

## **Preaching on Mark 9:14-29** **Casting Out an Evil Spirit**

Once again I would draw attention to my revision of Fred Craddock's preliminary methodology in preparing for the sermon. Basically it involves three things:

- 1) Analysis of the text
- 2) Looking at any ancillary materials (ranging from what is happening in your church to theological or literary works on evil embodying itself in the human community.
- 3) Determining several themes in the text and choosing one.

### A. Analysis of the Text

1. In analyzing the text note that our unit occurs in 8:22-10:52: Jesus' Way to Jerusalem. At the boundaries is the healing of two blind men (8:22-26 and 10:46-52). What is noticeable in this unit is that while blind men come to see, people who are not impaired in vision physically (the disciples) are blind to the spiritual implication of Jesus' mission. Three times Jesus makes his famous passion predictions (8:31-32; 9:30-32; 10:32-34). Each one is followed by misunderstanding by the disciples and Jesus' clarifications on discipleship. It is noticeable in our unit (9:14-29) a similar pattern is implicit.
2. In analysis of the text the parallels in Matthew (17:14-18) and Luke (9:37-43a) are much briefer. How do we account for that? Note when Matt and Luke place this unit in their narrative.
3. Mark especially expands in Mark 9:14-16 and 9:11-15. Why?
4. Also Luke has no parallel in Mark 9:28-29.
5. Now divide Mark's text into the main sections and get in mind what is going on there. Check commentaries. Geddert and Hartman are excellent.

### B. Make a connection between what is happening in this text and how you evaluate the spiritual situation in your congregation to whom you preach.

### C. Isolate Several Themes in the Text

1. The Dullness of the Disciples
2. The theme of death and resurrection (cf. 9:9-13); also 9:26-27.
3. The Cry of the Father in the presence of chaos "I believe – Please help my unbelief" (9:24) -- Faith in the face of unbelief.

I chose the latter theme:

In contrast with the disciples who are interested in the technique of exorcism the text commends an anonymous man who is prepared to enter God's new world with nothing but unyielding faith.