

Glorification and Humiliation

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- [0 : 0 0] I want you to open up your Bibles to the Gospel of Mark, chapter 9. We have spent the last four weeks in a series on marriage. A couple of weeks before that we spent in the book of Jude.
- But before that, from the second week of January all the way to the end of July, we were walking steadily through the Gospel of Mark. And we took a brief break because I felt like you might need a break, okay?
- And that you might need to hear about some other things from God's Word. But now we're back to the Gospel of Mark and we have covered 8 of 16 chapters. So we are halfway through the Gospel of Mark.
- And I want us to begin today to take that trip through the second half of the Gospel of Mark. And we're here in chapter 9. And this morning we're going to cover verses 2 through 13. So I want to ask you guys if you'll stand with me as we read in honor of God's Word.
- Mark writes, And Peter said to Jesus, Rabbi, it is good that we are here.
- [1 : 2 0] Let us make three tents. One for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah. For he did not know what to say. For they were terrified. And a cloud overshadowed them and a voice came out of the cloud.
- This is my beloved Son. Listen to Him. And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only. And as they were coming down the mountain, He charged them to tell no one what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.
- So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead might mean. And they asked Him, Why do the scribes say that Elijah must first come?
- And He said to them, Elijah does come first to restore all things. And how is it written of the Son of Man that He should suffer many things and be treated with contempt?
- But I tell you that Elijah has come. And they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written of him. Father, take Your Word this morning and open our eyes to see beauty in it and our ears to hear and obey it.
- [2 : 3 0] I pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Y'all take a seat. There are certain days, I think, in most people's lives that change us forever.
- There are certain events that happen either directly to us or they just happen to be of such a grand scale that they change the way that we see the world.
- They change the way that we think about things on a daily basis. So if you ask anyone who was alive and old enough to remember about December 7, 1941, they will immediately tell you, that was when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor and that was when the United States was thrust into World War II and everything changed from that point on for the way that they had to conduct themselves, for the way that they thought about the world because the country was at war and it was not a war in which they were certain of the ending.

Everything changed. Or if you ask people about November 22, 1963, the day when John F. Kennedy was shot, that changed the way that people thought.

It changed the way that they viewed things around them. Or most recently, all of us have images that come into our minds when we think of 9-11 and we see the towers and we can envision the plains.

[3 : 48] We remember where we were and what we were doing and all the things that unfolded after that and the things that are continuing to unfold even today that date back to that event. There are those just sort of crystallizing events and sometimes they're on a national or international scale like those things.

Sometimes they're just things that happen to us personally, but they change everything. When your first child is born or when your first grandchild is born or when you're married, there are events that happen to you that you never forget and they change everything around you.

Well, that's exactly what happens for three men in this passage. Peter and James and John see something that changes them and the effect of this event never wears off on them.

In fact, if you hold your place in the Gospel of Mark and you turn over to the book of 2 Peter, in 2 Peter, Peter writes this in chapter 1 verse 16. He says that, We did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

For when He received honor and glory from God the Father and the voice was born to Him by the majestic glory, This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased. We ourselves heard this very voice born from heaven for we were with Him on the holy mountain.

[5 : 12] Here is Peter decades later. And when Peter wants to anchor all of his preaching and all of his teaching in some great reality beyond himself, he says to his readers, We're not making this stuff up.

I was there. I was on the mountain when His glory was revealed. He's decades removed and that for him is one of the defining moments of his life. It grounds the Gospel that Peter preaches.

It changed Peter forever. Or if you turn to the opening chapter of the Gospel of John. John does not reference this event directly in his Gospel, but in John chapter 1 verse 14 he says about Jesus coming into the world.

He describes it by saying that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. And he says, We have seen His glory. Glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

You can hear echoes of this event in the way that John describes. We've seen His glory. We've seen Him. We were there. We knew. In fact, in 1 John he opens that letter by saying, I'm telling you what we were eyewitnesses of.

[6 : 27] We saw Him. We heard Him. We touched Him. We have beheld the glory of the Son of God. And these men were changed forever. We don't have a testimony from the disciple James, but I would guess that his testimony would be the same thing.

That this event and what they saw on this day on a mountaintop changed everything for them. So let's take a look and see what was it that was so life-changing.

What exactly did they see? And what did it mean? In verse 2 it tells us that after six days, this is six days after Jesus has had a discussion with His disciples, in which if you'll remember it's a very famous passage where Jesus says, Who do you say that I am?

