



HICKORY GROVE

BAPTIST CHURCH

The Glorified Jesus

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Mark 9:1-8

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9 And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power." 2 And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, 3 and his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them. 4 And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. 5 And Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." 6 For he did not know what to say, for they were terrified. 7 And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him." 8 And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only.

(Pastor prays)

I was not a great student in high school, and in college I was okay. When I got out of college, I went into seminary. The first seminary I started in was sort of a false start. I started again at New Orleans Seminary, where I finished school. After seminary, I learned that I actually do like to read. Every night around 9:00 PM, I'll open a book and read until about 10. I try to go through history and biographies, and over the course of the last 25 to 30 years, I've read lots of books. There is one biography that stands out to me. It is written by

William Manchester. It is a magisterial biography of Winston Churchill called *The Last Lion*. There are several volumes, and every page is filled with writing that makes your soul soar and makes you really love the man, Winston Churchill.

In 2017, I was sitting at my desk and someone sent me a text with a YouTube video of a movie that was coming out called *The Darkest Hour*. It's a preview of a movie depicting just one little snippet of Winston Churchill's life, and I remember watching that preview over and over and over again because I could not wait for the movie to come out. And I've seen that movie now, probably, at least 25 times. But the preview got me ready for it.

That's what you have here in front of you—it's a preview. If you've been following along, there are three things that happened that got us to this point. The first was Peter's great confession when he said, "You are the Christ, you are the Son of the living God." Peter said that, and Jesus says, "Nobody gave that to you, God gave that to you." Jesus then explained for the very first time to the disciples what was going to happen to the Son of Man: He will be crucified and raised from the dead. They are told that not only is the Christ, the Son of God, going to be killed, but He also would be raised from the dead. And then, after telling them how He would die and be raised again at the end of chapter eight, you have Jesus offer up this radical call for discipleship. You remember the words: to deny yourself, to take up your cross, and to follow Him. Those are heavy things that are going to happen.

And then chapter nine opens up with the glorious Transfiguration. And I've been looking at it all week and asking, why? Why is this here? Why the Transfiguration, and why is that necessary? Here's what I think: it's the glory. If you like to write things down, you might write this down:

The Glory of Jesus Gives Us What We Need

We live in a world that's going to hell. We've been given commands to follow Jesus, and those commands are heavy. And yet, the picture here reminds us

of this tremendous glory. Here's what I'd like to do: I want to just go through this narrative passage and point out a couple of things. Then we'll come back and see if we can make sense and find out why we need the Transfiguration. Go with me to verse one in chapter nine.

Let's actually back it up a little bit in chapter eight where Jesus has thrown down the gauntlet and talked through what it means to follow Him. He finishes up in verse 38 that anybody who is ashamed of His words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of that person the Son of Man will also be ashamed. He's going to come with all the glory of the Father and bring millions of angels with Him. Now, let's tie that verse to the first one in chapter nine—*And He said to them* (He's still talking to the crowds, not just the disciples here. He's talking to all the followers and the hangers on and those who think He's really neat). He said to them in verse one, *Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death...* That's a dramatic way of saying they're not going to die, not going to taste death until they have seen the Kingdom. The Kingdom is going to come with all of its power. So, there's a pretty dramatic thing in verse one after what He has said in chapter eight. And Mark tells us that about a week has passed, six days. After six days, Jesus takes three of His disciples that are very close to Him, the sons of Thunder, James and John, and the man named Peter. Peter is probably the primary source of the Gospel of Mark. He's the one who has told Mark everything that happened years ago.

The text says in verse two that Jesus took those three men who were His closest confidants up on a high mountain. We don't know where this mountain is, but it's not Mount Sinai. It could be Mount Hermon because it's the highest peak there at about 9,000 feet. We find out from the other Gospels that they go up there to pray. We find out here that they go by themselves with just Jesus. So right here, there are those three men and Jesus, but we're gonna find out that two more are coming. So there are going to be six men up there, but right now it's just Jesus and these three. Verse three tells us that He's transfigured. We call it the *Transfiguration* because

that word means “a dramatic change, a metamorphosis.” It’s something that changes from one thing to another. It’s the description in the Bible in the New Testament of coming from darkness to light. We sometimes use the word when we talk about conversion, and what it means to become a Christian because there is a dramatic change. But right here, there’s a change in Jesus, and verse three tells us that when that change happened, His clothes began to glow. They are radiant. Moses’s face glowed, but that happened because God shined on him and he reflected God’s glory. But here, Jesus is the glory. His clothes became radiant and they are intensely white as no one on earth could bleach them. It’s like Peter is trying to describe just how white they are, and he is saying it’s not like a white tablecloth, it’s not like a white piece of paper, it’s so white that no person on earth could bleach them to make them that white. He’s saying that you can’t believe how white they were.

