

² Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. ³ His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them. ⁴ And Elijah appeared to them with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. ⁵ Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah” — ⁶ because he did not know what to say, for they were greatly afraid. ⁷ And a cloud came and overshadowed them; and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!” ⁸ Suddenly, when they had looked around, they saw no one anymore, but only Jesus with themselves. ⁹ Now as they came down from the mountain, He commanded them that they should tell no one the things they had seen, till the Son of Man had risen from the dead. ¹⁰ So they kept this word to themselves, questioning what the rising from the dead meant. ¹¹ And they asked Him, saying, “Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?” ¹² Then He answered and told them, “Indeed, Elijah is coming first and restores all things. And how is it written concerning the Son of Man, that He must suffer many things and be treated with contempt? ¹³ But I say to you that Elijah has also come, and they did to him whatever they wished, as it is written of him.” ¹⁴ And when He came to the disciples, He saw a great multitude around them, and scribes disputing with them. ¹⁵ Immediately, when they saw Him, all the people were greatly amazed, and running to Him, greeted Him. ¹⁶ And He asked the scribes, “What are you discussing with them?” ¹⁷ Then one of the crowd answered and said, “Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit. ¹⁸ And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. So I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not.” ¹⁹ He answered him and said, “O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me.” ²⁰ Then they brought him to Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth. ²¹ So He asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?” And he said, “From childhood. ²² And often he has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.” ²³ Jesus said to him, “If you can believe, all things *are* possible to him who believes.” ²⁴ Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!” ²⁵ When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it: “Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!” ²⁶ Then *the spirit* cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead, so that many said, “He is dead.” ²⁷ But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. ²⁸ And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?” ²⁹ So He said to them, “This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting.”

Introduction

Last month in Mark’s gospel Jesus taught His disciples the importance of the necessity of the way of the cross.

By this Mark meant the need for Jesus to die on the cross.

Mark also emphasized the necessity for every disciple of Jesus to die spiritually if they desire to follow Him sincerely.

Taking up your cross and following Jesus for the early disciples meant the risk of martyrdom.

This is the case for many Christians throughout the world today.

Mark is showing us that the normal Christian life is the way of self- sacrifice, giving up your life to serve Jesus.

This can mean different things for different people depending on their circumstances.

However, it should always mean a complete surrender to serve Jesus in the things that He wants us to do, which can often be out of our comfort zone.

In Romans Chapter 12: v. 1-2 Paul teaches that this surrender should be a normal response to the gospel message.

This is why in Romans Chapter 1-11, Paul presents the gospel and then from Chapter 12 to the end of his letter he applies the expected practical outworking of the gospel in our lives.

Romans 12: v. 1-2.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

The last point of our study was Mark 9: v. 1

And He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power."

We discovered that Mark was saying "**after the cross comes the glory**".

Jesus reassures the disciples with a promise in chapter 9: v.1 and then He follows up this promise, six days later, with the experience of the transformation.

It is at this point that we begin our next study.

1. A taste of God's final kingdom - 9: v.1-8.

Before we start to examine this experience, we need to note that there are some connections between this experience and what happened in Exodus Chapter 24.

In this Chapter we are told that the "Glory of God" rested on Mount Sinai.

There some parallels to consider.

The disciples had to wait for **six days** until God's glory was revealed – Mark 9: v.2.

Moses had to wait **6 days** before God called Moses from the cloud – Ex.24: v.16.

The disciples had to go up on to a **high mountain** to meet with God - Mark 9: v.2.

Moses also had to go up a **high mountain** to meet with God. – Ex. 24: v.15.

God spoke to the disciples **out of the cloud** - Mark 9: v. 7.

God also spoke to Moses **out of a cloud** on Mount Sinai - Ex. 24: v. 16.

In Exodus God reveals Himself to His chosen nation.

In Mark's gospel, the glory of God is seen in Jesus.

In the Old Testament the New Testament is concealed, but in the New Testament, the Old Testament is revealed.

The Bible is one book and it is all about Jesus, being revealed as the only answer to our problem. The big problem of all mankind is the problem of the sinful human nature that exists in all of us. This is what causes wars, murders, theft, ungodly behaviour and all the bad things about our society.