And they give Him, or who do people say that I am? And they give Him the various answers that people have given. Some say Elijah, some say a prophet, some say John the Baptist. And then Jesus says, But who do you say that I am?

And Peter utters the confession, You are the Christ, the Son of God. So six days after that, that pivotal event in the ministry of Jesus, comes another pivotal event in the ministry of Jesus and in their lives.

[7 : 37] And here we are after six days. It says Jesus took Peter and James and John. It was His inner circle within the twelve disciples. These three sort of stand out, and they end up being singled out by Jesus on multiple occasions and taken aside for these kinds of special events.

It says that He led them up on a high mountain by themselves, and He was transfigured before Him. The Word is literally, He was metamorphized.

He was transformed. He was changed right in front of their eyes. Something happened. They were able to see something about Jesus that in His normal ministry, in His normal walking around among them, that they were unable to see.

Something was revealed. And what was revealed was, I think, an indescribable glory. Because if you read the gospel accounts, the gospel writers themselves are struggling to describe what appeared here on this mountain.

Mark, who is writing down Peter's account, so that he had, this is a, this is really ultimately a first-hand account, because Mark is writing Peter's account. Even Mark, with an eyewitness telling him what to write, is having trouble describing exactly what he saw.

[8 : 53] Listen to what he says in verse 3. It says that his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them. So he limits himself to a discussion of his clothes, and all he can say is, his clothes were shining white in a way that it's just impossible to conceive of.

Nobody can make anything that white. That's how brilliant his clothes were. Luke doesn't even attempt to really describe what happened. All Luke says is that Jesus' face was changed.

He just looked differently. His face looked differently. But if you turn over to the gospel of Matthew, I think Matthew probably heard this story pretty soon after these disciples came down off the mountain.

And Matthew describes what happened in Matthew chapter 17. It says that Jesus, in verse 2, was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light.

You see how you have these different descriptions. Mark focusing on the clothes. Luke just kind of vaguely saying his face was changed. Matthew saying his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white.

[10 : 05] They have these different descriptions because the language does not exist. The words do not exist to fully describe what they saw when Jesus was transformed there on the mountain.

It's indescribable. It is a glimpse, I believe. What they received was a glimpse of the glory that Jesus describes in his prayer in John chapter 17 when he prays to God the Father.

And he says, he talks about the glory that I had with you before the world existed. There is an eternal glory that Jesus shares with the Father that's indescribable, and that in God's will, God desired and allowed that to shine through on this particular day.

And these men and those who would write down the accounts from these men of what happened, they don't have the words to describe it. It is an indescribable glory that they see.

It's an indescribable glory, I think, because it is a divine glory. Take a look at how it's described as you move on through the passage on what happens exactly.

[11 : 16] As you move down to verse 7, we'll come back to the verses in between, but as you move down to verse 7, we're giving a little bit more of a description of what took place on the mountain. And it says that, A cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud.

This is my beloved Son. Listen to Him. A cloud came down and overshadowed Him. There's no doubt in my mind that we're immediately, when we hear that phrase, we're supposed to immediately think of the Israelites' time wandering in the wilderness.

In fact, it was on another mountain, in Exodus chapter 24, that God came down in a cloud upon the mountain and revealed Himself to Moses.

And in fact, in that instance, we are told that Moses was not allowed to allow anyone else to approach the mountain or to come within the cloud because God says, if they come near, they won't survive.

If you allow the Levites and if you allow the other leaders to come near, if they enter the cloud with you, they will perish. They will not survive because you don't come into the presence of the glory of God, stained with sin, and walk away from it alive.

[12 : 39] It doesn't happen. Do you remember what happened to Isaiah? In Isaiah chapter 6, when he was in the temple and he saw a vision of God. Do you remember this? That Isaiah immediately began to cry out, Woe is me for I am undone.

What Isaiah is saying is, I'm falling apart in the presence of infinite glory. I can't behold divine glory and live. And the reason Isaiah identifies is because of his own sinfulness.

He says, I'm a sinful man. I live among a people of unclean lips. I can't bear to be in your presence. That's the normal response of people who encounter this indescribable divine glory.

But for some reason here, in this instance, God allows these three men to not only be a part of the revealing of the glory of Jesus, but he also allows them to live to tell about it.

It's indescribable. It's divine. But notice how the disciples respond to this revelation. It's not as if they respond properly and they respond in the ways that they should.

