

Life After Mountain Tops FEBRUARY 11, 2018 Scout Sunday

Mark 9:2-9 2 Kings 2:1-12

INTRO:

We've all been there . . . the mountaintop where, for the briefest of moments, all seems right with the world. We have "**arrived**," and we want to rest. We want to set up camp and stay there for awhile, or forever. Today is Scout Sunday. Scouts camp and camping happens in valleys, on plains and also on mountaintops. That is where we can see everything for miles and miles. That is where your vision is the clearest. These are *literal* mountaintop experiences. There are *metaphorical* mountaintop experiences too. This is were for a just little while, everything seems right with the world. These are the times we want to set up a tent and stay awhile. Perhaps forever. Circumstances are just right, we feel in the zone. We are growing and developing, **so why would we want to leave the metaphorical mountaintop?**

ME:

In high school I had two of these types of mountaintop experiences, but they also occurred on the top of actual mountains. This happened on the Adirondack mountains in up state New York. I went with Young-Life to Saranac Lake for two **transformative retreats. Coming home was not**

fun! I wanted to stay on that mountaintop to keep experiencing . . . my mountaintop experience! More on this a little later.

YOU:

Have you ever had a mountaintop experience? On a literal mountain or a metaphorical mountain top? Today Jesus and some of his disciples are on a mountain top. Some want to stay there, but others know that life happens after the mountaintops. Let's go there now and see what Jesus can teach us about mountain tops and the life that happens after them:

Let's pray just before we open ourselves to the Scriptures:

GOD:

Mark 9:2 Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, 3 and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. 4 And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. 5 Then Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." 6 He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. 7 Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!" 8 Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.

9 As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

WE:

We can understand why Peter after having arrived at this alive moment with Jesus, wants to put some tent stakes in the ground. He offers to build three dwellings — one for Jesus, one for Moses, one for Elijah — so that they can all stay there, in *happy habitats* on that mountain . . . forever.

“**Nope,**” says Jesus. “**We must go on.**” There is always some next thing to be getting on with in Mark’s Gospel.

They say that what Peter has been able to glimpse here is some fullness of time; some thin and holy scenario where these three critical moments in the holy narrative are drawn into a single place in time.

Perhaps he also glimpsed there and then the way that Jesus would soon join the company of these other two prophets, gone on to God and present only in memory. The power of that must have been as *concerning and confusing* as it was *comforting*. Of course he wanted to stay there forever and keep Jesus in the safety of some mountaintop habitat. But, of course, they couldn’t stay. After all, no perfect moment can remain.

Life after the mountaintop. Life after Saranac Lake was fun. I continued to go to Young-Life meetings and I went sporadically to the Campaigner Bible

studies. As long as it was fun, I continued to go. Then when I went to college that stuff was not fun anymore. I stopped going to Young-Life, because that was for High school aged kids. I stopped going to church, because it was not as fun as Young-Life had been. This is when I found God to not really feel necessary to life. I had confused **faith** with **fun** and **fun** with **faith**. Faith can and should be fun, but it is not necessary for it to be fun. It is serious too and life is not always fun. We need to prepare for life after the mountaintop. We need to find routines and habits that feed our faith and strength our souls that we might grow into the transformations begun on the mountain top. We can pray, and read, and argue with God, and doubt some of what we read. We can ask questions of those whom we trust, not excluding God being One whom we trust. We can sit quietly in the noise of life and listen for a whisper from God. It may be audible, but likely a feeling of contentedness. We will feel that we are going to be okay. We will realize that wherever we go, God is already there.

Enjoy the view from the mountaintop, but plan for, work for, believe for the life that comes after we descend the mountain into homework and traffic and work and laundry and . . . Life.

THE SERMON IN A SENTENCE:

Life is lived after mountain top experiences as we ascend to life transformed by the view.

YOU:

**How will you maintain your zeal once you leave the mountaintop view?
What can you do too deepen the transformation? How will you help
our youth live into their transformation?**

CLOSE:

Our youth are returning from a youth retreat today. It was no where near any literal mountain tops. But it was certainly full of metaphorical mountain tops, *I guarantee it!* They are going to be *excited* and *on fire* for Jesus. Then they are going to get home and realize they have homework to do. They are going to remember they have chores to do. *Life crowds in when we rerun from the mountain top!* The great thing to remember is that they are plugged into youth group and Church life. Even more, their experience on the mountain top will transform their daily life from bus stop to homework to the cafeteria to their chores.

In those places we glimpse some holy fulfillment of all God's promises, all of our hopes, and all the mystery of creation. It is natural to want to put up a flag and stay there forever. But since we can't—**what truth can we take from the mountaintop that will sustain us for the journey ahead?**

We can ask the God of the mountaintop, to be known to us in this place. We can ask him to send his Spirit to move among us, that we might glimpse his glory in all that lies around us. We can pray to open our eyes to

the wonder of this day, this hour, this moment. Let us dwell for a time in his presence, that we might be renewed for the journey ahead. Oh God, speak your calling on our lives again and make us one in the hope that we find in you.

Let's talk to the God who is here