

The Clarity of the Resurrection
Mark 9:2-13 (9-13)

As we pick up our final consideration of the transfiguration of Jesus this morning, I would like to take you back to three verses we have already explored in the gospel of Mark:

Mark 1:1 (ESV) *The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.*

The first is Mark 1:1. Mark writes this gospel narrative with a very specific purpose in his mind and heart. He records the life and ministry and death and resurrection of Jesus in order to affirm for his readers that Jesus of Nazareth is, in fact, the Christ, the Son of God.

Mark's readers have begun to experience the rejection and persecution Jesus warned His followers to anticipate. They are following in His footsteps and that means sharing in His suffering at the hands of unbelievers. But they are also asking a quite natural question. They are wondering, given the severity of their struggle, if their faith is right. Is Jesus really Who they have believed He is? Is He truly One for Whom they ought to give their lives? Mark writes the gospel to encourage and establish them in their faith in Jesus. He is all they have believed Him to be and more.

Mark 8:29 (ESV) *And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Christ."*

In this verse Jesus asks His disciples the essential question every disciple must face and answer accurately and rightly for themselves. Your answer to this question determines both the course and outcome of your life. Peter declares that Jesus is the Christ, and he is right, sort of. What Peter expects of the Christ and what Jesus knows of His role as Christ are not quite the same, and from the moment He asks this question, through the rest of the gospel of Mark, we find Jesus constantly refining His disciples understanding of who He truly is and what He came to do.

Mark 8:31 (ESV) *And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again.*

The third verse I want to bring to the forefront of your minds this morning is Mark 8:31. In this verse, for the first time in the narrative, Jesus speaks plainly to His disciples of His anticipated suffering, death, and resurrection. Peter's response is to rebuke Jesus for even suggesting He is going to die. Peter is not being sentimental here. He is expressing the general thinking that the Messiah, when He comes, comes as a conquering, victorious Savior restoring the nation of Israel to international power and glory. A dead savior is no savior at all, in Peter's thinking, so he rebukes Jesus for even mentioning such a thing. Peter doesn't yet understand the true nature of God's Christ and the goal of His mission. Like so many of us, Peter needs to gain not his idea of Who Jesus is, but God's perspective of Who Jesus is!

That brings us to **Mark 9:2-13** and the transfiguration of Jesus. Jesus has taken three of His disciples, Peter, James, and John up on high mountain where He reveals His true nature, His glory, to them. They are joined by Elijah and Moses. They are also joined by the God the Father, who comes in a cloud and speaks to the disciples. God says to them, "This is my beloved Son;

listen to Him.”

After God speaks from the cloud, it lifts and the three disciples are left standing there alone with Jesus. They begin their descent down the mountain and Jesus returns the conversation to the theme of His death and resurrection. These three disciples are to say nothing to anyone about what they have seen and heard on the mountain until **after Jesus has risen from the dead**. It is the mercy of Jesus to keep bringing His disciples back to essential points of clarity until they finally get it. (If you are wondering why you keep arriving back in the same teachable moments over and over again, it could be because there is something essential for you to learn and Jesus doesn't give up on you until you get it.)

Peter and James and John still don't understand what Jesus means about rising from the dead, but this time, instead of rebuking Him, they keep their thoughts to themselves. They do ask Him to clarify one question for them, though. In verse 11, they ask Jesus, “Why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?”

There was a long standing tradition in Israel, derived from **Malachi 4:5-6**, that the appearance of Elijah the prophet would precede the arrival of the Messiah. **Malachi 4:5-6 (ESV)** ⁵ *“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. ⁶ And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.”*

Essentially they are asking Jesus to clarify something for them. They hear Him talking about suffering and death and resurrection, and they don't know what to think about all that, but they do have one clue about Messiah and that's that Elijah is supposed to come first. Now, you can imagine that they might be thinking, “If Elijah has not come, then all this talk of suffering, and death, and resurrection is still far off, and nothing to be concerned about right now.”

