**Text: Mark 9:17-29**

**Subject: We Are Under Siege!**

 In our text, we find a father and a son who were both under siege. At first glance, we might conclude that the son was under siege because he had a physiological condition that caused him to be mute, and also, from time to time, caused him to have violent seizures.

 Some commentators suggest that the boy had epilepsy which caused the boy to fall to the ground without warning. And when it came upon him, it also took away the boy’s ability to speak.

Said another way, this perceived physical condition caused the boy to become numb so much to the point that he became rigid. We know this because our text in verse 18 the boys father said, whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and then becomes rigid.

In another sense, we might surmise that the boy was also suffering from some type of neuropathy which causes numbness and hot and cold flashes. In verse 22, the father told The Lord Jesus that the condition cast the boy into fire and water to destroy him.

In other words, from birth, this boy had an uncomfortable, uncontrollable and violent condition that caused him to be numb and in pain and as a result, for most of his life, he was under siege.

Before I go any further, let me define some more terms. According to the dictionary, to be under siege means to live in a condition of misfortune for a prolonged period of time. It also a military operation in which enemy forces surround a town or building, cutting off essential supplies, with the aim of compelling the surrender of those inside.

This is where in the movies, someone would say, “we’ve got you surrounded, come out with your hands up.”

In this case, the boy was under siege by a relentless condition that came upon for a prolonged period of time and caused him to become numb because of the drama and trauma that he had been subjected to for all of his life.

And if we look deeper into the matter, we can conclude that at the root of the boys physical condition was a spiritual condition whereby the enemy had the boy and his father surrounded with pain and suffering that would not let up.

We know this because the first thing the father said to Jesus was, Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a spirit that makes him mute. In the King James Version, this spirit is referred to as a dumb spirit. The NLT calls it an evil spirit. The Contemporary English Version says it is a demonic spirit.

However, whichever version we choose, each version agrees that the root of the boy’s physical condition was something spiritual where the enemy had come upon the boy and put him under siege so much to the point that he become numb and disabled from functioning properly in his life.

Church, so it is with us. We too are under siege by the enemy who has got us surrounded by all manner of evil and difficult things that have made us Spiritually numb because of the onslaught of negativity that we are being forced to endure.

As a nation, it seems like we are under siege by a deaf and dumb spirit that brought to us pain and suffering the likes of which we have never seen before. And the likes of which seems to be getting bolder and bolder; meaner and meaner; and more destructive as each day goes by.

I can tell that this nation is under the influence of a demonic spirit because usually the enemy does stuff that doesn’t make any sense and comes upon us, at will, in order to gain a stronghold over our lives for a prolonged period of time.

So it was with the boy in our text, the enemy had come against him from birth whenever and wherever he felt like it and always in a way that did not make any sense.

At the same time, our community, especially the African American community in general, and specifically in DC is under siege by all manner of injustice and poverty. As a result, many people in our community have grown numb to the value of life partly because our lives have not really mattered since 1619.

In essence, I surmise that it is hard to value one’s life especially when your life has not been valued by those who have been given the responsibility to do what’s right for all its citizens.

Now, don’t’ get me wrong. I am not saying that we too do not have a responsibility to value our own lives and take ownership of our own condition. Rather, what I am saying is that given the circumstances of what we’ve gone through from the birth of this nation, I can understand how many may have grown spiritually numb because we have been under siege for more than 400 hundred years.

In other words, throughout the history of this country, we as a people, and as individuals, have tried to advance. However, because of the demonic spirit of racism, there has been a concerted and somewhat successful effort, to stop us in our tracks from making the progress in our lives.

I have personally seen where the old saying: “we take one step forward but then we have to take two steps back,” has certainly been true in my life. And I know this is true for many other people that I know in our community.

Now, even though I keep climbing and striving, there are too many people who have all but given in and given up because the spirit of hopelessness and helplessness has taken root because we have been under siege for such a prolonged period of time.

At the same time, because of what we have endured, many in our community are hostile and violent because many were born into a hostile environment and is all some have ever known.

For instance, I become distraught when I watch the news because every day, they report the number of people who have been shot and killed due to senseless gun violence. Just this past weekend, there were 3 deadly shootings in DC; more than 16 killings in the first 12 days of July; and nearly 100 hundred lives have been lost in the first 6 months of this year in DC alone.

