

A Better Picture of Jesus

11.4.18

Mark Series

Message 39

1. Going forward with Jesus

A. The day told about in this passage was a big day for Jesus and these 3 disciples.

1. For Jesus, it was an encouragement from the Father that Jesus was on a path that pleased Him.
2. For the 3 Apostles, they were permitted to see the amazing glory and deity of Jesus.

a. It also fulfilled Mark 9:1 where Jesus said that there were those standing with Him that would not die until they saw the kingdom of God come in power.

b. For Peter, the Transfiguration of Jesus was confirmation of his declaration of faith.

1. Not long before Peter had declared Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of God.

2. Now Peter got to see and hear this reality first hand.

B. The Transformation is a pretty big deal for us too!

1. For many here, the past few weeks have been hard and discouraging.

2. I know this by two ways:

a. First, I know what many of you have shared with me and the other pastors.

b. For many of you, life is not much fun right now for many reasons.

3. The second reason I know is that what happens in our workplaces and homes works its way into our interactions with others, especially at church.

a. In other words, some of US are being cranky and petty with each other. But, it will be ok.

b. Because **when life happens, so does Jesus.**

c. The greater the obstacle the clearer God makes Jesus in our life.

C. Today, as we explore this passage together, it is my hope that for the many of us here that are struggling, that Jesus will make himself clear and will reveal His glory!

2. This amazing event didn't happen in front of everyone.

A. To begin with it happened only in front of Peter, James, and John.

1. This was their time to see the glory of God magnify Jesus.

2. While this may sound unfair, it really is ok.

3. The other disciples got their time when Jesus appeared to them after the resurrection.

4. Even more got to see the glory and power of Jesus displayed when he left Earth and entered into heaven in front of around 500 people.

5. They all eventually saw and experienced the glory and power of Jesus.

6. Some just had to wait their turn.

B. Some of us here today feel more like the 9 disciples who were waiting their turn to see the glory of God.

1. You are wondering when you are going to see your miracle.

2. You are wondering when your answered prayer will come.

3. It seems that, while everyone else is getting victory, you feel forgotten and alone.

4. Sometimes, God chooses people to see or experience things based upon a time schedule that you and I don't understand.

a. When the Lord blesses others and you are left waiting, don't get mad and cranky with God, get happy.

b. Be happy for your brother or sister and celebrate with them.

c. Because your day is coming.

5. Our attitude while waiting on God will determine the level of blessing we receive from God.

3. Before the eyes of Peter, James, and John, Jesus is transfigured.

A. Transfigured comes from the Greek word "Metamorphosis".

1. It means a change of form or nature from one thing into something completely different.

a. Like the change of a caterpillar into a butterfly.

b. The end doesn't look anything like the beginning.

c. "I want to tell someone here today that your end is not going to look like your beginning because God is transforming your life into something that looks completely different than where you started."

2. Peter, James, and John thought they knew Jesus pretty well at this point.

a. They had lived with him, ate with him, and saw the miracles.

b. They had even confessed that Jesus was the Messiah, the Chosen Servant of God.

c. But their understanding was still falling short.

B. Before their eyes, the veil hiding Jesus' divinity was pulled back and they saw Jesus in His full glory.

1. What they saw was Jesus' holiness and purity.
2. The text tries to describe the dazzling purity of Jesus by saying Jesus' robes became whiter than any bleach or launderer could make them.
3. Not only were they incredibly white, they were also bright and shiny like polished brass.

C. No matter how holy and powerful the disciples thought Jesus was before this moment, the transfiguration exceeded their imagination.

1. The critical point for us today is that "Jesus is holier than you think."
2. Jesus is greater than you realize.
3. Jesus has more power than you can fathom.
4. **What we desperately need today is a higher view of who Jesus is, not a lesser one.**
 - a. When my view of Jesus is low, I lose my hope.
 - b. When my view of Jesus is low, I allow sin to dominate my life.
 - c. When my view of Jesus is low, I forget that Jesus has the power to change everything and everyone.
 - d. May God help us to see Jesus in His power and majesty.
5. Soon, the disciples were going to see Jesus crucified.
 - a. He would be brutalized and abused.
 - b. Jesus would be mocked and desecrated.
 - c. But those moments were transient (they wouldn't last).
 - d. The transfiguration was meant to show Peter, James, and John the fulness of Jesus' glory and origin.

e. No matter what happened next, Jesus was the Son of God.

Not only was Jesus there, but so were Moses and Elijah.

4. The appearance of Moses and Elijah are shrouded in mystery.

A. Why did these two appear with Jesus?

1. What did they talk about?
2. What do they represent?
3. Very likely, Moses and Elijah represent all of the promises and prophecies that looked forward to the day when God would send His Messiah.

B. The hope of Israel had been handed down for generations in the Law and the Prophets.

1. Through Exodus, Exile, and struggle, Israel had looked forward to the Day when God would come and establish His Kingdom.
2. Moses and Elijah were sent to declare that the day had come.
3. Moses and Elijah were there to declare that Jesus was the one that would restore all things.
4. Moses and Elijah were there to give their praise to Jesus.

C. What did they talk about?

1. It isn't recorded but I can imagine.
2. Imagine Moses said something like this to Jesus:
 - a. When I was in the wilderness, I saw you when you were the cloud by day and fire by night.
 - b. When I was in the wilderness I tasted of your goodness when I drank water from the Rock and ate of the Manna, the bread of life.

c. When I was on the mountain, receiving the Law, I was in your holy presence and your glory shown so bright that my face began to glow.

d. I know who you are and I am on the edge of my heavenly seat as I watch you fulfill the will of God by going to the cross.