And Jesus' response to them is perfect. “You're right. Elijah does come first. In fact, he has already come. Matthew makes it clear that Jesus is referring to John the Baptist. **Matthew 17:12-13 (ESV)** ¹² *But I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of Man will certainly suffer at their hands.”* ¹³ *Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist.*

But Jesus doesn't stop at simply removing their philosophical objection. He goes on to say, “And if you believe that the Scriptures prepare you for the coming of Elijah, you also ought to believe that the Scriptures prepare you for the suffering, death, and resurrection of the Christ.” Jesus tells these disciples that the people treated John exactly as the Scriptures foretold, assuring them He, the Christ, would be treated exactly as the Scriptures foretold as well. He points to His resurrection from the dead as the pivotal moment when they would finally understand Who He is and why He came. **The resurrection would be the moment of clarity that would change their lives forever.**

This morning we will celebrate the Lord's Supper together. We will commemorate the death of Jesus Christ on the cross in our place on our behalf. And we will share this symbolic meal

together on the first day of the week, the day Jesus was raised from the dead by the power of the living God!

As we prepare for this act of faith and worship this morning, I want to remind you of five facts that are affirmed by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

1. The resurrection validates Christ's claim to be the Son of God.

- a. **Romans 1:3-4 (ESV)** ³ *concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh* ⁴ *and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord,*
- b. The resurrection of Christ by God certifies Him as the Son of God

2. The resurrection of Jesus also validates His own teaching as being from God

- a. **Matthew 12:38-40 (ESV)** ³⁸ *Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you."* ³⁹ *But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah."* ⁴⁰ *For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*
- b. Had Jesus lied, misspoke, or in anyway misrepresented Himself or the Father, there would have been no resurrection.
 - i. Jesus would have deserved the punishment of death
 - ii. And remained dead

3. The resurrection of Jesus stands as evidence of His victory over death and the grave.

- a. **1 Corinthians 15:54-57 (ESV)** ⁵⁴ *When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."* ⁵⁵ *"O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"* ⁵⁶ *The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who has given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!*
- b. We have victory over death and the grave through faith in Christ who, through His resurrection, won victory over death and the grave for Himself and for us.

4. The resurrection of Jesus secures our salvation

- a. Conversion effect **Romans 4:23-25 (ESV)** ²³ *But the words "it was counted to him" were not written for his sake alone,* ²⁴ *but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord,* ²⁵ *who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.*
- b. Continuing effect **Hebrews 7:23-25 (ESV)** ²³ *The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office,* ²⁴ *but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever.* ²⁵ *Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.*

5. The resurrection of Jesus guarantees the resurrection of all those who put their faith in Him

- a. **1 Corinthians 15:20-23 (ESV)** ²⁰ *But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.* ²¹ *For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.* ²² *For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.* ²³ *But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.*

The question facing each of us this morning is this, **“Do you understand?”** Do you understand that living the life of faith and love for which you were created, then dying Himself in your place on your behalf, then being buried and raised from the dead on the third, do you understand that this is why Jesus came? Do you understand that Jesus’ life intent was more than merely modeling moral humanity but of offering Himself to God as a substitute sacrifice on behalf of immoral humanity? Do you understand that Jesus came primarily to die and to be raised from the dead for your benefit?

If you understand these things, there will be evidence of understanding. You will think clearly about the resurrection of Jesus and the role of the resurrection not only in His life but in your own. If you understand, truly understand Jesus’ resurrection, then you will accept by faith His life and death on your behalf. If you truly understand the impact of Jesus’ resurrection, you will receive the Holy Spirit and allow your life to be transformed day after day into the moral, ethical, and spiritual likeness of Jesus.

If your life is no different than it has ever been, then you don’t truly understand the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He is the living Savior whose desire is to live on you and live through you as you put your faith in Him. Today is your day. Come to Christ, confess your sin and repent. Receive new life and eternal life in Him. His resurrection guarantees that if you come to Him in faith, every promise of God’s word will be yours.