Let us now examine exactly what happens in v.1-8.

Firstly, Jesus promises the disciples that they will see the "kingdom of God" present with power. (9: v. 1)

What did Jesus mean by this promise?

Jesus meant that He was about to reveal His inner self, who He really was, so that the selected disciples could really see with their own eyes, that Jesus was God in human form.

By this I mean the second person of the trinity, being God the Son.

This is the only recorded instance during the ministry of Jesus where His glory is revealed for others to see.

Therefore, these are a very special few verses, and worthy of examination.

This was a very powerful promise on the part of Jesus and I am not sure that the disciples fully grasped what was about to happen.

The disciples had to wait six days, then Jesus selected Peter, James and John and led them to the top of a high mountain.

Why just Peter, James and John?

Well Mark does tell us that Jesus made His own choices about who would serve Him.

However, we do know that Peter was the eldest and that in the future he would play a significant role in establishing the Church.

John was the youngest and is described as the one Jesus loved.

James was martyred early on in his ministry and no doubt a very brave disciple.

I guess that Jesus chose these disciples because He knew which of his disciples would benefit most from this wonderful experience.

Although we should **never trust in experiences and feelings**, but **only in God's word**, there is no doubt about the fact that people who have experienced God in a wonderful way, usually don't backslide and desert Jesus, they go on to serve God in wonderful ways.

My only personal experience of this is meeting people who have experienced God during a Holy Spirit sent Revival.

These people, once they have experienced God's glory, **are never the same again**.

In Luke's Gospel Chapter 12 v. 35-48 Jesus talks about the faithful servant and the evil servant.

In v. 48 Jesus says, **"For to everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more."**

God spoke to Wendy and myself in 1985 through these verses.

God had provided our Salvation through Jesus as a gift from God.

God had provided wonderfully through my employment to provide for our needs and also to purchase a wonderful home to live in.

God had given us our first son, Andrew, a gift from God.

God, in 1985, asked us to give it all up to follow Him in faith.

We have no regrets but it has been a challenging 32 years.

Experiences can be helpful, but Wendy and I have always tried to trust in God's word and I would encourage you all to do the same.

Now we come to the actual transfiguration experience. What actually happened?

Chapter 9: v. 3-4 (N.K.J.)

³ His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them.

⁴ And Elijah appeared to them with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.

Peter didn't know what to say or do so he suggested making 3 huts, one for Moses, one for Elijah and one for Jesus.

Chapter 9: v. 7 (N.K.J.)

⁷ And a cloud came and overshadowed them; and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!"

After these events, suddenly Moses and Elijah disappeared and only Jesus was left in his normal state.

The experience was over. What can we make of it?

Well, in v. 9 Jesus commanded Peter, James and John to tell no one about this experience until He had been risen from the dead.

Although the disciples didn't understand what being risen from the dead was all about, nevertheless they kept this secret among themselves.

We need to unpack the theology behind this experience.

The two people who appeared on the mountain when the glory of Jesus was revealed were Moses and Elijah. (this was Moses' first step on to the promised land)

Moses represented the Law and was the writer of the Torah, the first 5 books of the Bible.

Elijah represented the Prophets.

Both of these people's ministry had their **fulfillment in Jesus Christ.**

Hebrews Chapter 1: v. 1-2 (N.K.J.)

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, ² has in these last days spoken to us by *His* Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;

The whole of the Old Testament was supporting Jesus Christ as the God man.

The transfiguration was visual proof that the Old Testament pointed to Jesus.

Don't forget Peter, James and John were Jewish and they knew at least the Torah and some of the Prophets at least.

They had been taught the Old Testament scriptures from an early age.

I think it is clear that God wanted these three disciples to understand that the whole of the Old Testament pointed to Jesus.

God didn't want the disciples to ignore their Jewish upbringing or culture.

He wanted them to realise that Jesus was a **fulfillment of the Old Testament Law**.

Jesus was the only perfect man who could obey the 10 commandments.

Therefore, the disciples must trust Jesus.

