

# Why can't we?

## GROWTH GUIDE AUGUST 11, 2024

12th Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture: Matthew 17:14-21

### AUTHOR

Matthew (Levi), a Jewish tax collector who became one of Jesus' disciples. Matthew wrote especially to the Jews and the purpose of this gospel was to present clear evidence that Jesus is the Messiah, the Savior. It was written approximately A.D. 60-65.

### CONTEXT

Prior to our scripture passage for today, Jesus along with Peter, James, and John (disciples) had gone to a mountaintop where they witnessed the transfiguration of Jesus (Jesus' appearance changed – his face was like the sun and his clothes were white like light.) Moses and Elijah joined Jesus and spoke to him. The disciples heard God speak about his beloved Son. It was an amazing experience. As soon as they reached the foot of the mountain there was a large crowd waiting for them as our scripture passage opens.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read Matthew 17:14-21. What stands out to you in this passage?
2. After taking some time for spiritual renewal, they went from a mountaintop high to a low in the valley. Have you ever experienced this?
3. Who did Jesus encounter when they came off the mountain and what did he ask Jesus to do? What was the result of the disciples' actions?
4. Are you surprised by Jesus' response in Matthew 17:17? Does it seem harsh?

5. Jesus is frustrated with a generation that he sees reflected in his disciples. In Matthew 17:17 how does he describe this generation?
6. How did Jesus heal the boy and how long until he was cured?
7. The disciples asked Jesus why they could not cure the boy. What was Jesus' response? Jesus was not criticizing the disciples so much as he was encouraging them to a greater faith. Could it be that they relied on their own power to heal? Even a little faith has great potential (much like the tiniest seed – mustard seed) when we trust in God's power to act. Have you ever struggled to trust God?
8. This same story is told in Mark 9:14-29 and Luke 9:37-42. Mark gives more details in his telling of the story. What other details can you glean in the Mark passage?
9. The Father in Mark 9:24 tells Jesus, "I believe, help my unbelief!" Do you ever struggle with this same thought?
10. Read Mark 9:29. What does Jesus say will cast out this particular demon?
11. Do you pray expectantly? Who could you pray for today that's in need of healing?
12. Sometimes healing does not take place in our lifetime. Does this challenge you?

### ENCOURAGEMENT

When we feel overwhelmed by an obstacle or problem that looms large like a mountain that will not move, we can look to Jesus to strengthen and grow our faith, as we trust in him.