And now, something else happens. Two great men of the Old Testament appear. So here is Jesus, the greatest of the New Testament, and now two great ones from the Old Testament are up here with Him. The first is a man named Moses, who gave the Law of God. And the second is a man named Elijah, who preached the Law of God. And now they are here with Jesus, and Peter tells Mark that they are talking. We find out from the other Gospels that they are actually talking to Jesus about His exit—that’s the Greek word, *exit*. They’re talking about His departure and how He’s going to leave. This is interesting when you think about how Moses left and how Elijah left. They’re talking about Jesus’ departure and everything that it would entail, what that means.

So, you have the Law and the Prophet and Christ, and it’s a beautiful scene. Now Peter, who is the leader—the spokesman—begins to talk. And sometimes Peter talks when he should not, and he just rambles there in verse five. And Peter says, “Rabbi.” Now that’s the wrong thing to call Jesus right here in the middle of the Transfiguration. *Rabbi* is a diminished name, and now Peter—who is the one who told Jesus, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God”—has called Him, “Rabbi.” They are now on the mountain and Jesus is transfigured. Moses is there, Elijah is there, and Peter decides to show some

familiarity. It's a strange time to be so familiar.

So now, there are six of them up on the mountain. And Peter says, "Let's make some tabernacles." You see, it's Peter's desire to stay there. They want to be there; they are having a mountain-top experience. I'm not sure, but I think Peter just doesn't know what else to say, so he just keeps talking. He says, *Let's make three tents, one for you, one for Elijah, and one for Moses.* Let's do all three. Some people say that maybe this is Peter saying that now Jesus is equal to Moses and Elijah. He's not getting the idea that Jesus is completely distinguished from the Old Testament. We really don't know, but what I think verse six tells us is that he didn't know what to say. He was scared, it was terrifying, which is understandable. They've never seen this Transfiguration, and they were scared to death. He has read about Moses, and he has read about Elijah, but he has never seen them in person.

There are two different kinds of people: some people get scared and get quiet, and some people get scared and start talking. That's what Peter is doing here. He just kept running his mouth to the degree that in verse seven, a voice comes out of the cloud. It might be worthwhile to circle that word *cloud* and do a word study on it. Where does it come from, that word *cloud*? Where and how is it used in the Old Testament? Where do we see it in the New Testament? It comes to reveal the presence of God and the glory of God. There's obviously a correlation. A cloud has now descended that is covering God, because you can't see the image of God and survive. And out of that cloud comes something familiar: the voice of God that they have heard before at the baptism of Jesus when God said, *This is my Beloved Son.* God has now added, *Listen to Him.* You've read Moses, and you know about Elijah; they've been leading to this. Listen to Him.

Now, something miraculous happens. You read the other Gospels and find that this probably happened at night, so it made it even more brilliant. When that is all gone, you now see that they finally pick up their heads and start looking around. And they no longer see anyone but Jesus. So now let's go all the way back up and take a look at this passage. Why is it here? Here is the

first point, number one:

We need hope

Every person sitting here right now needs just a little bit of hope. When you read chapter eight verse 38 and hear the call for discipleship, it can seem overbearing. Sometimes we can make discipleship—denying yourself, taking up your cross, and following Jesus—sound like drudgery. We make it sound like you are chained to it and that it's nothing more than an obligation.

But then, this is here. Jesus brings James and John and Peter up on the mountain so that they can see that there is hope. All three were there when Jairus's daughter was healed. They would be the ones to go into the garden. They would be the primary spokesmen. John would write about it; James would be killed for it. Peter would write about it and be crucified upside down for it. But he would write about it because he had seen it. And here on the Mountain of Transfiguration, these three men are going up there so they can see and have hope. They're going to see something that has not been seen by the human eye since the Garden of Eden. And Jesus lets them know in verse one that they're just going to see a little snapshot of the Kingdom, the Transfiguration.

And seeing just a little picture—it doesn't take much, just a little hope, just a little picture, just a little something for your soul—would give these three men, who will go on to follow Jesus and be killed for it, tremendous strength to walk through all kinds of adversity.

