

- If I were to get you to think back over your life. It doesn't matter if you are 70 or 15. And I told you to consider the highlights of your life, what would they be?
- You might come up with the typical things. Marriage. Having a child. When the child left. When that relationship started. When it ended. That big promotion. We remember these events.
- Let's change the question a little bit. Whether in the last year, 5 years or over your life. What were those encounters with God that fundamentally altered the direction your life was going. Where a core belief was changed or started. Where something was turned over. An experience that permanently changed what you did or how you thought about yourself.
- Now, let's step into our imaginations. Let's pretend you are one of the disciples. Let's pick Peter. You lived as a fisherman, and then you met Jesus and spent three years of your life living with and following him. What do you think were his highlights? When he told his stories later, what were those watershed moments for him? What stuck in his mind? What changed his life and how could you possibly pick one?
- I'm sure there were many, but there was one event that is told in all 3 of the gospel accounts of Jesus, and is in Mark 9 where we are today. It was such a powerful memory that 25 years later, Peter, when writing to Christ-followers still remembered it clearly and wrote to them about it. Listen to what he says.

*2 Peter 1:16 For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17 He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." 18 We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.*

- There was an event that was burned in his memory. But it wasn't just an intellectual memory. It was a memory of Jesus that forever changed his view of who Jesus was. It inspired him to shape his entire life around following Jesus and it gave him tremendous hope, even at the end of his life when he was facing his imminent death under the emperor Nero.
- That is where I want to land today. I am not going to have a bunch of points of ways to life or act. What I want to do by looking at this account is inspire hope.
- I want us to gain a greater appreciation of who Jesus is. His greatness. His glory. His supremacy. To give a clearer picture of the glory and power and hope that we have in Jesus.
- The kind of hope that sustains us when our circumstances are not as good as we would hope, when we are not feeling as joyful as we want, when we struggle with feelings of guilt or shame, or we wonder if all of this is even worth it.
- I believe if we were to get a true glimpse of what Peter saw, it would mark us and lead to greater hope and joy.
- **A GLIMPSE OF CHRIST'S GLORY WILL KEEP US GOING.**
- *"What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us...the cause of many of our modern spiritual woes is the loss in today's church of a lofty concept of God."* (A.W.Tozer, The Knowledge of the Holy)
- Let the Holy Spirit fuel your imagination as you picture what is happening throughout this entire event.

*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.*

- While the text doesn't say, most agree Jesus went unto Mount Hermon, located about twelve miles north of Caesarea-Philippi. Mount Hermon has an elevation of over 9,000 feet.

- Peter, James and John were three of Jesus closer confidants. He sometimes took them when he wanted a smaller group of his disciples. He took them when he raised a girl from the dead. He took them in the garden when he prayed before his crucifixion and he took them with him here.

*There he was transfigured before them. 3 His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them.*

- This entire event is called the transfiguration of Jesus. The Greek word is the one we get the term metamorphosis from. It means a change in form, not just a change in appearance. It was like Jesus was changed. He became something different.
- In reality, this was less of a transformation than a revealing.
- Mark is trying to describe the amazing view. White garments were worn by priests and kings and represented purity. The common people out walking and working would never wear white because it soiled too easily. Those with white vehicles can attest to this, right?
- But they weren't just white. They were dazzling. Overwhelming.
- Here is what is so important. Jesus did not change. He did not turn into something or someone else.
- Paul said Jesus is the one "who dwells in unapproachable light" (1 Timothy 6:16). John himself described Jesus when he saw him in his vision at the end of his life: "The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow." (Revelation 1:14)
- For a brief moment, God pulled aside the curtain to show who Jesus really was. The glory that had been robed within a veil of flesh was revealed for them to see. And his glory was overwhelming.
- Jesus' real transfiguration came when he came as a child. Now, as if this isn't all startling enough for the three disciples . . .

