

As frequently as we discuss justification by faith alone, looking at Jesus' earthly ministry helps us see a clear picture of the One we put our faith in. Let's look at two passages in Mark 9—verses 14–29 and 42–50. These passages give us insight into the effects of sin and evil on humanity, but also Jesus' authority over them.

### **Mark 9:14–29**

Immediately after Jesus shows his glory to Peter, James, and John, Jesus continues to display his power by casting out an unclean spirit.

- The unclean spirit in the boy caused him to partake in pretty destructive behavior (jumping into fire, drowning). What are some similarities between the effect the unclean spirit had, and the effect that sin has in our lives?
- Based on similar accounts in the gospels, other people most likely tried to fix the boy's problem with different methods. What are some faulty ways we try to beat sin in our lives?
- Jesus calls the people a faithless generation. We could be tempted to think that Jesus said this because the people weren't trying hard enough, but that certainly wasn't the case. Where does the power of our faith come from? Who was Jesus calling them to have faith in?
- Go back and read Mark 9:1–14. Why do you think Mark would tell a story that displays Jesus' glory right before he meets a demon-possessed boy? What does he want us to know about Jesus?
- Jesus showed that he was the only one who could fix the boy's problem and heal the unclean spirit. How does this relate to the gospel?

### **Mark 9:42–50**

We can gather from Jesus' entire ministry that sin should not be taken lightly, but verses 42–50 explicitly show us how seriously we should fight sin.

- Jesus puts a significant burden on those who cause children to sin. The church has a specific responsibility to raise children in the faith. What are some ways that all members of the church can contribute to the spiritual growth of children and youth in the church?
- Although we know that Jesus does not want us to literally cut off our hand or pluck out our eye, he does want us to take extreme

measures against sin. What sins do you often try to manage, instead of fighting? In what ways do you manage sin? Do you find it easy to forget that sin is not just bad, but destructive?

- In light of the lesson these two passages teach us, how does Jesus want us to fight sin?