The Transfiguration is going to remind them of several things. It will remind them that Jesus is the Kingdom of God. Jesus will usher that in, but here's a picture of Jesus showing them the Kingdom of God. That will remind them that Jesus is not just a teacher, He is the glory of God. It will tell them, as He stands there with Moses and Elijah, that Jesus is the law of God. Jesus said it himself, "I came to fulfill the law." This will tell them that Jesus is the wisdom of God. "Listen to Him," God said. This will tell them that—in fact, what Peter

said—Jesus is the Son of God. The Transfiguration is there to remind us that Christ is the hope of God. He is your hope. Our God is a happy God that rejoices in His Son Jesus and rejoices in you when you are in Jesus. As a Christian, you can live your life filled with hope, regardless of what you're walking into. You can wake up with joy in the Lord because this is the Lord's Day that He has made. You can rejoice and be glad in it.

This is God giving a large kindness to those three. God gives us small kindnesses to encourage our hearts. He gives us small things to remind us to be joyful in the Lord and to know that what we're walking through is not in vain. Brothers and sisters, if you're in Christ, you have hope—and we need that hope. We can run off that hope. You walked in today because this is a place of hope. But it's not just a vague hope. Remember what our hope is and where it is anchored. Our hope is anchored in the perfect life of Jesus, and His death on the cross for our sins. Our hope is anchored in the resurrection.

At Mallard Creek Campus yesterday, one of our members there just tragically died of a sudden heart attack. And as ministers of the gospel, all of our pastors there were taking care of a woman who just lost her husband. We will immediately have something to offer her. We don't just offer condolences; we can offer hope. We can point directly to the death and resurrection of Jesus and to the hope of Heaven. Jesus takes these three men up on the mountain and gives them just a little picture that is going to strengthen them; it's going to put steel in their spines. There is great hope in the love of God and in the sustaining power of God—the great hope of Heaven. This is here because we need hope. Let me give you something else, number two:

We need reminders

You've got them on your phone. You see it on your calendar. You can set alarms. We need reminders every Sunday morning. I have several alarms set on one phone. I don't know if that's effective or not, but we need reminders. What are the reminders here in verses two and three? Let me just point out a couple for you. Look at the three men, Peter, James, and John. Jesus led them

up high on the mountain by themselves and He was transfigured there before them. His clothes became radiant, intensely white as no one on earth could bleach them. One of the reminders is that we need actual fellowship and accountability. These are three men who walked with Jesus, and they had fellowship. They were close brothers. They were friends. They walked together and they took care of each other. One of the great assets of the Christian Church—and what should be one of the hallmarks of coming to Hickory Grove—is fellowship and accountability. You should have an inner circle of people here that you are close with, worshipping the same God and rejoicing in the same Savior and bought by the same blood of Jesus. We need that. We need reminders that when you come into this church building, you see that the people are the Church, and you're glad to see each other. They are reminders that you're not by yourself. He took them high on a mountain, they had a mountaintop experience. This could have taken several days to get up there. Another reminder is that we actually need to go off by ourselves. You actually do need time to go off, maybe as a couple—or you might call it a couple's retreat. You take time to be alone with Christ. Luke says they went up there to pray. They got together alone to pray and to be off with brothers and sisters in Christ to be strengthened. That's a good thing to do.

Let's get to the Transfiguration. It is the Greek word *metamorphosis* which means, *to change*. What did that change remind them of? Well, there are a couple of things. Mark says that it's so pure, so right, that we are reminded of the purity of Christ. We are reminded of His holiness. We are reminded that we are accepted by God not because we're good people, but because of Christ. Christ is completely holy, and He gives us His righteousness. It makes it so that we are whiter than any bleach on earth can make us. As I read this passage, I think about the reminders that I need. I need to be reminded that the Lord's Church is good. I need to be reminded that I need the Church and I need worship. I need to come and engage and worship and sing songs with joy in my heart because of Christ. I need to be reminded that the Bible holds me up. I need brothers and sisters in my life to help me, to correct me, and to remind me that my joy is in the Lord and I am living for Christ.

I'm reminded that my sins are forgiven. There is forgiveness. I need to be reminded that I forgive people. I need to be reminded of the grace that I have received and the grace that I am called to give. We need hope and we need reminders. Let me give you a third thing we need, number three:

We need depth

I want your faith to be deep. I want it to be informed. I want you to know what the Bible says and I want you to know who Christ is. I want you to know the attributes of God. There's depth here in verses three and four. Let me read it to you. *...And his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.* Luke says they are talking about His exit, His departure. So, let's think this through. Why Moses? Why Elijah? Well, the lawgiver is Moses. He's the one through whom God gave the law. Not only that, but there's also no prophet like Elijah. Jesus is the fulfillment of the law of Moses that was given to Elijah who preached it. It's interesting that Moses and Elijah both met with God on Mount Sinai. Now they're meeting on another mountain. Mount Sinai would be the mountain of law, and this mountain with Jesus is a mountain of grace. It's a gospel mountain. Not only that, the text says they are talking with Jesus about His departure, and where He's going, which is interesting because of the way Moses died. He went up on the mountain, God was with him, and God buried him. Nobody knows where Moses is buried.