[13 : 48] It says in verse 4 that there appeared to them Elijah with Moses and they were talking with Jesus. And Peter looks on and he sees these three talking and Peter says, Rabbi, it's good that we're here.

Let us make three tents. One for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah. And it sounds initially as if Peter is trying to honor Jesus and Moses and Elijah.

But in reality, Peter has no idea what to do. It even says that. It says, verse 6, For he didn't know what to say, for they were terrified. See, they have the same kind of response that Isaiah had.

They have the same kind of response even that John will have again later on in the book of Revelation when he falls down on his face as God reveals his glory to him. They're terrified.

They don't know how to react. They don't know quite what to do with this manifestation of divine glory. They don't know how to react.

[14 : 50] And I think that part of the reason that they don't know how to react is that they don't fully understand what it is that Jesus has come to accomplish in his life and in his ministry. Because that's what Mark centers this whole passage upon is understanding what Jesus came to accomplish.

You can see it hinted at in the fact that you have Moses and Elijah who come to Jesus and stand with Jesus on the mountain and begin to talk to him. Moses and Elijah.

Moses, the one who gave us the law, the Torah, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Moses is responsible for that. Moses is the lawgiver.

And Moses, as the lawgiver, comes to Jesus to talk with him on this day. Elijah, who is the greatest of all the prophets in the latter half of the Old Testament, he is the exemplar prophet.

He's the most powerful prophet. Others long to have the kind of power that Elijah has. So you have the lawgiver of the Old Testament. You have the great prophet of the Old Testament.

[15 : 51] And they come here to meet with Jesus to symbolize, I think, that Jesus in his life and ministry and death and resurrection, Jesus fulfills all the law and the prophets.

What is the most common shorthand phrase used in the New Testament to describe the Old Testament? It is the law and the prophets. That's how Jesus himself refers to the Old Testament.

The law and the prophets. So that Jesus has come and Moses and Elijah stand on the mountain here to bear witness to the fact that Jesus has come to fulfill all the scriptures in himself and in his life and in his actions.

In all that he does, Jesus is fulfilling the Old Testament. And not just in the obvious ways, I think, that we often assume. I mean, there are obvious prophecies prophecies in the Old Testament that predict the coming of the Messiah, that predict his death.

Isaiah 53 is a great passage that predicts the death of Jesus centuries before Jesus was born or lived or died. Isaiah predicts that. But it's not just in those most obvious ways that Jesus fulfills the Old Testament.

[17 : 01] Because what's happening here? What's happening in this story? That you're seeing a cloud descend upon a mountain of Israel in the days of the wilderness when God descended on the mountain at Sinai.

And then everywhere that Israel traveled, they would take the tabernacle, which was like a movable temple. It was a tent that they would set up and they would offer their sacrifices there. And we are told that the glory of God would manifest itself in that tabernacle, in that tent as a cloud.

And there were times when the presence of God was so powerful in the tabernacle that even Moses himself was unable to enter in. And Jesus has come.

He has come to bring a final fulfillment to all of that imagery of the Old Testament. Jesus is in himself a new Israel. In every way that Israel failed, Jesus will succeed.

So Israel failed in the wilderness as they received the law of Moses. They disobeyed it the moment that they received it. They continued to disobey the law throughout their years in the land.

[18 : 09] They were failures at every step. And the prophets, like Elijah, had to come into place because Israel has failed. The primary task of the prophets was to call the people back to obedience to the law.

So here Jesus stands on a mountain, glory of God, coming down in a cloud, revealing itself through him, conversing with Moses and Elijah because he is the ultimate, final fulfillment of everything written in the law and the prophets.

And if you have that understanding, if you have that perspective on Jesus, then it changes the way that you read the Gospels. I'll give you one example. You don't have to turn there. But in Matthew chapter 2, there's this strange story in the midst of the birth narrative, the story of the birth of Christ.

There's a strange story about Joseph packing up Jesus and Mary and taking them down to Egypt, right? And then later on, Joseph packs them back up and he brings them back into the land of Israel.

And Matthew says, this is to fulfill what was written, out of Egypt I have called my son. That in the Old Testament, that's a reference to Israel leaving Egypt in the Exodus.

[19 : 31] So all of this language in the Old Testament about the things that Israel did and the things that God called Israel to do in the New Testament and particularly in the Gospels are applied to Jesus.

