - Warped and crooked generation: Acts 2:40; Philip 2:15
 - “How long?”- Numbers 14:1-12
 - We eventually learn that the disciples failed due to their lack of faith.
 - We also learn that faith as small as a mustard seed can “move mountains”.
 - Jesus clearly expected them to have more faith.
 - Jesus expected them to know how to improve their faith.
- ▼ Jesus teaches Peter the implications of his messiahship while choosing not to force the issue with the tax collectors.
 - Peter answers the tax-collector’s question without thinking through the implications of Jesus’ messiahship.
 - He tried to make Jesus look good within the prevailing paradigm.
 - Jesus prompts Peter to reflect on the “taxable” status of the King’s subjects, forcing him to better understand the implications of the fact that Jesus is the Messiah.
 - Jesus, knowing he was headed for his final confrontation with the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem, avoids forcing the issue with the tax-collectors in Capernaum.

▼ **Re-focus on the Kingdom.**

- We need to shake off the world’s paradigms and think through the implications of who God really is and who Jesus really is.
- What do you do when things get difficult? Do you talk to God about it?

- Have you learned how to get an answer from God?
- Focusing on the Kingdom means a commitment to prayer, the Word, fellowship, and outreach.
- It means that Kingdom exploits are not just for “other people” or “professionals”.

▼ **Take Jesus’ identity, authority, and mission seriously.**

- Yes - Jesus’ attitude is consistent with God’s attitude expressed in other passages.
- ▶ Other expressions of attitudes by Jesus:
 - Yes - A failure to fully grasp the implications of Jesus’ identity and mission underlies both stories.
 - Jesus’ remarks about “little faith” reflected the disciples’ failure to understand the full implications of his mission.
 - We need to reflect deeply on Jesus’ mission and its implications.

▼ **Take your mission seriously.**

- Once you’ve decided to take Jesus’ mission seriously, you have to take your own mission seriously! - Matthew 28:18-20
- God only has one church and that church has one mission: proclaiming the good news of God’s Kingdom.
- God is reclaiming our broken world through Jesus and his followers. We each need to be on point so that we can do our part.
- Our inability to perform is often related to a lack of faith which, in turn, often results from a failure to engage either with who Jesus really is, or what Jesus is really doing.

▼ **Do your job! Enjoy the adventure.**

- We can’t be spectators - we have to be “all in”.

▼ **Future Discussion / Reflection Questions:**

- What does it mean to focus on the Kingdom?

▼ **What is the message?**

- What does it mean for you to take Jesus’ mission seriously?
- What is your mission? What does it mean to take your mission seriously?