

## The Gospel According to Mark - Can't Stay On The Mountain

**March 24, 2019**

**Can't Stay On The Mountain - Mark 9:1-9**

"My shame was a ransom He faithfully bore! He cancelled my debt and He called me His friend! When death was arrested and my life began!"

Can you and I even begin to understand the ransom Jesus paid in order to cancel our debt and to be able to call us His friend? And then we sang the bridge to that song...

"Oh we're free, free, forever we're free! Come join the song of all the redeemed!"

Here's my question for each one of us here today: Can we rejoice in our freedom, in our redemption, in the fact that we have been ransomed and not be heart broken over those who were our fellow captives in sin? Is it not the mission of the church to announce loudly to the world the invitation for them to...

"Come join the song of all the redeemed!"

Let's pray and ask God to grip our heart with His mission and that we might want to be like Jesus when He was transfigured before three of the disciples and that the glory of God would shine on our faces and in our lives so that those living in life's valleys would join the song of all the redeemed!! Pray!

Open your Bibles to Mark 8:34-35 and we'll read our intro to our text for today...

Mark 8:34 ... "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

Mark 8:35 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it.

Right after Jesus tells the disciples these things, in Mark 9:1 Jesus says to them...

Mark 9:1 ... "I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power."

What did Jesus mean by that? Some have surmised that Jesus was talking about the second coming of Christ! But we know that was not the case because that has not happened yet. There are some other really out there guesses, which causes me to wonder why people always have to look for some secret, hard to understand, hidden meaning to every verse in the Bible. We are told to study God's Word and to seek God's truth and to ask for God's wisdom, but I don't think it's always so terribly difficult! In this situation, I believe Mark went straight to the next story because it explained a part of what Jesus was talking about when He said...

Mark 9:1 ... "I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power."

Let's read verses 2-9 and I think you will see what I'm talking about.

Mark 9:2 After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them.

Mark 9:3 His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them.

Mark 9:4 And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus.

Mark 9:5 Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters--one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah."

Mark 9:6 (He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.)

Mark 9:7 Then a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and a voice came from the cloud: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!"

Mark 9:8 Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus.

Mark 9:9 As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

So we know Peter, James and John saw a taste of heaven on that mountain! They got a glimpse of the

kingdom of God and the power of Almighty God! So this is certainly one plausible answer to what Jesus meant when He said some of those standing with Him six days before the transfiguration would not die before they saw the Kingdom of come with power! But there is one other explanation to Jesus' statement I feel has great merit. He may have been talking about the fact that some of the people with Him those 6 or 8 days, Mark says six, Luke says about 8, He may have been talking about the fact some of the people with Him before the transfiguration would not die before seeing the kingdom of God come with power through the cross! They would later witness the beating, the fake trial, and the torture of Jesus on the Cross, but they would see how Jesus handled those things and how through His death, burial and resurrection He would win victory over death and the grave for you and me! In fact, when we look at the story of the transfiguration of Jesus in Luke's Gospel we hear these words...

Luke 9:30 Two men, Moses and Elijah,

Luke 9:31 appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem.

So Moses, Elijah and Jesus were having a conversation about the Cross, the burial, the resurrection and the glorious ascension of Jesus back to heaven and these three disciples were privy to that conversation! They would later understand more fully what they had heard that day on the mountain as they witnessed the events surrounding the Cross and the power of the Kingdom of God to overcome the power of the kingdom of darkness! I don't know if you've ever thought about this, but Moses was the one through whom God gave the law, but even while Moses was receiving the law the people rebelled against God! Moses offered to have his name blotted out of God's book, but God said Moses couldn't die for the people. When Moses later died, he died a quick and painless death. Elijah was one of the most famous prophets of God who tried to get the people to turn away from sin and back to God, but he was not one of the prophets stoned to death, he was carried up into heaven on a chariot, never having to face death. And it's these two mighty men of God talking with Jesus the Son of God about the fact that He was the One who would suffer and die for the sins of the people. What a conversation that must have been! Such fascinating facts about our story, but what does this all have to do with your daily life? Good question and I'm so glad you asked it!

We're going to look at some very practical take home lessons for you and me from this story of Jesus being transfigured on the mountain before the disciples. By the way, transfigured simply means this: The transformation of Jesus' appearance before the disciples from His normal human appearance to the amazing display of God's glory, His brilliance, His brightness, His splendor and His majesty! Okay, what are the practical take home lessons for you and me from this story?

### **Lesson 1 - You must allow God to lead you up the mountain!**

The three disciples were led up to the mountain!

Mark 9:2 After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them.

