

28.63 Failure to Heal Demon-Possessed Boy; Death Predicted (Matthew 17:14–23; Mark 9:14–32; Luke 9:37–45)

✓ “Check” it out: opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows
[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher, not the student. It also indicates answers to questions.

Visuals and Tools:

- Pictures and/or visual aids found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check also “Activities” and “Handwork” below for additional suggested items.
- Mustard seed

Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach: Vocabulary words are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *seizures*: a symptom of epilepsy; not usually, but in this story the disease was caused by a demon

Scripture: (ESV)

Matthew 17:14 And when they came to the crowd, a man came up to him and, kneeling before him, 15 said, “Lord, have mercy on my son, for he has seizures and he suffers terribly. For often he falls into the fire, and often into the water. 16 And I brought him to your disciples, and they could not heal him.” 17 And Jesus answered, “O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him here to me.” 18 And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him, and the boy was healed instantly. 19 Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why could we not cast it out?” 20 He said to them, “Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.”

22 As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, “The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men, 23 and they will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day.” And they were greatly distressed.

Mark 9:14 And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and scribes arguing with them. 15 And immediately all the crowd, when they saw him, were greatly amazed and ran up to him and greeted him. 16 And he asked them, “What are you arguing about with them?” 17 And someone from the crowd answered him, “Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a spirit that makes him mute. 18 And whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able.” 19 And he answered them, “O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me.” 20 And they brought the boy to him. And when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. 21 And Jesus asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?” And he said, “From childhood. 22 And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.” 23 And Jesus said to him, “‘If you can!’ All things are possible for one who believes.” 24 Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, “I believe; help my unbelief!” 25 And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.” 26 And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, “He is dead.” 27 But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. 28 And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?” 29 And he said to them, “This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.”

30 They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And he did not want anyone to know, 31 for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, “The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise.” 32 But they did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask him.

Luke 9:37 On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd met him. 38 And behold, a man from the crowd cried out, “Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child. 39 And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out. It convulses him so that he foams at the mouth, and shatters him, and will hardly leave him. 40 And I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not.” 41 Jesus answered, “O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here.” 42 While he was coming, the demon threw him to the ground and convulsed him. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. 43 And all were astonished at the majesty of God.

But while they were all marveling at everything he was doing, Jesus said to his disciples, 44 “Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men.” 45 But they did not understand this saying, and it was concealed from them, so that they might not perceive it. And they were afraid to ask him about this saying.

Introduction/Review:

Peter, James, and John had seen Jesus transfigured before them. They had also seen Moses and Elijah visiting with Jesus about His coming “departure,” or death, in Jerusalem. But ✓equally if not more impressive than these two events was the voice from the bright cloud that declared, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him.” It all was terrifying, but Jesus assured these men that they need not be afraid.

Story:

The crowd

Jesus and the three disciples stayed on the mountain that night and descended the next day. As they approached the other disciples, they noticed a large crowd of people, including scribes, who were arguing with the disciples. When the crowd saw Jesus, they were greatly amazed. Why? Some say the reason was because He had been gone so long and had been needed for a situation we will explain. Other Bible teachers wonder if ✓perhaps Jesus’ face still shone with some of the residual glory it had manifested on the mountain—the fading glory like that which Moses had experienced on Mount Sinai. This would certainly cause amazement.

So the people ran up to Jesus and greeted him, but Jesus, understanding what had been going on, asked the disciples and/or the scribes, “What are you arguing about?” ✓We can assume the scribes had been insulting Jesus as they usually did.

The problem

Neither the scribes nor the disciples answered, but a man in the crowd did answer. Coming up to Jesus and kneeling before him, the man cried out, “Master, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child. An evil spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out and becomes rigid. It convulses him so that he foams at the mouth and grinds his teeth. It throws him down and won’t leave him. It has made him deaf and mute. I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not.”

Jesus, ✓answering the man and the doubting scribes,* proclaimed, “O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you and bear with you?” Jesus was “[u]pbraiding them with the length of time he had been with them, in which so many wonderful works had been done among them, and yet they remained unbelieving and incorrigible.” Also, He was “intimating, that his patience and longsuffering would not always continue; and that in a short time, he should be gone from them, and they should no longer enjoy the benefit of his ministry and miracles, but wrath should come upon them to the uttermost”

(<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/matthew-17-17.html>).