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

- Two men were suddenly there with Jesus and in some way that we are not sure of, they knew who they were. Moses and Elijah.
- This is hugely significant. The Jews would have gotten the significance far quicker than we do because of their history and background.
- Moses represented the Law of God. When Israel became a nation, God used Moses to lead them out of Egypt. He was not only the first true leader of Israel, he was also the one who God met with and spoke with and gave him the law.
- I don't know if you remember the story, but God called Moses to him and gave him the law and the commandments and when Moses came out of the presence of God his face shone so brightly that the people were afraid of him, and he was simply reflecting the glory of God like the moon reflects the sun.
- It was these laws that set the course of a nation of people for the next 2,000 years. The law was supremely important – the most important. Most of Jesus' clashes with the Pharisees was because of some aspect of the law that they thought he was not following.
- Elijah represented the prophets. He was the first major prophet in Israel. He confronted the entire nation to point them back to God. He did amazing miracles. He was the one who had the confrontation with the prophets of Baal where he prayed and fire came down from heaven to burn up his offering. It was this amazing experience.
- The Jewish Scriptures (our now Old Testament) is a record of the law and the prophets.
- Why is this so significant?
  1. God spoke to the people through the law. When they did not listen or follow the law he spoke to them through the prophets. And now, at the end, God is speaking to the entire world through his son, which is the clearest and most powerful speaking God had ever done.

2. Everything in the law pointed towards Jesus. The rules and regulations for the nation, the building of the tabernacle, the prophecies that take up so much of our bibles – in the end it was all about Jesus and Jesus is the fulfillment of both the law and the prophets.

- When Peter, James and John saw this, there was no New Testament. Yet everything they did have pointed to and culminated in Christ. Yet the people, including those who were supposed to know this, completely missed it.
- What God was doing was affirming the identity and mission of Jesus. He was the focal point of everything. He is the whole “point” of everything.
- Peter inevitably, instead of remaining awed and quiet, had to pipe up.

*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.” 6 (He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.)*

- First of all, this appearance of the glory of Jesus was so overwhelming, so amazing, that it was freaking them out.
- Not just a little bit. It literally means “frightened out of your wits.” Their minds could not grasp this. They were terrified yet they did not want it to end. Peter wanted to accommodate this experience and maintain it. Build three tabernacles (maybe remembering how God’s presence was part of the tabernacle when he gave the law to Moses).

#### **ILLUSTRATION**

*Peter either wanted to prolong this experience or maybe he was trying to package God’s glory. Maybe like we want to hold onto our missions experience, or re-create the circumstances or experience when we were first saved.*

- What is interesting is that even now, the disciples did not fully get it. He wanted to build a tabernacle for each of them – Moses, Elijah and Jesus. It might imply that the disciples see them as of equal importance.

*7 Then a cloud appeared and covered them,*

- The cloud was often the symbol of the presence of God because the cloud obscured a full revelation of who God was because a direct view of him would strike us dead instantly.
- and a voice came from the cloud: “This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!”*
- God the Father was affirming the identity of his son. At the beginning of his ministry when he was baptized, God said in a voice from heaven that this was his son and he was well pleased with him.
  - Now, at the end of his ministry and just before he would obediently die, he affirms him again.
  - This is Jesus. He is my son. He is greater than Moses. Greater than Elijah. He is the new mediator of all that I do. He is the one who brings you to me. He is the supremacy of all things.
  - Notice the beautiful symmetry of the message.
  - Where did Moses receive the law? On the top of a mountain where he encountered the presence of God and spoke with him.
  - Where did Elijah encounter God? He had his ultimate confrontation with the prophets of Baal and Israel on a mountain and then he ran for his life to avoid death and ended up going to a mountain where encountered directly the God he served.
  - And now God is communicating again on a mountain. And his message is so clear.
  - This is my son. He is God. He is glorious and powerful. He is so much bigger than you even know. So LISTEN TO HIM.
  - It means to be obedient to him. Shape your life around him. It confirms the lesson that we looked at last week that Jesus had taught only a week earlier, that to follow him is to deny ourselves, put his priorities first and live in obedience to Jesus.

- Matthew tells us that when God spoke, they fell to the ground. If they were scared before now they were so overwhelmed they couldn't even stand or sit. Anyone who encounters the glory of God has the same reaction. It is impossible not to be on your face before it.

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

- It was over. Jesus was Jesus as they knew him. Elijah and Moses were gone.

*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.*

- He knew that this was not going to be fully understood until after his death and resurrection. They already didn't comprehend that, so they for sure weren't going to get the significance of this.

