

Come, Behold the Wondrous Mystery
Mark 9:2-13

I. Introduction

A. Connect the passages

1. Tell the story
 - a. Six days after the events of Mark 8:31-9:1, Jesus takes three of his disciples up a high mountain for a meeting with God
 - (1) Six days after he asks them the question that is not only the focus of Mark's gospel, but the focus of their lives
 - (2) Six days after he heals a blind man through a series of two touches
 - (3) Six days after he plainly announces the brutality and death and resurrection he faces
 - (4) Six days after he sets their own future before them, that they must lose their lives in order to save them
 - (5) Six days after he declares that some of them would see the kingdom of God come with power
 - b. Six days after these things, Jesus takes Peter, James, and John up a mountain where the three of them witness the kingdom of God come in power.
2. Connect with previous passage
 - a. There on the mountain, having asked his disciples if they know who He really is, He reveals Who He really is
 - (1) He has revealed His agenda to them: to die and rise from the dead in Jerusalem
 - (2) He has revealed the fundamental requirement of discipleship: utter surrender to devotion to him
 - (3) He has revealed the kingdom was coming in power
 - b. And now he gives them a visual personal, experiential reason to accept and trust everything He has said about Himself, His Father, His kingdom and the role they will play in the kingdom.
 - (1) He shows them His glory.
 - (2) **He reveals in no uncertain terms that He is, in fact, the Son of God, the Christ, sent into the world at the Father's will to fulfill the Father's plan.**

B. Make the point

1. This is the point of the transfiguration of Jesus
 - a. Given all that He has done he now answers a very practical question
 - b. How do we know the commitments disciples are called to make are really worth making?
 - (1) How do we know, truly, who Jesus is, and whether what He is telling us about Himself is really true?
 - (2) How do we know that we really ought to believe what He

- says, and embrace what He teaches and does?
- c. How do we know we can trust Him?
 - (1) Because of the transfiguration
 - (2) Because Jesus, in this moment, reveals the truth about Himself
 - (3) Because Jesus reveals in His transfiguration that He is none other than God Himself come in human flesh, deity with a body.
 2. We're going to take several Sundays exploring the depth of grace that is ours in this one event in Jesus' life, but for this morning, there are **three takeaways from the transfiguration of Jesus.**

II. Three Take-aways

A. **The transfiguration of Jesus confirms that even though we are required to know the right answer to Jesus' question, "Who do you say that I am?" the true identity of Jesus must be revealed to us.**

1. When Jesus asked earlier how he was being perceived by the crowds, he got a survey of answers
 - a. John the Baptist
 - b. Elijah
 - c. Some other of the prophets
2. There is in all these answers an awareness that Jesus is someone extraordinary, someone who possesses a unique and remarkable relationship with God.
3. What is missing, even in Peter's answer that Jesus is the Christ, is an awareness that Jesus is more than a servant of God, He is God Himself.
4. Take Note
 - a. Despite the miracles, and the authoritative teaching, and the compassion, and the mercy, the dispelling of demons, and healing the sick and lame, and all that Jesus has said and done, there was still something not understood.
 - b. They could see that Jesus was empowered by God but they could not see on their own that He was God.
 - c. His true nature, His true identity could not be derived from human reasoning or rationalization.
 - d. **His true nature has to be revealed.**
5. Human persuasion, no matter how clever or clear, can only get us so far.
 - a. For all of us, if we are to know Jesus as He is and trust Him with our lives, **He must reveal Himself to us.**
 - b. The work of salvation in Christ is the work of the Holy Spirit
 - (1) Revealing the true person of Christ to the human heart and
 - (2) Producing faith in Him.
6. In these tumultuous days, pray, Christian, pray.
 - a. Pray that God will open the eyes of the blind
 - b. Pray that God will reveal Christ to needy hearts
 - c. Pray that God will take those whom He is calling to faith to the

presence of Christ where they may see Him clearly, not only for what He has done for them, but for Who He is!

B. The transfiguration of Jesus confirms that He is the Son of God, the central figure of all Christian faith and practice.