God invites us to let Him lead us up the mountain! But we live in south Louisiana and there are no mountains! Yes there are!!! They are spiritual mountains God invites us to join Him on! How do we find the mountain of God? I'll tell you in just a moment, but I must tell you this first: God has invited you to His mountain, but you must respond to His invitation. God led the Peter, James and John up the mountain, He did not forcefully pick them up and carry them up the mountain. He didn't make them go. He led them. God has called out to you and wants to lead you into His presence, but it's up to you to follow by faith! How many mountain top experiences do we miss each and every day because we are so confounded busy we don't take the time to allow God to lead us up the mountain? The Psalmist, King David was known as a man after God's own heart! That means he was a man who sought after and yearned to know God and His ways! He cried out to be in God's presence. We all know David was not a perfect man, but he was a man who genuinely asked forgiveness and yearned to be led by God. Listen to David's words in Psalm 61...

Psa 61:1 For the director of music. With stringed instruments. Of David. Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer.

Psa 61:2 From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

Psa 61:3 For you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the foe.

Psa 61:4 I long to dwell in your tent forever and take refuge in the shelter of your wings. Selah

Psa 61:5 For you have heard my vows, O God; you have given me the heritage of those who fear your name.

Psa 61:6 Increase the days of the king's life, his years for many generations.

Psa 61:7 May he be enthroned in God's presence forever; appoint your love and faithfulness to protect him.  
Psa 61:8 Then will I ever sing praise to your name and fulfill my vows day after day.

Did you hear the Psalmist's words?

Psa 61:2 "...lead me to the rock that is higher than I."

He asked to be led to the rock that was higher than he was. Was he talking about a literal mountain of rock? No, David was talking about being led into the presence of the One who is the rock of ages, the One who is the only true and stable foundation for building one's life! Now I want you to see something so important. It's the secret to finding the mountain of God and then being led up that mountain by God! Ready? Listen to the Psalmist David's words...

Psa 61:1 ...Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer.

Psa 61:2 From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint

David prayed! That's where the spiritual mountains are found! In prayer! In fact, when we read Luke's gospel about the transfiguration we discover how the mountain top experience began...

Luke 9:28 About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray.

Luke 9:29 As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning.

Jesus took Peter, John and James on the mountain with the purpose to pray, and it was while He was praying His appearance changed! Wow! And this takes us to the second practical lesson for us in this story.

## **Lesson 2 - While you're on the mountain, pay attention!**

Mark 9:2 After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone...

"The were all alone!" How many times do we find ourselves all alone with God anymore? Is it even possible? We have little devices in our pockets and purses that we never turn off! We are probably the most distracted generation in all of history! When's the last time you went on a walk, or got alone in a room without a TV, computer or smart phone and just spent some time you and God? Sometimes we are simply scarred of silence, or maybe we're scarred God will speak to our hearts and minds and bring a little conviction concerning things that aren't right in our lives, or maybe in the silence we will hear Him challenge us to actually get involved at the church instead of just attending church! Yikes, some of you may have just decided you're just not into spiritual mountain climbing! It's just too dangerous! I mean God might just push you out of your comfort zone and and you might fall into a whole new way of living! Yikes! Pretty scary huh? But I will tell you this, if you accept Jesus' invitation to go up the mountain into the very presence of God and you pay attention, you will discover a peace and a purpose that the world with all of it's entertainment, distractions, material comforts and earthly treasures cannot give you! What's this going to cost me, you might ask? Let's see what God says in Isaiah 55...

Isa 55:1 "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.

Isa 55:2 Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare.

Isa 55:3 Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David.

So pay attention by minimizing the distractions. Let God speak to you through His Holy Spirit, and let God show you through His Word His ways and His will for you. When these guys started paying attention they saw things and heard things that astounded them. But for some of us it's not the distractions that hinder us when we get alone with God! It's the fact that we actually took time to slow down and pit stop from the rat race of life! "Okay, Pastor Larry, you've got me a little confused on this one! How does slowing down keep us from paying attention?" Simply put, we struggle to pay attention because our body is so in need of rest it wants to shut down. Can I get a witness? Do you ever start praying or reading your Bible and your eyelids suddenly weigh ten thousand pounds? And your head starts bobbing like those little bobble heads on the dash of a car? Did the disciples have this problem? Let's see what Luke had to say...

Luke 9:32 Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him.

So let's just say we get rested up and actually plan to spend some time on the mountain with the Lord spiritually. Let's just say we leave the distractions behind. What can happen when we intentionally pay attention?

Mark 9:2 After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them.

Mark 9:3 His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them.