Then Jesus said to the man, “Bring your son here.”

Even as the man was bringing his son, the demon saw Jesus and convulsed the boy so that he fell on the

ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth.

Jesus asked the father, “How long has this been going on?”

The father answered, “Since he was a child. Often it casts him into fire or water to destroy him, but *if you can* do anything, have compassion on us and help us!” Notice that this man, by saying, “If you can,” seemed unsure whether or not Jesus could heal his son.

The rebuke

So Jesus repeated the doubtful man’s words: “*If you can*! All things are possible for one who believes.”

Immediately, repenting of his unbelief, and grieved at the present weakness of his faith, the father of the child cried out with tears, “I believe; help my unbelief!”**

The cure

When Jesus saw a crowd come running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “You mute and deaf spirit, I command you to come out of him and never enter him again.”

The demon, ✓unwilling to come out of one whom it had controlled so long, attacked the boy as it left, crying out and convulsing the boy terribly but coming out, leaving the boy like a corpse so that most of the people said, “He is dead.” But Jesus took him by the hand, lifted him up, and gave him back to his father.

The question

After the crowd had seen this marvelous work of Jesus, the Bible states, “All were astonished at the majesty of God.” Hallelujah! On the other hand, the disciples were puzzled. After they had all gone to a house, they asked Jesus privately, “Why could we not cast it out?”

Jesus answered, “Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move,*** and nothing will be impossible for you. However, this ✓fierce and obstinate kind of demon cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting.” [Older translations add the word *fasting*—“prayer and fasting.”]

The prediction

While they were all marveling at all the things Jesus was doing, the Lord and His disciples left the base of Mount Hermon in the area of Caesarea Philippi and passed through Galilee, ✓for Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem. For a third time He was teaching his disciples, “Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise.”

But the disciples did not understand these words because the meaning was hidden from them, and, ✓perhaps remembering Peter’s incident of rebuking Jesus, they were afraid to ask Jesus what He meant.

*“‘O faithless and perverse generation’; a way of speaking, which is never used of the disciples, and indeed could not be properly said of them; for though they often appeared to be men of little faith, yet not faithless; nor were they so rebellious, stubborn, and perverse, as here represented, though there was a great deal of perverseness in them: but the characters better suit the body of the Jewish nation, who, on account of the incredulity of this man, and those that were present, being of the same temper with them, are exclaimed against in words, which were long ago spoken of their ancestors, (Deuteronomy 32:5) and from whence they seem to be taken” (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/matthew-17-17.html>).

**John Gill states, “[H]e saw it was not in his own power to believe; nor had he strength of himself to oppose his unbelief; but that both faith must be given him, and power against unbelief” (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/mark-9-24.html>).

*** “. . . meaning, not that it would be ordinarily or ever done in a literal sense by the apostles, that they should remove mountains; but that they should be able to do things equally difficult, and as seemingly impossible, if they had but faith, when the glory of God, and the good of men, required it”
(<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/matthew-17-20.html>).

Lessons from This Lesson:

- Jesus is God:
He healed the demon-possessed boy when His disciples, who had been given authority to cast out demons, could not do it.
Again, He predicted His death and resurrection.
- When we pray the words, “Help thou mine unbelief,” we are asking, “Supply thou the defects of my faith. Give me strength and grace to put ‘entire’ confidence in thee”
(<https://biblehub.com/commentaries/barnes/mark/9.htm>).
- Just as the disciples did not understand Jesus’ prediction of His coming death and resurrection, “the plainest truths of the Bible are unintelligible to many because they have embraced some belief or opinion before which is erroneous, and which they are unwilling to abandon. The proper way of reading the Bible is to lay aside all previous opinions and submit entirely to God”
(<https://biblehub.com/commentaries/barnes/luke/9.htm>).