So God says, I called Israel out of Egypt. Now I call Jesus out of Egypt. Jesus, the ultimate son of God. Israel failed as God's son.

Jesus will succeed in every way as God's beloved son. He is the fulfillment of all of the law and the prophets. I think that that is even the primary reason that God the Father speaks and He says to these disciples in verse 7, He says, this is my beloved son.

Listen to Him. That's the kind of language that's used in the Old Testament to refer primarily to Israel or the King of Israel. It's the same phrase that you find at the beginning of the Gospel of Mark when Jesus is baptized and God speaks again to the people at Jesus' baptism.

He says, this is my beloved son. So at key events, the beginning of Jesus' ministry, here in the middle of Jesus' ministry, just before Jesus completely turns His focus to Jerusalem and the death that awaits Him, at these key turning points in the ministry of Jesus, God wants it known, this is my son.

[20 : 52] I have a new son. Israel failed. The kings of Israel failed. I have sent Jesus to succeed in every way that they failed.

But Jesus will move beyond that. Jesus will do more than accomplish the things that Israel and the kings of Israel were unable to accomplish. In Luke's account of this passage, we are told what Jesus and Moses and Elijah were talking about.

Here in Mark's account, we're not told. It just says that they were talking. But in Luke's account, it says that they were discussing His coming departure. His departure.

What does that mean? It's the same word that's used in the Greek version of the Old Testament to translate the word for Exodus. So Moses and Elijah are standing on a mountain talking with Jesus about His coming Exodus.

His leaving this world. About His death. About His crucifixion. So that's what they've come to discuss. The great lawgiver and the great prophet have come with Jesus to talk to Him about His impending death.

[22 : 00] About His own Exodus. That's what they've come to talk about. And Jesus speaks to this issue as the discussion moves on with His disciples.

Because after all the business on the mountain as they're traveling down, it says in verse 9 that they were coming down the mountain and Jesus charged them to tell no one what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

Keep this to yourselves. Don't tell anyone what you've seen until I've risen from the dead. Now this is something we have seen happen over and over in the Gospel of Mark. It's a great revelation of who Jesus is.

Sometimes it's a revelation even from the voice of a demon and Jesus will silence the demons. Sometimes His disciples catch on and they see who He really is. And over and over in the Gospel of Mark Jesus says, Don't tell anyone.

Be quiet. Keep it quiet. Why? Because the time has not yet come for the glorification of Jesus. You see, if the people know who He is, if the people gain a full understanding of who Jesus is, or if the disciples come and tell everyone what they've seen on the mountain, they'll do what they tried to do after He fed thousands of people.

[23 : 15] They'll try to make Him a king and Jesus is not yet ready to wear His crown. Not the kingly crown. First He has to wear a different crown.

He has to wear a crown of thorns. In fact, Jesus has spoken about this to His disciples. In Mark 8, verse 31, it says, that 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.

He has told His disciples, I'm going to die. I'm going to suffer at the hands of the leaders of Israel. I'm going to die. And then three days later, I'm going to rise.

Now here in chapter 9, not long, remember six days after this conversation, less than a week removed from this conversation, Jesus says to them, Don't tell anyone what you saw on the mountain until after I rise again.

But once again, they don't understand. Just as they didn't understand how Jesus came to fulfill all of the law and the prophets, so they don't understand the way in which Jesus is going to fulfill all of the law and the prophets.

[24 : 21] They don't understand this business about death and resurrection. So they ask Him a question because He mentions resurrection. And they're familiar with resurrection.

Jesus didn't invent the concept of resurrection. In fact, there were two main religious groups in Jesus' day in Palestine, in Israel.

You have the Sadducees and the Pharisees. And the Sadducees did not believe in a future resurrection of all the dead. But the Pharisees believed that there would be a day when all of the dead would be raised.

The New Testament carries that teaching forward. The New Testament says that there is coming a day when all will be raised from their grave and we will all face judgment on that day. So when Jesus speaks of a resurrection, His disciples, rather than remember the very thing that He told them less than a week before, His disciples jumped to that final resurrection of everybody.

And what they know about that resurrection is that the Old Testament in the book of Malachi predicted that Elijah would come before that happened. That before that day when God redeemed His people ultimately and finally that Elijah the prophet is supposed to return according to the book of Malachi.

[25 : 36] And so they ask Him a very basic question. It says in verse 10 or in verse 11 it says, so they asked Him, why do the scribes say that Elijah must first come?