What can happen? You just might see the glory of the Lord! You might just see the Kingdom of God come in power in your own life! Let me just interject something here. I hope you get excited to come to church on Sundays and worship and then hear the Word of God proclaimed. I hope you get excited to discover spiritual truths that are life changing! I hope this happens in your small groups during the week as well, but I need to share something with you. Nothing really compares to the experience you will have with the Lord when in your own quiet time, on your own spiritual mountain top, God begins to reveal the truth of His Word to you as you study and meditate on the Bible. When you start discovering these things in your own personal time with God the impact on your life will be exponential!! Why? Because the Glory of God and the reality of God will become real to you! It's so sad that many people dismiss the Bible based on hearsay and never read it for themselves. Here's the deal: Read it for yourself and ask God to reveal Himself to you through His Word and you will be amazed at what you will discover! Go ahead, try it, I dare you! I triple dog dare you! But let me reiterate one more time this very important detail! In fact it's so important that God Himself spoke it to the disciples when they decided to jump in and direct the conversation. And this takes us to...

### **Lesson 3 - Don't forget lesson two!**

Mark 9:4 And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus.

Mark 9:5 Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters--one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah."

Mark 9:6 (He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.)

Mark 9:7 Then a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and a voice came from the cloud: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!"

So lesson three is don't forget lesson two! God said for us to listen to Jesus! Of course the three disciples were pretty much overwhelmed by what they were seeing and good old Peter stops listening and starts talking! Peter must have been Baptist. His answer was, "Let's do a building program!" Nothing wrong with building programs or buildings! They are needed, but what is needed much, much more is that we listen to Jesus and make sure we are following His will, His plans, and obeying His Word! At this point in this experience, they needed to be listening not talking! God the Father affirmed the authority He had given the Son when He said...

"This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!"

One of the biggest problems in my Christian life has been my need to be in charge! My need to do things my way! My overwhelming need to do something even if it's not God's timing or God's plan. See, I'm like good ole Saint Peter, I'm impetuous, so I have to remind myself often to pay attention, to listen, to make sure my heart, my mind, my spirit, my soul, every aspect of my whole being is tuned in to God! What difference does it make whether or not you listen to Jesus or not? Well, here's what Jesus had previously said to the disciples...

Luke 6:47 I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice.

Luke 6:48 He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built.

Luke 6:49 But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete."

And some people would like to blame God for that collapse, but how can we blame God if we refuse to follow His instructions? Men typically don't like to read the instruction manuals, and many times pay the price. It's smart to read the instruction book because it is written by the builder, the maker, the designer and

they probably know a thing or two. God created you and me and He knows a thing or two about how we should live our lives, how we should go about building our lives! And speaking of building, one last lesson.

#### **Lesson 4 - You can't stay on the mountain!**

Mark 9:5 Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters--one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah."

Peter's building program was all about staying on the mountain! He's like, "It's good for us to be here! We'll just set up camp! We'll just stay on the mountain and hang out with You, Moses and Elijah! Have you ever been on a spiritual retreat, a youth camp, a Christian conference and just wished you didn't have to return to your real world life? That's tempting I know, but the whole reason for the retreat, the camp, the conference, the Sunday morning gathering, the small group meeting, the personal prayer and study time with God is so we can be equipped to go back out into the world and take the good news of Jesus to a world in desperate need! If we aren't willing to do that we become some of the most selfish people on the planet! I mean if we really believe Jesus gave His life on the cross to save people from their sins, to set them free from their bondage, and to have a personal relationship with them, how selfish would it be to find that freedom, that forgiveness, that relationship and then keep it to ourselves? I know it's a bit scary to come down off the mountain and go back into the difficult world in which you live, but it's so important that once we see Jesus transfigured with glory of God, that we allow Him to transform us with the glory and power of God so we can also shine His light in a world of darkness! Jesus told His disciples this...

Mat 5:14 "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.

Mat 5:15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.

Mat 5:16 In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

But how do we handle the scary parts? How do we handle the responsibility of being light in dark places. Well for the answer to that I'll close with wisdom from one of the characters in our story today, Moses. This wisdom comes from a conversation Moses had with God about the Hebrew people when God met with him in a tent outside the Israelite camp. It wasn't far from Mount Sinai where Moses met with God to get the Ten Commandments.

Exo 33:12 Moses said to the LORD, "You have been telling me, 'Lead these people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, 'I know you by name and you have found favor with me.'

Exo 33:13 If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people."

Exo 33:14 The LORD replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

Exo 33:15 Then Moses said to him, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here.

Exo 33:16 How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?"

Exo 33:17 And the LORD said to Moses, "I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name."

Exo 33:18 Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory."

Let's pray!

God we accept Your invitation to the mountain! We want to pay attention! We want to listen! Help us with overcome the distractions. Help us see Your glory and take Your glory back into our real world lives so others can see You. But we pray like Moses, "If Your presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here!" We know we can't stay on the mountain top, but we won't survive the valley without Your power, Your presence, Your provision and Your peace! We give you this time of invitation. You know the hurts, the struggles, the distractions, the temptations, the weakness of our lives. We ask You to meet us where we are and get us to where we need to be, for it's in the Precious Name of Jesus I pray and believe!!