1. Baccalaureate Backlash
 - a. Sermon focus: What will you do with Jesus?
 - b. Local “pastors” feedback: “Too christocentric for my taste”
2. Jesus’ identity as the Son of God, the God-man sent by God to deliver the world from sin and slavery to the fear of death means He deserves to be the center focus of your life, both theoretically and practically.
 - a. Consider the Revelation: Not a book about end times, but a book about Jesus!
 - (1) 1:1 The revelation of Jesus
 - (2) Chapter 1: picture of Jesus
 - (3) Each letter in Chs 2-3 begins with a portrait of Jesus
 - (4) The beginning of the heavenly perspective starting in ch. 4 starts with Jesus, the Lamb standing in the throne being worshiped
 - (5) Revelation ends with a plea for the return of Jesus
 - b. The focus of life and witness ought to be, deserves to be, Jesus and not peripheral issues, no matter how important they may appear!
 - (1) Jesus is the express image of God’s person
 - (2) Jesus is the God-sent, God-claimed, God exalted Son
 - (3) Jesus is the Savior
 - (a) We all are guilty of sin by imputation and activation
 - i) Guilt of Adam imputed by God upon all the descendants of Adam
 - ii) Guilt of Adam becomes our own personal guilt by our own sins
 - (b) We all stand condemned before a holy and just God
 - (c) Jesus
 - i) Fulfilled the faith and obedience God requires of all humanity, a faith and obedience that we cannot do for ourselves
 - ii) Offered Himself to God in our place on our behalf
 - iii) Took on Himself on the cross the punishment, the death our sin deserves
 - (d) Who did this for us?
 - i) Jesus, revealed at his transfiguration to be the Son of God, full of glory.
 - ii) Jesus, revealed to be God in human flesh, come not to destroy the world as it deserves, but through His own sacrifice to save the world.

- (4) Jesus is the substance and guarantee of every promise
- (5) Jesus is the friend that sticks closer than a brother
- (6) Jesus is the One who laid down His life for you in an infinite act of love
 - (a) Jesus is more than a thought or an idea or a motive or a theology.
 - (b) Jesus is more than brightness of God's glory; Jesus is God's glory!

- 3. Too much today
 - a. we look at the world and ponder the world, trying to figure out the world when we ought to use our time and energy to ponder and pursue Jesus!
 - b. We are like a bride-to-be who spends every waking hour devoted to the details of her wedding yet winds up standing alone at the altar because in her attention to wedding details she neglected to engage the groom, even forgetting to tell him the date and location of the wedding.
 - (1) The marriage is more important than the wedding.
 - (2) **The person of Christ is more important than the place of current events in some eschatological timeline.**
 - (3) Plan a wedding if you will, but don't leave out the groom.

C. The transfiguration of Jesus prefigures the glory that will one day be revealed in us if we remain faithful to Him.

- 1. **Romans 8:18 (NIV) *I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.***
 - a. Moses on the mountain asked to see God's glory and it was revealed to him
 - b. John reports in the opening chapter of his gospel that he was one to whom Christ revealed his glory
 - c. History is replete with occasions through which God reveals His glory to us,
 - d. but a day is coming when he will reveal His glory in us.
- 2. Come, behold the wondrous mystery
 - a. You were
 - (1) **Ephesians 2:1-3 (ESV) *¹ And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.***
 - (2) **Ephesians 2:12 (ESV) *¹² remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of***

- promise, having no hope and without God in the world.*
- b. But now you are
 - (1) **Ephesians 2:13 (ESV)** ¹³ *But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.*
 - (2) **Ephesians 2:19-22 (ESV)** ¹⁹ *So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,* ²⁰ *built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,* ²¹ *in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.* ²² *In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.*
 3. **Colossians 1:27 (NIV)** *To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*
 - a. Christ in you, the hope of glory
 - (1) Not hope that Christ will get glory from you
 - (2) Not hope that God will make up some deficiency of glory with you
 - (3) Hope, a sure expectation, that the presence of the indwelling Christ, who lives in you by faith in Him, will one day result in our participation in His glory
 - (a) **1 Peter 5:1 (NIV)** *To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed:*
 - (b) **1 John 3:2 (ESV)** *Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.*

III. What now, while we're waiting for that day?

A. Paul's Answer: Unwavering Faithfulness

1. **Colossians 1:22-23 (ESV)** ²² *he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him,* ²³ *if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard,*
2. Christ in you now will one day be manifested as your glory, which is now your hope
3. So, what do we do in the meantime?
 - a. Continue in the faith, stable and steadfast
 - (1) If you have not yet believed in Christ, trusted Him, and put your faith in Him, now is the time to do so.
 - (2) If you have trusted Christ and are living by faith in Him then augment and reinforce your foundation

- b. Don't shift or move away from the hope of the gospel
 - (1) **Ephesians 6:** Having done all, stand
 - (2) **2 Corinthians 10:4** Take every thought captive
 - (3) **1 Peter 4:13 (ESV)** Rejoice in suffering
 - (4) **1 Thess 5:17** Pray without ceasing

B. The Final Word

- 1. **Hebrews 10:23 (ESV)** *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.*
- 2. The transfiguration of Jesus lets us see with our eyes that Christ is the glory of God.
 - a. He is all God's faithfulness
 - b. He is all God's love
 - c. He is all God's wisdom, and righteousness, and grace
 - d. Hold fast to Him, without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.