There are also some verses in Malachi 4: v. 4-6 to consider.

⁴ "Remember the Law of Moses, My servant,
Which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel,
With the statutes and judgments.

⁵ Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet
Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.

⁶ And he will turn
The hearts of the fathers to the children,
And the hearts of the children to their fathers,
Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse."

Some scholars believe that these verses connect well with what Jesus says in Chapter 9: v. 12.

Many Messianic Jews and some Christians believe that Moses and Elijah will return to be God's evangelists to the Jewish people before God's day of judgement to this world.

This certainly fits in with this passage, but it is not the main point of what God is trying to teach the disciples.

The main point is that Jesus is "**God's beloved Son**" and the disciples must "**listen**" to Him.

This fits in with the whole theme of Mark's gospel.

Remember in Mark 1: v.11 when John baptised Jesus?

¹¹ Then a voice came from heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

If you wanted a theme for Mark's gospel it would be "**Believe in Jesus, God's beloved Son**".

We now move on to the second half of our passage.

2. A Call to dependent discipleship – v. 14-29.

When Jesus, Peter, James and John returned from the transfiguration experience, all the disciples were taught a valuable lesson on "**dependent discipleship**".

This is a lesson that "ALL" Christians need to learn.

In the text of v. 14-29 we are told the story of Jesus arriving at a dispute between the disciples of Jesus and the scribes.

The discussion seemed to be over a possible demon possessed boy whom the disciples could not exorcise. The boy's father spoke to Jesus and explained the problem.

v. 17-18.

¹⁷ Then one of the crowd answered and said, "Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit. ¹⁸ And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. So I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not."

Jesus didn't immediately cast the demon out of the boy, He asked a few questions and then challenged the father to "believe" that with God, his boy could be healed.

In v. 24 we have the recorded prayer of the father towards Jesus.

v. 20-27.

²⁰ Then they brought him to Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth. ²¹ So He asked his father, "How long has this been

happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. ²² And often he has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." ²³ Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things *are* possible to him who believes." ²⁴ Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" ²⁵ When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it: "Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!" ²⁶ Then *the spirit* cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead, so that many said, "He is dead." ²⁷ But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.

The interesting thing to note in this miracle is **the belief of the father versus the failure of the disciples to cast out the demon.**

The father had complete faith in Jesus, he was "**honest**" and "**desperate**".

Jesus promised him that if he could only believe then it would be possible to heal his son.

When the disciples asked Jesus why "THEY" couldn't cast out the demon from the boy, Jesus replied in v. 29

²⁹ So He said to them, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting."

It appears from what Jesus said, that the disciples failed in the area of prayer and fasting.

I know that some translations don't include fasting, and only mention the word prayer. I am persuaded that Jesus did include fasting.

Jewish people were quite strict on prayer but fasting was a little more serious and not always possible if you were working or needed physical energy.

However, the challenge here is a call to dependent discipleship.

When you serve Jesus, with the help of the Holy Spirit, you must always be dependent upon His power to heal and to resolve spiritual and practical problems.

Sometimes this does require prayer and fasting.

Not that this is a scientific formula, but it does draw you closer to Jesus and the Holy Spirit, ready for ministry in a difficult situation.

Prayer and fasting was very much part of everyday ministry in the Acts of the Apostles.

The Bible says "WHEN" you fast and NOT "IF" you fast.

The other side of this is always giving GOD the glory when something happens in answer to either prayer or prayer and fasting.

The one thing that I don't like to hear from Christians in ministry is:

"If it wasn't for me, this would not have happened..."

It doesn't matter if it is the healing of somebody, the appointing of a person in a Church, either as the Pastor or ministry worker, it is ultimately **God who does the work.**

We are only instruments in His hands and HE must have ALL the Glory.

Isaiah 42: v. 8.

⁸ I *am* the LORD, that *is* My name;

And My glory I will not give to another,

Nor My praise to carved images.

Today we give glory to God for sending Jesus to die on a cross that we might be saved from the wrath of God to come.

Today we give glory to God for our Salvation through Jesus.

Communion is a celebration of "Thanksgiving" for what God **has DONE**, not what we DO.

Let us pray.