And if you're talking about the resurrection we have a question about it. Why? Why does Elijah have to come first? And Jesus just gives them a straightforward answer. Verse 12, He said to them, Elijah does come first to restore all things.

He's coming. He has to come first. And then He says, and how is it written of the Son of Man that He should suffer many things and be treated with contempt? But I tell you that Elijah has come and they did Him whatever they pleased as it is written of Him.

See for Jesus, for Jesus, Elijah has already come because John the Baptist was an Elijah-like figure. The Gospels over and over identify John the Baptist with this coming of Elijah.

See part of the problem is that the scribes interpreted that prophecy in Malachi overly literally. They took it too literally and they were really looking for the actual prophet Elijah to come.

[26 : 45] And so the disciples are wondering, listen Jesus, you're talking about resurrection but they say that Elijah has to come first so what's the deal here? And Jesus says, listen Elijah does come first.

Elijah came and they killed Elijah. They did whatever they wanted to do to Him. So God has not redeemed His people yet simply because Elijah came.

There's more that must happen. And then He says, how is it written about the Son of Man? What's it written about Me? What does it say? That He should suffer many things and be treated with contempt.

You see, the disciples are so focused on some of the current religious debates of the day and they are so focused on trying to get the right answers to the wrong questions that they don't even understand the very things that Jesus has been teaching them all along.

Jesus has been teaching them that I am coming to die in the place of My people. He's been teaching them that I have come here to succeed in all the ways that the people of God have failed.

[27 : 56] I have come to fully obey the law of Moses. In my life and in my person I am full and complete obedience to that law and yet I have it in mind at the end of it all to lay my life down like a lawbreaker.

I lay it down as if I've broken it all because they've broken it all and you've broken the law and you all deserve the wrath of God. You deserve His condemnation and I have come in your place and in the place of God's people.

I have come to lay down my life. I will be treated with contempt. I will suffer and then I will rise in victory. That's what I have come to do and the disciples at this point do not yet understand.

They have seen indescribable divine glory. They have seen Jesus talking with the lawgiver and the great prophet. They have seen all of these things.

They should understand. Jesus has told them He's going to die and rise again. They should understand it. They've heard it all before and now they have seen glimpses of the glory of Jesus and even with all of that they don't understand.

[29 : 16] My greatest fear as a pastor is that I would preach week in and week out and I would preach about the gospel and I would preach the death and resurrection of Jesus and the hope to be had in Jesus and that you would hear all of those words and that you would be able to repeat even many of those words and you would know some of these things but at the end of the day you would not fully understand it.

That you would not understand what Jesus has accomplished in His life and in His death on your behalf. Because everything hangs upon that.

Everything hinges upon do you understand and do you believe and do you trust in the sacrifice of Christ on the cross for you and for your sins or do you believe that those things happen but ultimately you trust in yourself and your own goodness and your own obedience to the law and your niceness and your church attendance and your Bible study.

Do you trust in all of those things because the scriptures are clear that none of those things are acceptable in God's sight. Only the sacrifice of the infinitely glorious Son of God is acceptable in His sight.

Jesus must undergo infinite humiliation on our behalf before He receives infinite glorification in the presence of His Father.

[30 : 46] and we like Jesus we must die to ourselves we must receive the humiliation of repentance and turning away from our sins in order for us to receive the glory as the sons of God that Paul talks about in Romans 8.

We must give up all attempts to earn we must give up all attempts to claim that we have accomplished anything with our own works in our own strength and in our own ability we must undergo that kind of humiliation that kind of dying to self if if we want to receive the glory and the inheritance that can be had in Christ.

And the word for that is repentance. If you look up in chapter 8 this is the last time we were in the gospel of Mark we were focused on these verses and Jesus says in Mark chapter 8 verse 34 that if anyone would come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me for whoever would save his life will lose it but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospels will save it.

Losing your life means dying to who you were it means turning away from who you were and Jesus says you want to save your life? you want the glory that is to come?

You want you want resurrection someday? You want all that? Lose your life. Try to gain your life try to earn a right standing with God try to cling to things in this world and you'll lose it all.

[32 : 29] So my question for you this morning that I want you to go home with these questions ringing in your mind my question is are you still clinging to your own good deeds?

Are you still clinging to the things that you have done to earn you some life and forgiveness in the sight of God? Or have you died to those things? Have you let those things go?

Is the glory of Jesus is it theoretical knowledge to you? Or is it life changing truth to you?

Let's pray.