

Life Group notes, 20 October 2024 - Don't Celebrate Too Early. Mark Chapter 9

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<https://www.npbc.org.nz/sermons/dont-celebrate-too-early/>

Intro:

Today we are looking at the Mount of Transfiguration. You could argue that this event is one of the most amazing, awe-inspiring moments of Jesus' earthly ministry, yet Jesus is using this mountain top moment to teach his disciples and us that the glory of the Messiah, is going to be found in suffering and death.

Simply put, if we want to get to God's summit, then we are going to have to journey through the valleys.

Before we go any further, let's read our passage for today.

Read: Mark 9:2-13

1) [Jesus is Bringing us God's Kingdom](#)

Q: Have a look again at verse 2. How many days are mentioned here?

Read: Exodus 24:15-18

Q: How many Days was Mount Sinai covered by cloud?

For a Jewish mind in the ancient world, when they heard the words 'mountain' and 'six-days', their minds would have gone back to Moses and his six days of preparation on Mount Sinai before God spoke to him on the seventh day.

And once you make the connection with Moses and Mount Sinai and then read the transfiguration account, you can't help but notice that Mark is making a lot of parallels between Mount Sinai and the Mount of Transfiguration.

Read: Exodus 24 from verse 1. How many people were specifically named that accompanied Moses up the mountain? When you compare Mark 9:2, do you see the similarity?

An interesting side note, the number 3 is significant because that is the number of witnesses needed to fully establish any matter in Jewish law. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 13:1, every matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. These three would officially testify to what they would see to the other apostles and then eventually to the whole world.

Other parallels.

Jesus is transfigured and his clothes become radiantly white is very similar to Moses' skin shining when he descends from the mountain after talking with God.

At the transfiguration God appears in veiled form in an overshadowing cloud which is almost identical to God appearing to Moses in veiled form in an overshadowing cloud.

At the transfiguration a voice speaks from cloud which again is almost identical to a voice speaking to Moses from the cloud.

And the people are astonished when they see Jesus after he descends from the mountain, which is very similar to the people being afraid to come near Moses after he descends because his face was radiant.

God's previous redemptive acts with Moses help us understand what is happening with Jesus at the Mount of Transfiguration. Mark is making the point that Jesus is the new Moses, and that Jesus is bringing us the New Covenant just as Moses was given the old covenant (the law). Jesus is bringing Gods Kingdom

Moses was Israel's first deliverer or rescuer, and the people were expecting the arrival of a prophet like Moses who was going to appear to liberate and save Israel.

Elijah was supposed to come back at the dawning of the end time when God ultimately redeems and saves Israel.

Read: Malachi 4:4-6

The two figures (Moses and Elijah) that join Jesus in the transfiguration represent the coming of the Day of the Lord as well as God's saving and redemptive plans.

Jesus is bringing the New Covenant which is the ultimate salvation of God from the curse of sin so that everyone in the world has the opportunity to turn to God and dwell in His presence. Our role, as the church, is to live as children of God and continue to build His Kingdom here on earth so that others might join and experience the salvation of God. We need to make sure that our priorities are in the right order and that we following God's Kingdom NOT the Kingdom of the world. Jesus is bringing about the Kingdom of God – we just need to make sure that we are following him and living for it.

2) [We Often Default to Human Ways](#)

Read: Mark 8:27-31

Scholars believe that Mark is drawing a parallel between the mount of transfiguration and Jesus' resurrection.

The glory revealed on the mountain is a private epiphany while the suffering on the cross is a public spectacle.

Jesus is surrounded on the mountain by two prophets of old, Moses and Elijah; on Golgotha, by two thieves.

On the mountain, Jesus' garments glisten in glory; on Golgotha, they take his garments from him, compounding his humiliation.

Three male disciples view his glory at close range; three female disciples view his suffering from afar.

A divine voice from the clouds announces that Jesus is the Son of God, one of his executioners, a Roman centurion, acclaims him to be the Son of God after his death.

In both scenes someone raises the question of Elijah.

Mark is teaching us that if we want to see Jesus in all his glory; then we need to understand that his glory can only be experienced through rejection, suffering and death. The disciples could not get their head around how the glory of God could come through rejection, suffering and death. For us today, we need to remember that the Kingdom of God is not all standing on Mountain Tops, the Kingdom of God is often being lived in the Valley.

3) God Affirms That We Can TRUST Jesus' Words.

Read: Mark 9:7 again.

Q: Why do you think God tells us that Jesus is His son, and we should listen to him?

Jesus' words are the bread of life that can sustain us to the very end of the age. The miracles of God are amazing; but they are only temporary. What is eternal? The words of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Yes, Jesus is bringing about the Kingdom of God. Yes, God will always be with you and will never forsake you. Yes, you will sometimes see miracles and have mountain top moments. But until Jesus returns and redeems creation so that we can all experience the Mountain of Transfiguration forever; then we need to remember that our lives will be lived in the trenches. We can learn from the Mountain of Transfiguration. Don't celebrate too early.

As the Apostle Paul says:

Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

When you find yourself in the deep trenches wondering what on earth God is doing – just remember – you are actually on the slow journey up the mountain where you will one day experience the glory of God.

Conclusion:

A helpful 7 minute explainer with RC Sproul of the transfiguration - and a comparison with Moses– play the audio here at the end of your meeting if you have time:

<https://www.ligonier.org/podcasts/ultimately-with-rc-sproul/the-transfiguration-of-jesus-christ>

Q: Do we reflect the glory of God? How can we become a reflection of the glory of God like Moses was? Do we spend enough time with Jesus to be a light in this world?

Learn to listen to God and to Jesus more than ever before. Feed on his word. Mountaintop experiences are necessary. From time to time, you might want to get away from the busyness of your life to meet with God and gaze upon his majesty.

Go find a mountain or whatever is good for you, forest, beach, but get alone and let God speak peace to your heart. Let him renew you. Let him restore you. Let him revive you so that you can serve him.