Activities:

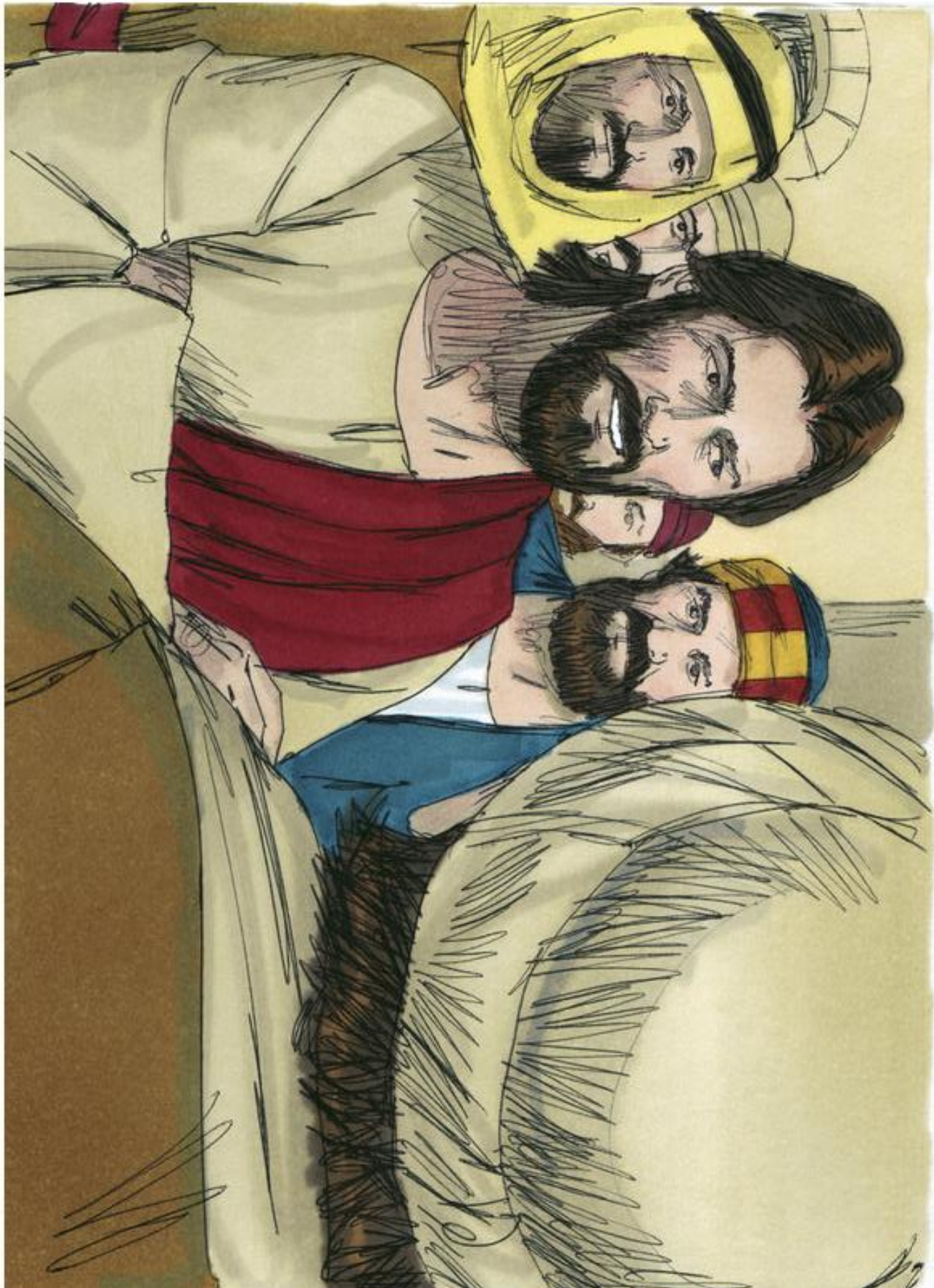
- Play dough: boy
- Thank the Lord for good health or for health limitations.
- Review questions: (Game: Cut five pairs of 2-inch footprints out of felt. Students place a footprint on a flannel board for each correct answer.)
 1. Whom did Jesus see when He and the three disciples came down from Mount Hermon? [A crowd; scribes; the other disciples.]
 2. What was wrong with the boy? [He was demon-possessed; so he fell down, foamed at the mouth; was deaf and mute, etc.]
 3. What words showed the father wasn’t sure Jesus could heal his son? [He said, “*If* you can heal,” and, “Help my unbelief.”]
 4. What things are possible for one who believes? [All things.]
 5. Would the evil spirit be able to enter the boy again? Why or why not? [No; because Jesus said never to enter him again.]
 6. Why could the disciples not heal the boy? [“Because of your little faith”; because “this kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting.”]
 7. Complete this sentence: “If you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to . . . [“This mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move.”]
 8. What words did Jesus want to sink into the ears of the disciples? [“The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And after three days he will rise.”]
 9. Explain how the disciples received this news. [They were distressed, did not understand, but were afraid to ask Jesus about His words.]