*10 They kept the matter to themselves, discussing what "rising from the dead" meant. 11 And they asked him, "Why do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?" 12 Jesus replied, "To be sure, Elijah does come first, and restores all things. Why then is it written that the Son of Man must suffer much and be rejected? 13 But I tell you, Elijah has come, and they have done to him everything they wished, just as it is written about him."*

- It's almost this is a side discussion. Jesus told them not to talk about the experience they just had, but they had just seen Elijah and Moses and so they had questions.
- They had been taught that before the Messiah would come, Elijah was going to appear to prepare the way for that Messiah. If Jesus was the Messiah, then how did Elijah fit into this?
- Jesus' answer is two parted. Elijah had come – it was John the Baptist – who prepared the way for the Messiah. He was not what the religious leaders expected since they thought Elijah himself would appear and usher in a new and powerful Messiah.
- Instead, John came to tell the people about Jesus. Then, instead of a powerful Messiah, Jesus came to suffer and die, the same fate which John himself suffered a year or so previously.
- Where does this leave us? With a Lord whose glory makes a difference in everything we face, say, think or do.

## **I. Christ's glory overwhelms our circumstances.**

- The disciples saw Jesus ever so briefly as he will be when he returns in power and glory to set up his final kingdom on earth. In that glimpse they saw his power, his glory, his greatness, his supremacy. They caught a glimpse of Jesus as he truly is.
- I know sometimes our circumstances are right in front of us and seem to engulf us. Put your eyes on Jesus. See that he is bigger. Glorious. Eternal. Powerful. Soak in it. Know it. Think about it. Ask to see more of it. So much so that everything around you dims in comparison to his majesty and grace. That is the God we serve. That is who loves you. That is who is in you. That is who has forgiven you.

## **II. Christ's glory makes his presence weighty.**

- It was the glory of Jesus that knocked these disciples off their feet and made them incapable of coherence. It was the touch of Jesus that lifted them up and it was Jesus who walked off that mountain with them.
- When you know that Jesus is with you, it's the glorious, powerful, amazing Lord that walks with you. Jesus alone would bear their sin and provide for their redemption in the days ahead. He alone was worthy of their worship and devotion.
- It was his glorious sacrifice that means you are not judged worthy by how good you are or whether your good deeds outweigh your bad. You are not earning his love and grace. It is simply responding to his invitation.

- Everything about our identity, our life, our value – everything, comes through Jesus and he is enough.

### III. Christ's glory gives hope in our mission.

- God had plans for these men in the coming months and years. They would be instrumental in the birth of the church and the preaching of the Gospel.
- Their faith would soon be tested like never before, and they would need a reminder of the power and glory of the Lord.
- He is coming back. Not as a man. Not humbly. Not with any apologies. But with power, majesty, might – the full glory of who he is.
- Anything we give up here or suffer on his behalf allows us to participate in that glory.
- We can be utterly sure, commit our lives to him and take ridiculous risks for him because our hope in our glorious future is utterly secure and assured in him.

- **A GLIMPSE OF CHRIST'S GLORY WILL KEEP US GOING.**

- A.W. Tozer said, *"As God is exalted to the right place in our lives, a thousand problems are solved all at once."*
- When we lose sight of the glory and majesty of Jesus, God, we invariably fill the gap in our vision with the glory of someone or something else. A spouse, our kids, our family, a leader or a friend.
- When we lose sight of the glory and majesty of Jesus, we begin to put our hope in our money, our abilities, our job or even our government.
- When we lose sight of the glory and majesty of Jesus we pursue joy by having experiences, traveling, enjoying ourselves, even serving others.
- And this is complete folly. It is unwise. It is the very definition of irrationality. And it's exhausting.
- What we need is a regular, ongoing glimpse of the glory of Jesus. Only **A GLIMPSE OF CHRIST'S GLORY WILL KEEP US GOING.**
- Hold your circumstances in one hand and then put the amazing power and glory of God in your other.
- Consider that the God of glory, Jesus the holy one, is walking with you, sitting with you, speaking to you, living IN you.
- Consider the things that keep you from committing more deeply to him. Think of your fears, be they relational, financial, personal or otherwise. Picture those fears as you take them in front of the majesty and glory of Jesus, knowing that our hope in heaven and in him is solid.