And unfortunately, those who have been shot and those who have done the shooting are people of color.

Church, again, I don’t want to make any excuses but I understand the impact of being under siege by the spirit of poverty and hopelessness and how it can cause someone to become numb to the value of life especially when someone has never known the value of their own lives.

At the same time, during this time of plague and pandemic, we have been under siege by virus that seems to have a mind of its own whereby it indiscriminately attacks people whenever and wherever it feels like it.

As a result, too many people have become spiritually numb because we have been wrought with fear, doubt and worry, that something bad is going to happen to us.

O yes, We Are Under Siege because we have been quarantined for a prolonged period of time and some people are starting to feel hopeless and helpless because of situation.

Trust, there are some people who are starting to feel like they are losing their minds because it doesn’t seem like this thing is ever going to end. In other words, this thing is starting to get on our nerves and is beginning to effect our nervous systems in a negative way.

Now, from a physiological perspective, when nerve cells have been under siege by emotional trauma for a prolonged period of time, the neurons begin to wear down and can cause us to experience a neuropathy that may cause us to become numb like the boy in our text.

The same thing happens from a Spiritual perspective. After we have been under siege by the enemy for a prolonged period of time, our hearts can get hardened and our faith can begin to fail. And when it fails, then we, indeed, will become Spiritually numb.

Now, when we become Spiritually numb, we lose all sense and perception of the presence of God. We know this because in Mark 8:14-21, the Lord Jesus speaking to the Spiritually numb pharisees asked, why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread?

Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear? And do you not remember? When I broke five loaves for the five thousand?...and the seven for the four thousand?...and He said to them, do you not yet understand?

In other words, the Lord Jesus Christ was saying that the Pharisees could not see, hear, or understand that God was in the midst because they were Spiritually numb because their hearts were hardened.

Now, we can’t celebrate too long because the truth of the matter is perhaps some of our hearts have become hardened because of all that we have been under siege for far too long as a Nation; as a people; and as individuals.

Therefore, there are a few things we need to understand.

First, we need to know that **hardened hearts will cause us to be Spiritually numb**. We know this because in Ephesians 4:17-18 the Apostle Paul said, [we] must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds.

They are darkened in the understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.

And if we think closely about this, what this is telling us is that we have a choice to respond as the Gentiles who were Spiritually numb because they had hardness of heart. Or we can respond with Christ which will cause to be renewed in the spirit of our minds.

Ephesians 4:20-21 says, that is not the way we learned Christ—assuming that you have heard Him and were taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus.

In other words, we have a choice to tune out all of the negative news that is trying to besiege us; harden our hearts; and cause us to be so Spiritually numb that we cannot see, hear, or understand God.

Or, we can choose to have faith in Christ who is the only One who can help us to get through the attacks of the enemy who thinks He has us surrounded on every side.

Therefore, the second thing we should keep in mind is that **complete faith is the key to victory over Spiritual numbness**. We know this is true because in our text, in verse 19, after the father told The Lord Jesus that his son was being tormented by spirit that caused him to be mute and ultimately rigid, the first thing the Lord said was, O faithless generation, how long and to be with you?

Now, let’s pause here for a minute because victory over spiritual numbness takes a complete faith. In other words, “ain’t no half stepping” with this spirit because it is one that has come over a course of time, and can become a stronghold that does not intend to leave unless we truly believe, deep down in our hearts that The Lord Jesus Christ can and will rescue us from the torment that this evil spirt intends to bring.

In fact, what we should know is that we must have complete faith especially now because the enemy is coming at us with a vengeance because he knows that his time is winding up.

Revelation 12:12 says, woe to you O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short.

In other words, the reason why evil seems to be on a rampage where it seems like we are under siege is because we are. **We ARE Under Siege!**

We **ARE** in the middle of an all-out assault by the enemy so that we would become so spiritually numb that we will not be able to perceive the presence of God operating in our midst; and so that we will continue to be tormented like the boy in our text.

Therefore, we have to have complete faith because any lack of faith will be enough to come against the siege of the enemy.

In verse 20, when they brought the boy to Jesus, and when the spirit saw Him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth.