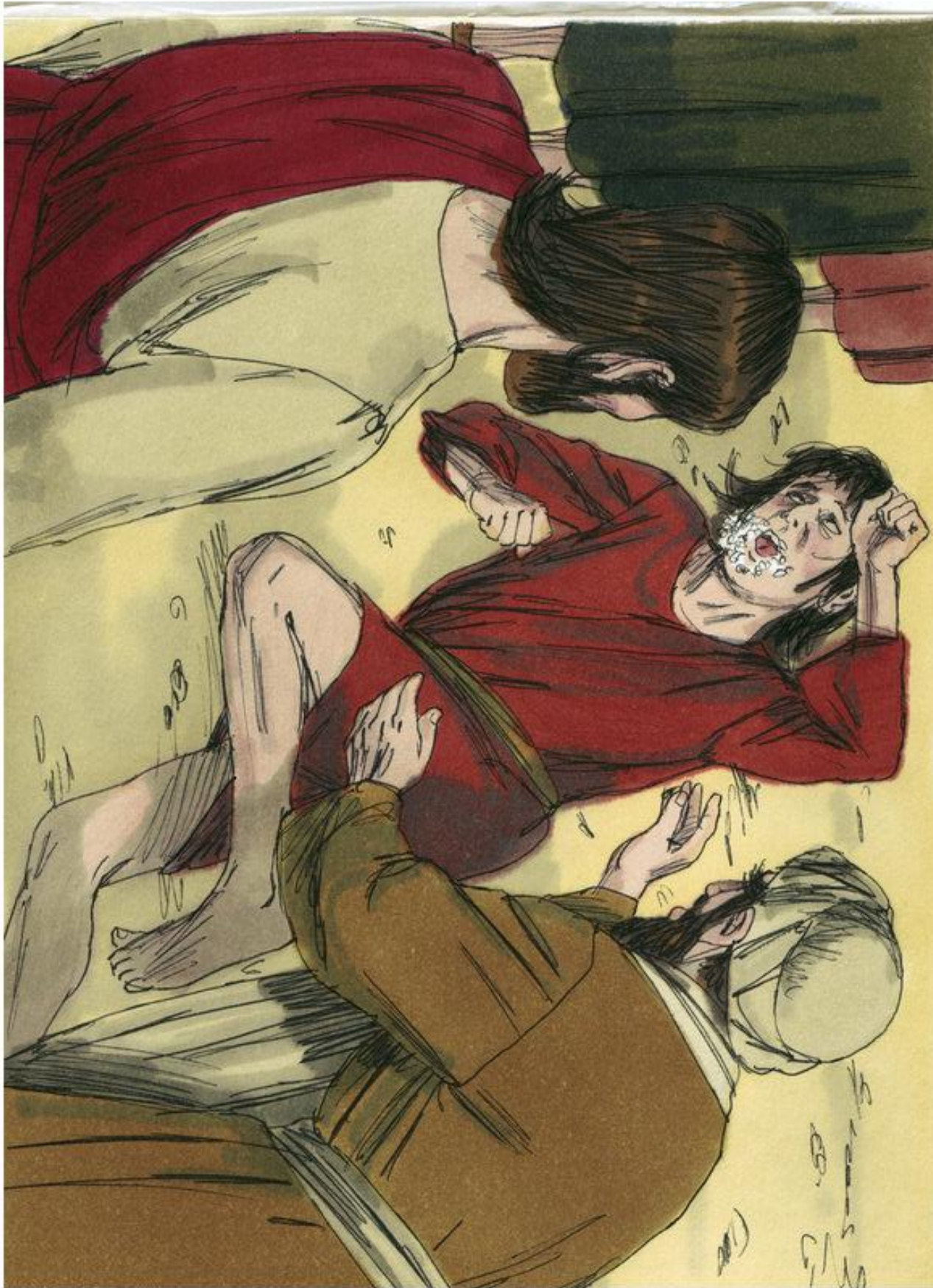
Handwork:

