

Discussion Guide to **Matthew 17:14-20**

**Jesus Heals a Demon-Possessed Boy**

14 When they came to the crowd, a man approached Jesus and knelt before him. 15 “Lord, have mercy on my son,” he said. “He has seizures and is suffering greatly. He often falls into the fire or into the water. 16 I brought him to your disciples, but they could not heal him.”

17 “You unbelieving and perverse generation,” Jesus replied, “how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy here to me.” 18 Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of the boy, and he was healed at that moment.

19 Then the disciples came to Jesus in private and asked, “Why couldn’t we drive it out?”

20 He replied, “Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Before you begin your discussion of these verses, have a short time of prayer… asking the Spirit of Christ to guide your discussion, give you insight, and grant you courage in your next steps of following Jesus.

**Intro**

This passage takes place immediately after Jesus and the three disciples (Peter, James and John) come down off of the mountain where Jesus had been transfigured—in power and glory—before them. At the very least, Peter, James and John have a new and different view and understanding of Jesus—even if they haven’t yet fully grasped the nature of Jesus’s ministry—one that would culminate in suffering and sacrifice for the sake of the world.

1. **In light of the context of this passage, what do you think Peter, James and John might have been thinking when witnessing this father approach and kneel before Jesus?**
2. **What surprises you about Jesus’s response in v. 17? To whom is he speaking?**
3. **Read Deuteronomy 32: 15-21… (Pauline pointed out that Jesus’s words in v.17 echoed these well-known words from the “Song of Moses” which rebuke the worthless idolatry of people—God’s very sons and daughters—who have abandoned God for their own way.)**

15 Jeshurun [Israel] grew fat and kicked;

filled with food, they became heavy and sleek.

They abandoned the God who made them

and rejected the Rock their Savior.

16 They made him jealous with their foreign gods

and angered him with their detestable idols.

17 They sacrificed to false gods, which are not God—

gods they had not known,

gods that recently appeared,

gods your ancestors did not fear.

18 You deserted the Rock, who fathered you;

you forgot the God who gave you birth.

19 The Lord saw this and rejected them

because he was angered by his sons and daughters.

20 “I will hide my face from them,” he said,

“and see what their end will be;

for they are a perverse generation,

children who are unfaithful.

21 They made me jealous by what is no god

and angered me with their worthless idols.

I will make them envious by those who are not a people;

I will make them angry by a nation that has no understanding.

1. In what ways is this passage relevant to this section in Matthew 17?
2. Where can you see or hear grace and love and hope in this portion of the “Song of Moses”? (also read Deuteronomy 32: 36-39)
3. Where can you see or hear grace and love and hope in the verses of Matthew 17:14-20?
4. **What, if anything, from Pauline’s sermon on this text encouraged, convicted or challenged you? Was there any specific response or application that you felt nudged by the Spirit to do or be as a result?**
5. **Take turns in your group saying aloud the answer Jesus gives in verse 20 to his disciples, and try to capture the tone of voice you think Jesus probably used.**
6. **With the last sentence in verse 20 in mind, share some “impossibilities” which you have seen God accomplish in your life, or in the life of someone close to you.**

**Close with prayer:**

Share with one another who and what you would like to bring to Jesus in a similar way for healing and freedom. Then, close your time in prayer, bringing your requests before God as the father in this passage brought his son before Jesus. With humility, with great concern and also with great expectation.