In other words, this spirit even bucked The Lord Jesus. It says when the spirit saw Jesus it caused the boy to go into convulsions.

Therefore, you know that if that spirit will buck Jesus, you know it will try to buck you and me. And if we think about what’s really happening here, the evil spirit had already bucked father and his son; and it had already bucked the disciples who could not cast it out.

And now, here, it tried to buck the Lord Jesus when it laid eyes on Him.

I guess what I’m trying to say is that nowadays, the enemy is playing for keeps because this is it! His time is short! So, like the finally on the 4th of July, when the fireworks are about to end, he just keeps coming and coming and coming with attack, after attack, after attack because he knows that his time is winding up.

And his ultimate goal is render us spiritually numb and ineffective so that we will continue to live a live of misery and torment like the boy and his father in our text.

The third thing we should do in order to overcome Spiritual numbness is to **Be Aware of What Type of Faith We Really Have**.

In our text, in verse 22, after the father told the Lord Jesus that his son had been under siege from birth, he said, and it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But **if** you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.

Then, in verse 23, the Lord Jesus Christ said to him, **If you can**! All things are possible for one who believes.

Before we go any further, let’s pause for the cause here because if we move too fast, we might miss what just happened.

First, the man, without even knowing it, exposed what type of faith he had. He said to Jesus—**IF** you can do anything have compassion on us. In other words, the man was not completely sure that The Lord Jesus Christ could do anything about his situation.

Perhaps this is because that demon had just bucked the Lord and everyone else who could not relieve his son of his misery and torment.

Or perhaps, that’s just what kind of faith he had. He had faith, but it was not a complete type of faith which is what was required to get rid of that stubborn spirit that had his son under siege for such a long period of time.

If I may, let me take a minute to tell you what complete faith entails. In the Amplified version, Hebrews 11:1 says, now faith is the assurance (the confirmation, the title deed) of the things [we] hope for, being the proof of things [we] do not see and the conviction of their reality [faith perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the senses].

Now according to the law, a title deed is a legal document that constitutes evidence of a right, especially to ownership of property. In the case of faith, that legal document is the Word of God that is a Testament of what God’s will is for our lives.

And this document was signed, sealed and delivered by the blood of Jesus when He died on the cross and was risen from the dead. And because of that, we have the assurance, that whatever God has said in His Word is true.

Then, proof of the existence of the supernatural reality is the degree to which we spiritually perceive that whatever God has already said and done in His Word, He is able to do in our lives.

And that’s why The Lord Jesus said to the man, basically, the real question is not if He, the Lord Jesus, could do anything to help the man. Rather, the real question was: IF the man completely believed that something could be done.

That’s why He said to the man, If **YOU** can! **ALL** THINGS ARE POSSIBLE FOR ONE WHO BELIEVES.

In other words, the Lord Jesus was saying don’t worry about what I can do. Instead, the question is do you really believe that I can do it; not just some things--- but ALL things which includes everything!

Therefore, let me ask you today. Do you really believe that the Lord Jesus Christ can **all things** that you are concerned about in your life?

Do you completely believe that even though you might be under siege, you can still be free?

Do you believe, that you can be set free from your misery?

Do you believe that you can come back to life again?

Do you believe that the Lord Jesus can pick you up and turn you around, and put your feet on solid ground?

Do you completely believe that through Christ ALL things are possible?

Well, I hope you said YES!

But, if you said NO, or I’m not sure,

Then, just know that **help** is on the way.

In our text, when the Lord Jesus said: If **YOU** can! All things are possible, the man immediately cried out and said, I Believe! But HELP my unbelief!

And before he said anything else, the Lord Jesus rebuked the mute and deaf spirit and said “I command you, come out of him and never enter him again!”

In other words, the truth will make us free.

We have to be true to ourselves about what type of faith we really have because God already knows.

And when we fess up to ourselves, about we REALLY are, then God will respond and will come to our rescue.

He will set us free!

He will wake us up!

He will protect us when we are under siege!

God knows that we under siege,

But is our complete faith

That will help us when the enemy comes rushing like flood,

For God will raise up a standard against him.

Therefore, just remember that:

* **Hardened hearts will cause us to be Spiritually numb**
* **Complete faith is the key to victory over Spiritual numbness**
* **We have to be Aware of What Type of Faith We Really Have**