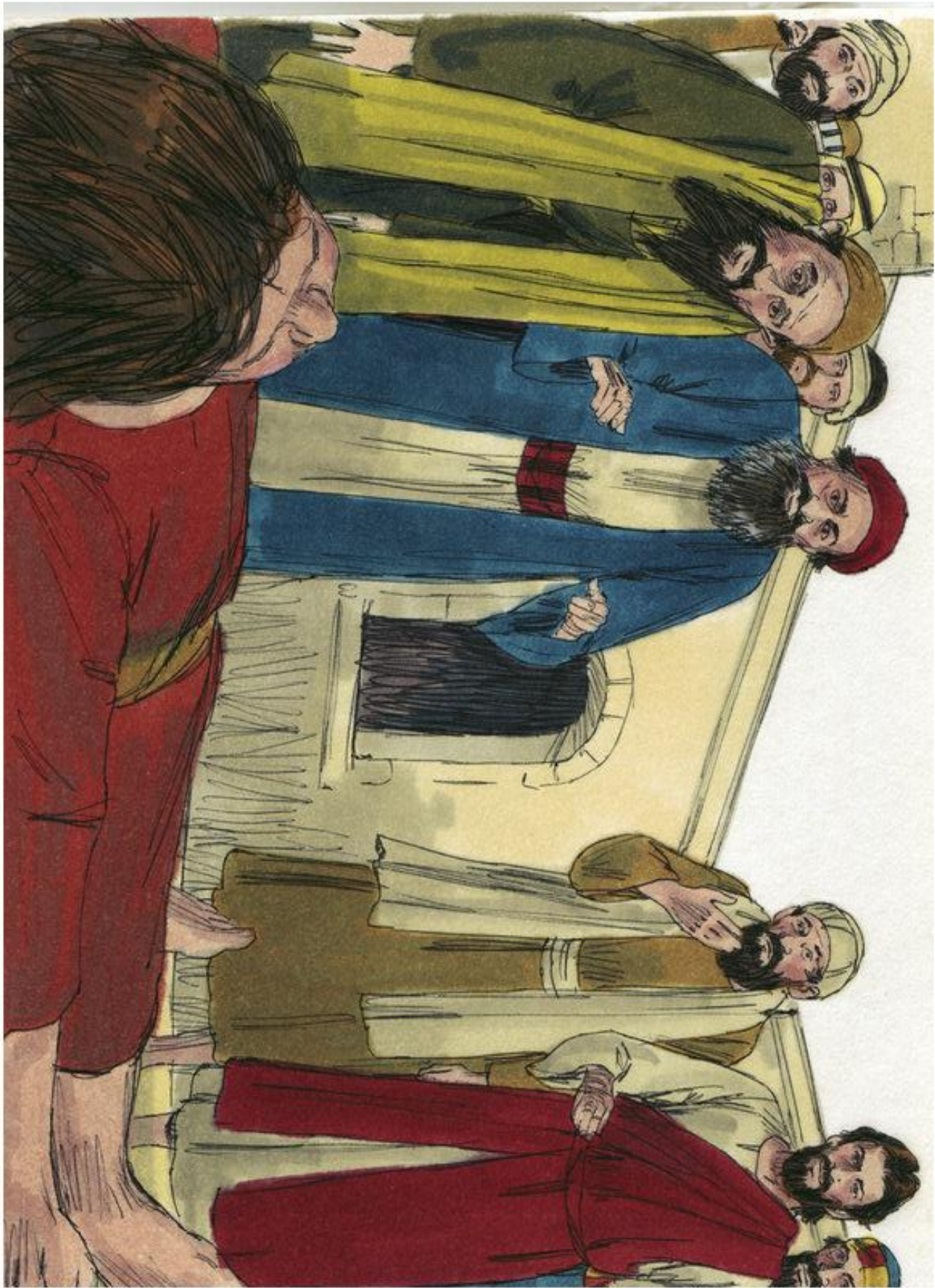
- Older students may do the word search found below
- Younger students may decorate the coloring page found below.

