

Gospel of Mark - Lesson Eight

Chapter Nine

Most Bible scholars agree that Mark 9:1 seems to be a continuation of the end of Chapter 8. It seems to be the high point of Jesus' words concerning discipleship and His promise of coming glory to those He was associated with at this point in history.

Mark 9:2-13

This was a preview of the coming glory of Jesus.

We see several times throughout the Gospels that Peter, James and John were a sort of inner circle of Jesus' disciples. The "high mountain" represents a place of revelation in the Bible. This was a symbol of God's glory.

The word translated "transfigured" is used in the New Testament in Romans 12:2 and 2 Corinthians 3:18 as a place of moral transformation and here in Mark and its parallel in Matthew 17:2 as a physical transformation. Jesus' appearance was changed temporarily and radically from that of an ordinary human to a divine being in all of His glory.

9:3 - We see that the **brightness of the clothes** Jesus was wearing was unlike anything any man could produce, another symbol of God's glory and a representation of the glory of His sinlessness. This is in contrast to the words of Isaiah regarding every other member of the human race, "...all our righteousness are as filthy rags." Isaiah 64:6

9:4 - Why do you think Moses and Elijah were the other two to appear with Jesus in this passage? It is believed they were representative of the **giver of the Law (Moses)** and the **great prophet (Elijah)**; those things that had come before Jesus. Jesus came as a fulfillment of the law and the prophets.

Also, Moses and Elijah were both associated with high mountains. Moses was associated with Mt. Sinai in Exodus 19 and Elijah was associated with Mt. Carmel in 1 Kings 18 when he called down the fire of God to consume his sacrifice.

Both men also had a transformation experience. Moses when his face reflected the glory Exodus 34:29-35 and Elijah when he was taken to heaven in a chariot of fire. 2 Kings 2:11 The **Biblical patriarchs** are another symbol of God's glory.

9:5 - This demonstrated Peter's lack of understanding of what he was experiencing at the time. He wanted to build three shelters as memorials. This would have put Jesus on the same level as Moses and Elijah. It also

indicated that Peter was thinking of something permanent which was not what Jesus was about. Jesus was on His way to the cross and this was but a foreshadow of the glory that was to come.

9:7 - The **clouds** suggests the glory of the Lord in the same way the bright clothes also suggested this. We recall the cloud in the OT that represented God's presence, protection and provision. In the NT the clouds are associated with the return of Christ of which this is a preview. This is also where God speaks and tells them to listen to Jesus. We remember that God also spoke when Jesus was baptized and told the people, "This is my beloved Son."

With Moses and Elijah also being present God tells Peter, James and John to listen to Jesus. Perhaps this is to show that the law and the prophets are now fulfilled in Jesus and what He has to say now is of utmost importance. The disciples were used to Jesus preaching the Good News of the Gospel. When he begins to talk about His suffering, rejection and death, they don't want to hear it. God is telling them, "Hear Him!" It doesn't matter whether they like it or not, they need to listen to him. This **audible voice from heaven** is the final symbol of God's glory.

Vs 8 - Moses and Elijah are gone and they are once again alone with Jesus. Ultimately, it is about Jesus. He alone would suffer and go to the cross for our redemption.

Vs 9 -10 - After such a dramatic encounter Jesus now tells them to keep it to themselves. They did not understand the importance of this experience and could not until they experienced Jesus death and resurrection. This was as Jesus intended. Imagine having such an experience and not being allowed to talk about it.

Why do you think that Jesus allowed Peter, James and John to experience the transfiguration? Perhaps it is because it would help them when they had to endure the suffering that was to come. Knowing the glory that Jesus promised, gave them courage and hope.

2 Peter 1:16-18 "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain."

Mark 9:14-29 - The crowd was excited to see Jesus as they always were. We see that the disciples were arguing with the teachers of the law.

The father explains that his child is demon possessed and he cannot speak. In vs. 25 we also see that he is unable to hear. In vs. 18, 20, 22, it appears that the child has epilepsy.

9:19 - Prior to this event the disciples had been able to exercise demons (Mark 6:13) but during this short absence of Jesus they failed due to their lack of **faith**. Jesus knew that He would soon be gone and that his disciples would take over and do what He had been doing on earth. Just because they had spiritual power before didn't mean they would always possess it. It is something that has to be maintained and renewed. We must do the same. Apparently the fact that the disciples had not been able to heal the boy shook the faith of his father as well because we see in Vs. 22 and Vs. 24 that he tells Jesus if you can heal him have mercy on us and help us and I believe, help me overcome my unbelief. How often we too struggle with our unbelief, we do believe yet we don't. It is a continual struggle of being a disciple of Christ.

Vs 28 - Once again we see that Jesus took his disciples to teach them privately and discuss this situation.

Vs 29 - Prior to this verse the emphasis was on faith but here Jesus brings up the idea of prayer and the necessity of prayer in our lives. **Prayer** is the avenue to faith. This is applicable to our lives as well. We can be believers who have a relationship with Jesus but unless we remain in constant contact with the source of our power, we will fail when difficulty comes. This is why it is so important to be continually seeking a closer walk with Jesus.

Mark 9:30-32

Jesus once again takes his disciples aside for the purpose of instruction. He wanted to get away from the crowd and have some private time to prepare them for his death. They did not understand what He was saying. It could also be that they didn't really want to know what Jesus was talking about because they liked things as they were and didn't want to think about what might come. According to Mark, Jesus' public ministry in Galilee was now over and this was the beginning of his journey to Jerusalem and the cross.

Mark 9:33-37

We see from these passages the same pride and temptation that are prevalent in our society today. Jesus was more concerned about their hearts as servants and their attitudes. Wanting to be known as the most important does not line up with being a servant. As Jesus life demonstrated He put others first and was the greatest servant of all. Children represent **innocence, vulnerability, and helplessness**. The disciples are instructed to receive or welcome those

who are like children. In this case receive or welcome means “to be concerned about, to care for, to show kindness to”. Greatness in the kingdom is not about position but ministry.

Mark 9:38-41

John was upset that someone was casting out a demon in the name of Jesus because “he wasn’t in our group”. We know in Acts 19:13-14 that the Jewish exorcist sometimes used Jesus name like a magical incantation and that was condemned but in this case the exorcist was a believer just not part of their group. We have to be careful today not to condemn other denominations or believers because they aren’t “part of our group”. We need to extend and accept hospitality with other believers no matter what group they belong to.

Mark 9:42-50

Vs. 42 - is referring to the same people as vs. 36. Those who are immature, weak and possibly new believers. To cause these to sin or stumble will bring serious judgment.

Vs. 43-49 deals with our own sin. These verses are metaphors and are not to be taken literally. It is saying that just as a surgeon amputates a limb that endangers the rest of the body, so we must remove those things from our lives that endanger our spiritual lives.

Vs. 50 - Pure salt does not lose its saltiness. Salt is both a preservative and a necessity of life. As believers it is necessary for us to be a source of spiritual life for the world. We sometimes do not function in the capacity that God desires us to function and it is this that Jesus was warning against. In ancient times the salt that was gathered from the Dead Sea contained many impurities. If those impurities were removed, what remains would look like salt but it would not have the life-giving, life-saving effects of pure salt. We have to be careful that we don’t have the outward appearance of a believer but not have the internal substance in our lives.