

# Dealing with Disappointment

Submitted by Dr. Anthony Brown

## Matthew 17:18-20 (BSB)

*<sup>18</sup>Then Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of the boy, and he was healed from that moment. <sup>19</sup>Afterward the disciples came to Jesus privately and asked, “Why couldn’t we drive it out?” <sup>20</sup>“Because you have so little faith,” He answered. “For truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”*

I start this reflection with a question. Has anyone had to deal with disappointment recently? Just think about the past couple of years – we have had to cancel weddings, defer graduation parties, had to choose virtual and drive-by options for major life celebrations, and endured major holidays that could not look like they had looked in the past. There has been a great deal of disappointment. Add to this, the disappointments we’ve experienced with other people and ourselves. Disappointment has been real.

Disappointment was the side of the text I saw in this morning’s scripture. A father is disappointed – his son is in pain and agony, and he can’t help him. So, he brings the boy to the disciples and – we know this story – they are not able to heal him. The disciple’s disappointment caught my attention in the middle of the text, the disciples come to Jesus privately and ask, disappointedly in my opinion, “why couldn’t we drive it out?” Can you hear, sense, relate to their disappointment. The emotion of disappointment is real. It has many faces – something or someone was not as good or did not perform as you hoped or expected. And in the case of our text a clear side of the disappointment is the disciple’s disappointment with themselves.

And here’s this morning’s encouragement, Jesus doesn’t buy into the emotion of disappointment, he uses it as an opportunity to remind the disciples about the importance of faith. And I am encouraged by this because what these past few years have reminded us is that “our faith” can keep us strong in the midst of life’s disappointments. What does faith tell us? This list could be long, but I’ll add a couple here. Faith tells us that God is still in control. Faith tells us that He sees everything that we’re going through. Faith tells us that with God what seems impossible, is possible. Faith tells us that even when we make mistakes, God still has faith in us.

Experts suggest some practical steps when dealing with disappointment. Remember your disappointment suggest you are passionate about something. Use it, disappointment, as an opportunity for growth, and understand disappointment can make you stronger, and in the example in the text – the reminder is that our faith always needs strengthening. The goal today is not to minimize or overlook your disappointment, it is to suggest HOW you can deal with disappointment and say to “this mountain” move from here to there. Be encouraged today – God is waiting to use even your disappointments to strengthen your faith.