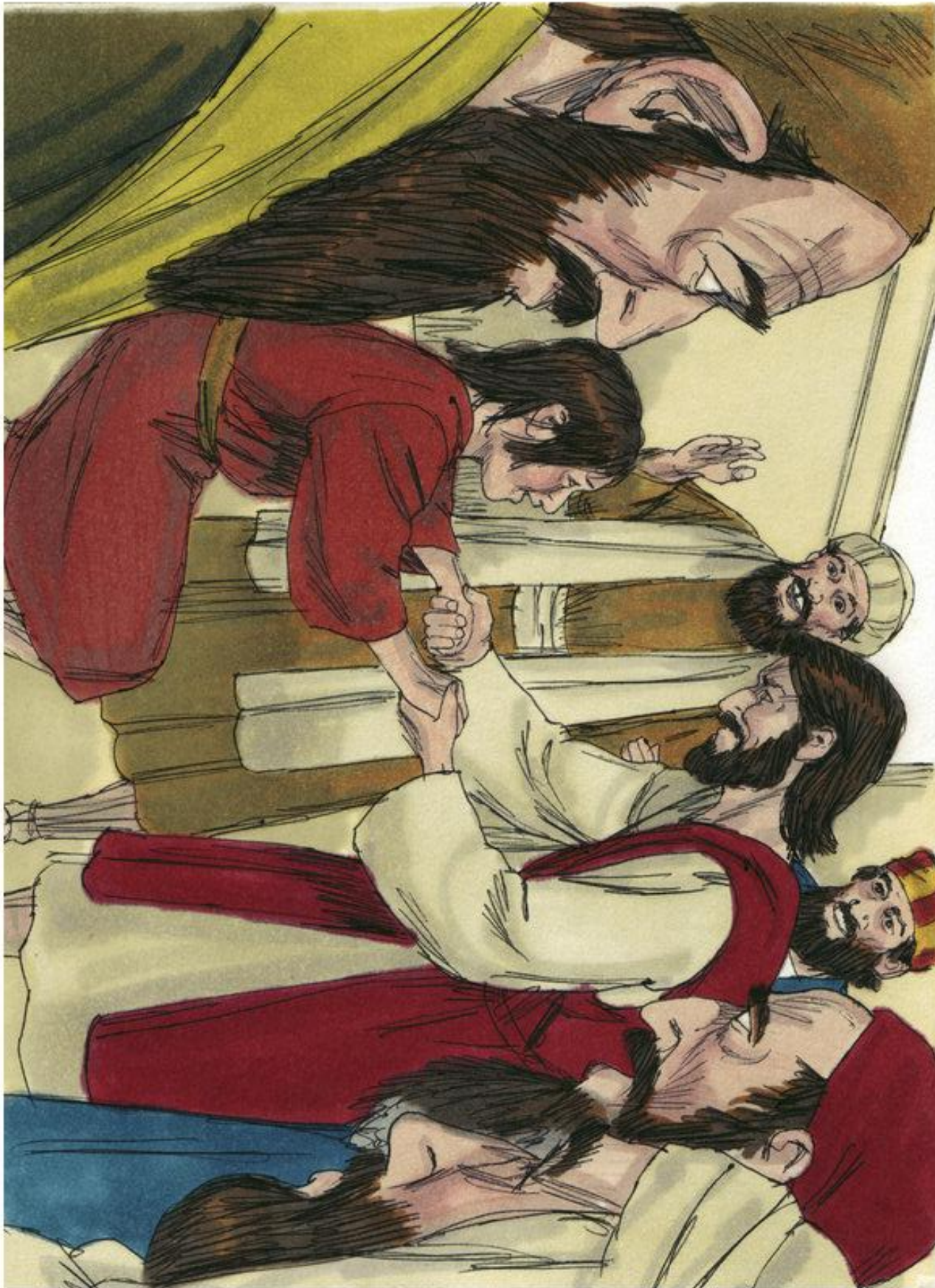
Memory Verse:

- Mark 9:23—All things are possible for one who believes.