What about Elijah? How did Elijah die? He didn't die; God came down and swept him up. These two, with peculiar endings, are talking to Jesus about His departure, His exit. What's interesting to me is that it is fair to call Moses the Great Emancipator—he led God's people out of slavery. Elijah would be the Great Proclaimer of God's goodness and power. And these two men are standing, talking to Jesus. Jesus is the greater Moses and the truer Elijah. And through the atoning death of Jesus on the cross and through His resurrection, He will lead and head up the second Great Exodus from the enslavement of sin and death and Satan. Moses, when he stood on Mount Sinai, reflected God's glory. Jesus, on the Mountain of Transfiguration, is God's glory. Elijah

preached God's glory. Jesus brings God's glory. And the Transfiguration is nothing more than a preview. Jesus says that there are a couple of them standing there who will see the Kingdom of God before they die, and then He takes them up on the mountain and shows them just a preview of the future glory. What else do we need? Let me give you a fourth most practical one, number four:

We need to be quiet

Sometimes, it's alright, even in mid-sentence, to just stop talking. Sometimes you don't have to open your mouth. I'm saying that because of Peter in verses five and six. You have Peter, and he just starts talking. He calls Jesus, "Rabbi," which is odd. It shows his total failure to grasp who Jesus is at this moment. And then he offers up a strange proposal. It is a complete misunderstanding of the significance of the situation, and you find out why in verse six. Verse six tells us it's because he is so nervous; he's scared to death. And this is just an example to us that sometimes it's better to just be quiet. What we'll find out in the next passage is the fifth thing, number five:

We need to listen

Join me there in verse seven. In this verse, you see the cloud I told you about earlier. It says the cloud overshadowed them and a voice came out of the cloud saying, *This is my Beloved Son, listen to Him*. I want you to think with me about that cloud. It's the same cloud with which God led the people out of Egypt. He led them at night by fire and by a cloud during the day. It's the same cloud in Exodus 33 after Moses had been through so much that he stands there and says, "I want to see your glory," and the cloud of God passes by. It's the same cloud at the end of Exodus that would cover the Tabernacle where God met with His people. It's the same cloud that, when Solomon's temple was dedicated, it descended in such a way so that the priest could minister. It's the same cloud in Isaiah chapter six when Isaiah, in the year the King Uzziah died and he didn't know what he was going to do, looked into the temple and saw the Lord, holy and lifted up in the cloud of smoke. It's the

presence of God, and out of that cloud comes a voice, and it's the same voice they've heard before saying the same thing: *This is my Son. Listen to Him.* Listen to Him about the gospel. The Gospel is going to be His life, death, and resurrection. What is the Gospel? The Gospel is that Jesus lived perfectly for you, died on the cross in your place, and took your punishment for you. God raised Him from the dead to show that the sacrifice has been received. He ascended into Heaven, and the Gospel says if you put your faith in what Jesus did for you, you will be saved. Listen to Him for sanctification, for growth, and holiness. Listen to Him. He will provide for your need. You're going to make it. Listen to Him, receive forgiveness from God, and give forgiveness to people. Listen to Him because this life is not all that there is. We don't weep as those who have no hope. Listen to Him for future glory. There is coming an age when the Son of Man will return in the glory of His Father with holy angels. Why is this here? I'll give you one last one, number six:

We need to focus on Jesus

You need to focus on Jesus. Don't you love how it ends? Luke gives us a little expanded version of it. They were up there; it's probably night, and they fall onto the ground as you would in the presence of the holy Jesus. And Moses is there, and Elijah is there; they're glowing this bright light, and you can't look at it. Then God speaks from this cloud and, once He speaks, everything disappears. Jesus is there. And why is He there? Why are we looking at Him? Why did Mark write it like that? Jesus is by Himself alone because we need to be reminded that, no matter what, there is hope that awaits us in Christ. Jesus Christ is the sole bearer of God's grace and love and forgiveness, and it is fully realized at the cross where He died, was resurrected, and where He lives. We need to be reminded that Jesus Himself is the New Tabernacle of God's glory. And all the other pictures in the Bible, all other revelations, Moses and the prophets, all other visions, the law—they've been leading up to Christ alone. And no matter what there is, where Jesus is, there is glory that awaits us. It's a preview. The glory of Jesus gives us what we need.

(Pastor prays)