3. Maybe Elijah said to Jesus:

a. I know who you are.

b. You were the one who spoke to me and led me to announce a famine in the presence of King Ahab and it didn't rain for several years.

c. You are the one who sent ravines to feed me when I was in the desert.

d. You are the one who multiplied the flour in the widow's jar, and you are the one who was there when you used me to raise her son back from the dead.

e. You were the one who told me to challenge the prophets of Baal at Mt. Carmel by offering sacrifices. Jesus, I saw you in the sacrifice and I saw you in the fire that fell and consumed the sacrifice.

f. When I killed the prophets of Baal, I saw your righteous judgment and then I saw your miraculous provision in the little cloud that ended the drought.

g. Jesus, when I was depressed running away from Jezebel you again provided for me, fed me, sustained me, and gave me hope and correction.

h. Jesus, you were in the whirlwind that took me to heaven without tasting of death.

i. Jesus, I know who you are! But none of those things compare to what you are getting ready to do. All of those miracles and prophecies testified of the upcoming days and glory.

D. Can you imagine how great it would have been to be in the presence of Jesus, Elijah, and Moses?

1. The impression would have been mind-boggling.
2. Peter is in amazement and proposes to build tabernacles in honor of these 3 great men.

5. Peter is not being foolish.

A. If you have heard sermons on this passage before, you have heard people say that Peter was volunteering to build 3 churches, one for each.

1. That is not what Peter is doing.
2. Peter is not proposing the worship of Jesus alongside Moses and Elijah.
3. Peter is expressing the Jewish hope that God had come to live among His people again.

B. During the days of the Exodus, God lived in the Tabernacle that Moses had built.

1. As the centuries moved on and the Jews experienced exile in Babylon and then in their own land, they began to look forward to a day when God would live again with them.
2. Judaism held onto the hope that God would once again tabernacle with his people as in the Exodus.¹
3. This hope was celebrated during the Jewish Festival of Booths also called the Festival of Shelters, and Tabernacles.
4. Peter's desire to build Tabernacles was a pious and good thing.
 - a. Peter was professing that God had indeed come in the form of Jesus.

¹ James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Mark*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos, 2002), 266.

b. And Peter wanted to be at the cutting edge of ushering in this new age.

C. What Peter didn't understand was that Jesus didn't need his help.

1. Jesus already had a plan to live with his people.

2. John, who was there on the mountain that day, wrote in his Gospel:

a. John 1:14 (NIV)

¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

b. That word "dwelled" is the word for tabernacle.

c. Jesus didn't need Peter's help erecting a building to house the glory of God, Jesus was the housing of God's glory.

d. Someday, when Jesus returns and establishes the New Heaven and New Earth, Rev. 21:3 will come to pass:

Revelation 21:3 (NIV)

³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.

6. Then there was an encouraging voice.

A. During the midst of all this, God speaks.

1. "This is my beloved Son, listen to Him".

2. In this short line, God encourages both Jesus and the disciples.

B. Jesus is preparing for the most difficult thing in his life and ministry.

1. The cross is coming and Jesus knows it.
2. The Father's affirmation gives Jesus the encouragement He needs to head to the cross.
3. When you and I are struggling, we need affirmation.
 - a. We need affirmation from our family.
 - b. We need affirmation from our friends.
 - c. We especially need affirmation from the people we worship with.
 - d. But before all of these, we need to be assured of God's love for us.

C. Then the Father admonished the disciples to "listen to him".

1. As soon as God speaks, Moses and Elijah disappear and only Jesus remains.
2. If Moses and Elijah represent the Law and the Prophets, God's command emphasizes the role that Jesus was to play.
 - a. Their obedience to God was going to be judged through Jesus and not the Law and the Prophets.
 - b. Jesus had come to fulfill the Law and the Prophets, and God was telling Peter, James, and John that obedience to Jesus would fulfill God's will.

Closing: Then there was only Jesus.

A. This must have been a "wow" moment.

1. Moses and Elijah are gone.
2. The voice of God has stopped.
3. Jesus' clothing has returned to its normal brightness.
4. Standing before them was no one except Jesus.

B. Yet, Jesus is enough.

1. As Jesus prepares His disciples for Jesus' upcoming death and resurrection, Jesus shows them that He is enough.
2. Jesus is enough for our salvation.
3. Jesus is enough for us to live with hope and joy.
4. Jesus is enough for us to give our lives to without fear.
5. Jesus is enough.

C. And **if everything else were to be stripped away, would Jesus be enough for you?**

1. The Transfiguration occurs right after Jesus tells the disciples to pick up their crosses and follow him.
2. If everything was stripped away from your life, would Jesus still be enough?
 - a. For Peter, James, and John, a glimpse of the glory and majesty of Jesus was all they needed to endure future hardship.
 - b. For many of us here, we have never been close enough to Jesus to say that He is enough for us.

D. What we need going forward in this day is a clearer picture of Jesus.

1. If you aren't sure where Jesus is in your life right now, if you feel alone, forgotten, or overwhelmed, here in a moment we are going to ask Jesus to show us His presence in our lives.
2. If you are uncertain of how you are going to make it through another week or day, today I want us to pray for the Presence of Jesus to be made known to you so you can overcome and win in your life.
3. If your picture of Jesus and his importance is growing murky, I want us to pray for clarity.

4. Let us pray today that Jesus becomes our driving passion and priority and may every lesser thing melt away into the background.