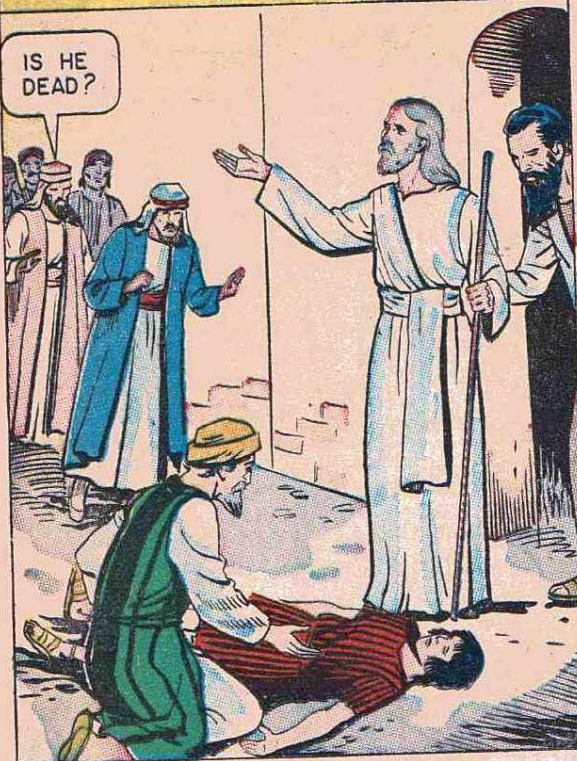






THE MEANING OF FAITH

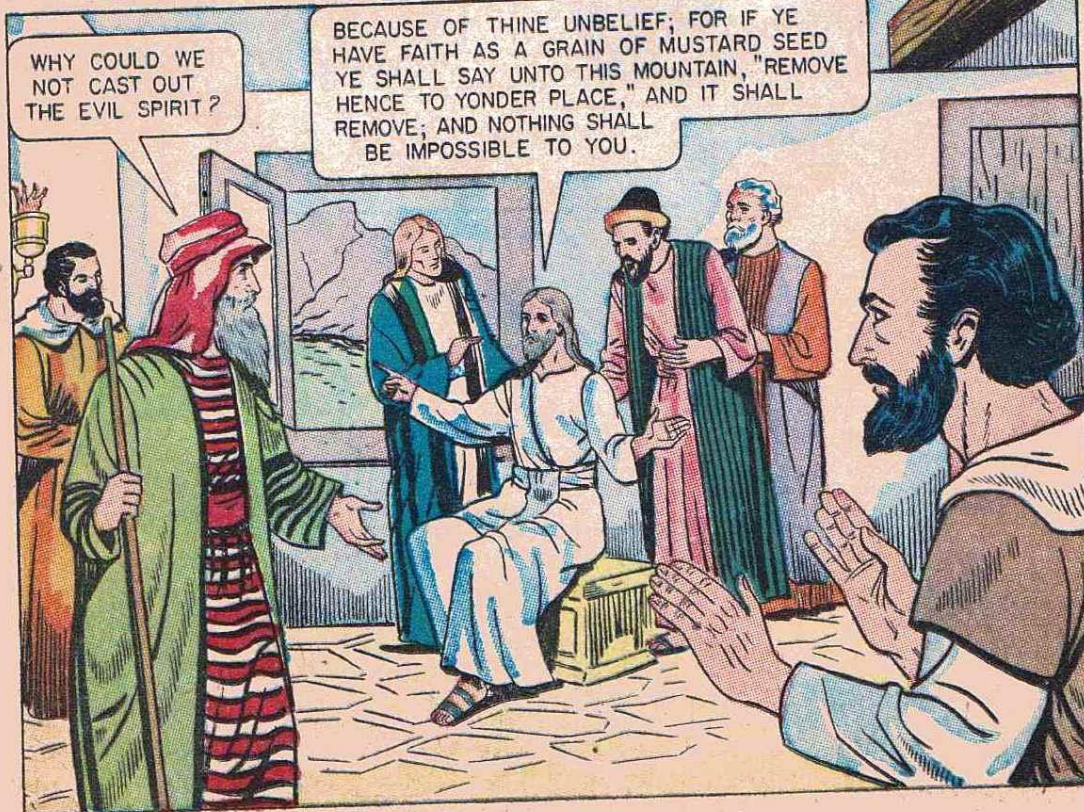
THE SPIRIT GRIED OUT AND LEFT THE BOY, AND HE FELL AND LAY QUIET.



