

Luke 9:37-50

Introduction: How do you respond to your own failures in your walk of faith? How do you think God responds to your failure? The disciples fail three times in this passage. Let's see how Jesus handles their failure.

Jesus reveals the magnificence of God—9:37-45 (the disciples fail to heal)

- 1) Jesus' miracle of healing—9:37-43a ³⁷ *Now on the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a large crowd met Him.*
 - a) The inability of the 9 disciples to help a desperate father—³⁸ *And behold, a man from the crowd shouted (to be heard above the crowd), saying, "Teacher, I beg You to look at my son, because he is my only child [μονογενής].* ³⁹ *And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly screams (enabled by the demon; cf. Mark 9:26); it throws him into convulsions (similar to an epileptic seizure) with foaming at the mouth, and only with difficulty does it leave him, while bruising him.* ⁴⁰ *So I begged (cf. 9:38) Your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able."*
 - i) This was the only child who would support this man when he was old, and to inherit his land and property when he dies.
 - b) ⁴¹ *Then Jesus, having responded, said,*
 - i) To the 9 disciples and the crowd—"O faithless [ἄπιστος] and twisted [pf. pass. ptc. διαστρέφω] generation, how long shall I be with you^{pl}, and put up with [ἀνέχομαι] you^{pl}?"
 - ii) To the father—"Bring your son here."
 - iii) The rebellion of the demon—⁴² *And while he was still approaching, the demon threw him down and convulsed him.*
 - c) *But Jesus ... (expresses 3 traits)*
 - i) Authority—*rebuked the unclean spirit,*
 - ii) Power—*and healed the boy,* (this is the 13th miracle done in Galilee that is recorded in Luke)
 - iii) Compassion—*and gave him back to his father.*
 - These are things Jesus could do with Israel if they would repent of their sin and trust Jesus.
 - d) Result—⁴³ *Then they were all astonished [impf. pass. ind. ἐκπλήσσω] at the magnificence [μεγαλειότης] (splendor, grandeur) of God. (cf. Acts 10:38)*
 - i) Luke 1:46 (plural of μεγαλειός)—Mary's response to God's revelation
 - ii) Acts 2:11 (plural of μεγαλειός)—the content of the speaking at Pentecost
 - iii) Acts 19:27—falsely attributed to Artemis/Diana
 - iv) 2nd Peter 1:16—Peter refers to the transfiguration
- 2) The inability of the disciples—9:43b-45 *But while everyone was marveling [pres. act. ptc. θαυμάζω] at all the things Jesus did, He said to His disciples.*
 - a) What did He say? ⁴⁴ *"Let these words sink (lit. "place these words", store them in your memory) into your^{pl} ears,*
 - i) What words? The words and works of Jesus

- ii) Why? because of the certainty of future events: *because the Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men.*” (popularity doesn’t last)
- b) Their response (the disciples fail to understand)
 - i) They were deeply grieved—Matthew 17:23
 - ii) ⁴⁵ *But they did not understand [ἀγνοέω] this saying,*
 - iii) *and it was hidden from them so that they would not discern [αἰσθάνομαι] it;*
 - iv) *and they were afraid to ask Him concerning this saying.*
 - v) What Jesus is teaching doesn’t fit with their way of thinking. They want their own glory in a kingdom without a cross, as is evident in the next sentences.

Jesus teaches on true greatness—9:46-50 (the disciples fail the humility test)

- Before this section, Jesus stops in Capernaum and pays the voluntary temple tax by means of a miracle (Matthew 17:24-27) This is now about 6 months before His crucifixion and resurrection.
- 1) The self-oriented setting—9:46 ⁴⁶ *Now a dispute [διαλογισμός] started among them as to which of them might be greater [μέγας] (in the kingdom; cf. Matthew 18:1).*
- 2) Jesus, in His omniscience, corrects their self-orientation—9:47-48 ⁴⁷ *But Jesus, knowing the thought [διαλογισμός] of their heart, having taken a child, He set him by His side, ⁴⁸ and said to them,*
 - a) What? (from the least to the greatest)
 - i) *“Whoever welcomes this child in My name welcomes Me,*
 - (1) Earthly status is not relevant in Jesus’ kingdom. (Magill)
 - (2) A child is utterly dependent and without rights.
 - ii) *and whoever welcomes Me welcomes Him who sent [ἀποστέλλω] Me,*
 - b) Why?
 - i) *for he who is least [μικρός] among you^{pl} all is the one who will be great [μέγας] (in God’s eyes).*
- 3) An unwelcoming attitude demonstrated by the apostles—9:49-50 ⁴⁹ *Then John, having responded, said, “Master,*
 - a) What they did—9:49a
 - i) *we saw someone casting out demons in Your name,*
 - ii) *and we hindered him*
 - b) Why they did what they did—9:49b
 - i) *because he does not follow with us.”*
 - c) Jesus corrects their attitude—9:50 ⁵⁰ *But Jesus said to him,*
 - i) What? *“Do not hinder him,*
 - ii) Why? *because he who is not against [κατά] us is for [ὑπέρ] us.”*
 - (1) The test of doctrine (1st John 4:1-3; 2nd John 1:7-11) and the test of morals (1st John 2:4-6, 29; 3:4-12; 4:5, 20).

Take-home truth: Take your failures to God. He already knows them, and loves you anyway. You do not need to be perfect to be a genuine follower of Christ.