THE BOY LIFTED HIS HEAD. THOSE WHO WATCHED SAW THAT HIS EYES WERE CLEAR AND HE WAS CALM.



AS SOON AS THE DISCIPLES WERE ALONE WITH JESUS, THEY QUESTIONED HIM.

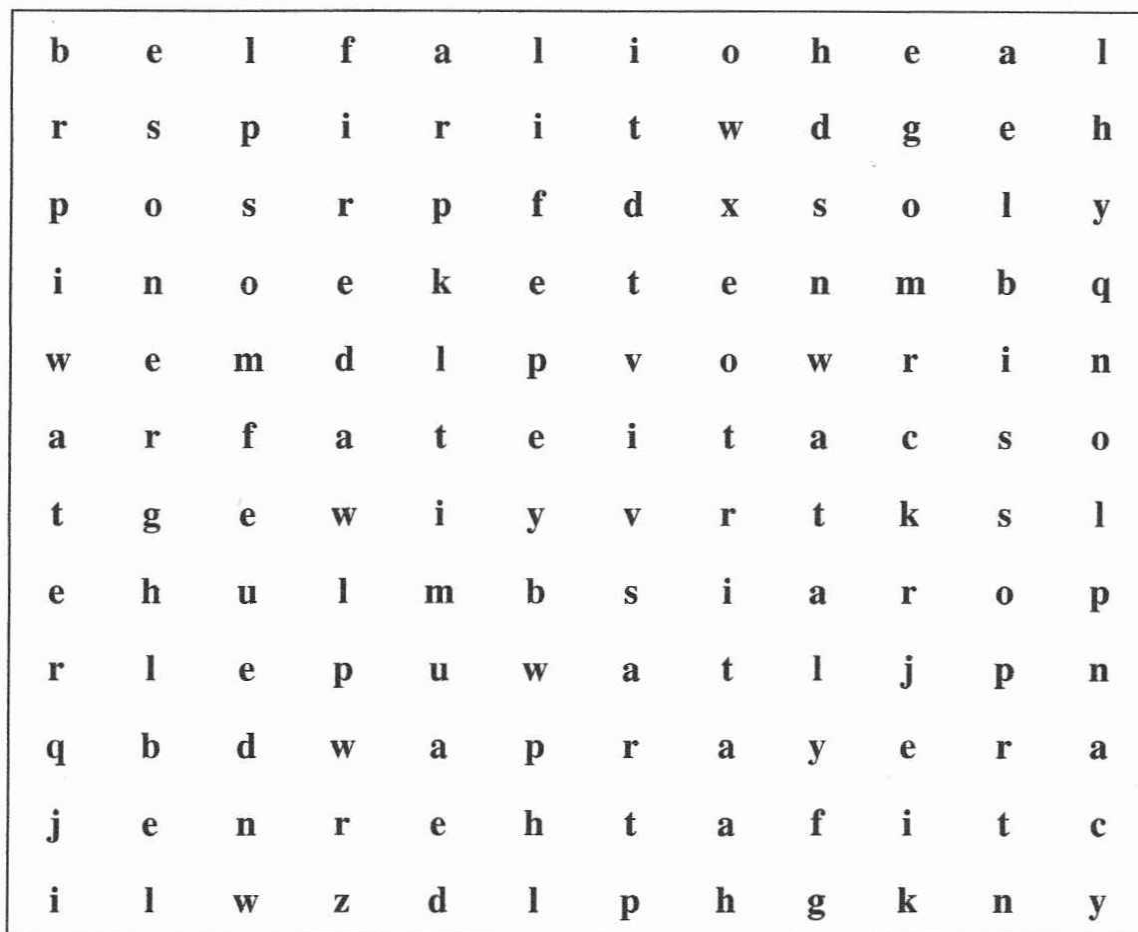


HE CAST OUT EVIL SPIRITS FROM THOSE WHO WERE POSSESSED.



Word Search

Jesus Heals a Boy with an Evil Spirit



spirit	father	son
evil	fire	water
possible	believes	prayer
healed		

Jesus told the disciples that
the evil spirit could only
come out by

Prayer

