

Title: The Book of Mark: Part 24, Encounters with Jesus

Speaker: Kevin Norcross

Passage: Mark 9:2-13

Big idea: An encounter with Jesus must produce life change.



In this passage of Mark, we see an encounter that 3 disciples had with Jesus and how it affected their lives.

An encounter with Jesus is something that we have all had in one way, shape, or form. Perhaps you can remember when you accepted Jesus in your heart, or your baptism, or when a light went on while reading your Bible, or connecting with God at church, or in prayer or in your devotional time, or in nature.

I am thankful to have had some of my own encounters with God growing up. As a teenager going to a youth conference with thousands of other youths realizing how big God's family is and how I am not alone. At Youth camp I specifically remember God strongly impressing on my heart a call to ministry. Going on a mission's trip as a young adult to China and seeing Jesus' work though us in another country. Multiple times in worship services while singing, I have sensed the reassurance of God's presence.

As I reflect on some of the big decisions in my life God has made his presence known to me and reassured me. In times of difficulty, when I feel low and overwhelmed by my circumstances, I have encountered God and His reassurance during those times. In my devotional times reflecting on God's goodness, I have encountered God and His reassurance. Throughout the service last Sunday my heart was stirred by the reality of Gods presence and by the end of the service, I could hardly put my words together because of what was stirring in my heart.

I am so encouraged and excited about what God is doing through His Spirit in so many people's lives. God is on the move; He is alive and well and He is working in the hearts of His people. Many of you are experiencing a fresh sense of God's presence at work in our church services. Many of you are responding in different ways to God stirring your heart and we will all respond differently, but I encourage you to lean into what God is doing, open up your hearts to Him, and encounter Him in all His Glory.

Encountering God in all His Glory is what happened to these disciples in this passage of Mark. These disciples had an encounter with God and their lives were changed because of it.

The passage today is Mark 9:2-13, but before we read it, let's remember what has just happened prior to this text.

Jesus had just explained to them that he must suffer and die and be raised again in 3 days. He has told the crowd that whoever will follow Him must lay down their life and be born again. We learned last week from Pastor Corey about the deep call of discipleship, and its high cost. His points were this:

- The Kingdom Cost Jesus His Life
- The Kingdom Costs Us Our Lives
- The Kingdom Costs Nothing we cannot afford to lose.
- The Kingdom Costs Us Love with the World

Jesus died so that we could be free, but he calls us to lay our lives down at his feet. Laying our lives down is for our good though, because anything that Christ asks us to do, or do away with, is for our good, benefit, and flourishing. There is nothing that can satisfy our hearts longing apart from Christ.

Pastor Corey also shared with us the way Mark is broken up. Verses 1;1-8:26 answer the question, who is Jesus? Verses 8:27-29 reveal who Jesus is. Verses 8:30-16:8 answer why Jesus came. And why Jesus came gets answered in the passage we are looking at.

The disciples are trying to come to terms with what is going on and what Jesus is saying to them. They are wrestling with what it truly means to be a disciple of Jesus. With this as our backdrop, let's read the scripture.

²After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. ³His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. ⁴And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus.

⁵Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” ⁶(He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.)

⁷Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: “This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!”

⁸Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus.

⁹As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. ¹⁰They kept the matter to themselves, discussing what “rising from the dead” meant.

¹¹And they asked him, “Why do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?”

¹²Jesus replied, “To be sure, Elijah does come first, and restores all things. Why then is it written that the Son of Man must suffer much and be rejected? ¹³But I tell you, Elijah has come, and they have done to him everything they wished, just as it is written about him.”

Mark 9:2-13

So, the disciples had this encounter with Jesus on the mountain. They met with Jesus and saw His Glory revealed. We have a lot to learn from their experience and response.

BIG IDEA

An encounter with **Jesus** must produce **life change**.



We are going to learn about this amazing encounter that these 3 disciples had with Jesus and how it changed their lives. We have the opportunity to encounter Jesus and learn from him and be changed by Him. This encounter with Jesus changed the lives of the disciples and our encounters with Jesus must change our lives as well.

Mark 9:2, “After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them.”

They climbed the mountain.

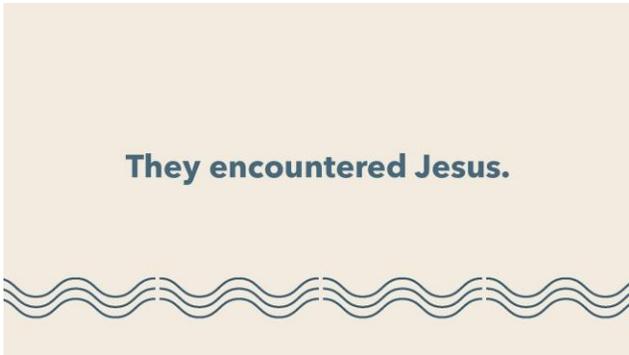


Jesus took His inner circle up to the mountain with Him. These were the ones who he was closest to and who He wanted close by Him for this historical moment in His life. He was about to share this meaningful experience with the inner circle of disciples. This shows us the importance of what is about to happen.

The fact that Jesus was with these three should cause you to lean in and see what is going to happen next. Something important and critical is about to happen and we need to lean in.

Jesus chose those who were closest to Him to share this big moment in His life. We need people in our lives to share these deep moments in life with. People to count on and who have your back, people who are likeminded and who you can depend on, and people who will build you up and not tear you down.

Mark 9:3, "His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them."



The disciples had been used to seeing Jesus in His human form, but we know that He was fully God as well as fully human. They had seen Jesus' Glory revealed through His teachings, and through His miracles.

It was in this moment that the Glory of God was revealed to the disciples that were with Him. In this moment they got to see a glimpse of Jesus as God and the glory of God. They had an encounter with Jesus!

They were impacted, overwhelmed, shocked, and in awe. In this moment, their eyes were opened to the glory of God. In this moment the amazing, dazzling glory of Christ was revealed. We have that opportunity as well to have an encounter with Jesus. We have the privilege of getting to know Him, having a relationship with Him, praying to, and worshiping Him.

It is so awesome to be able to have relationship with this amazing God, but sometimes we lose sight of that and we become too familiar and we need to remind ourselves of His glory and His majesty.

God is ...

- Incredible
- Amazing
- Powerful
- Awesome
- Unbelievable
- Loving
- Kind

These are just a few words that do not even come close to describing how incredible He is. You have the opportunity to know Him and have a relationship with Him. WOW!

Never lose that excitement and amazement of who Jesus is and what He has done for you. Cherish it.

We need to make room in our lives to have these encounters with Jesus. That is time set aside to pray, worship, and read God's word on a daily basis and open our hearts to encounter Him.

We need to come to church with expectation in our hearts to meet with Jesus and be transformed into His likeness. Worship on Sundays should be an overflow of your daily encounters with Jesus.

Be open to the leading and the moving of the Holy Spirit in your life and be open to Jesus revealing himself to you in new ways.

Mark 9:4, “And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus.”

This was a significant moment for the disciples because they understood the Old Testament teachings and all that was written about the coming of the Messiah.

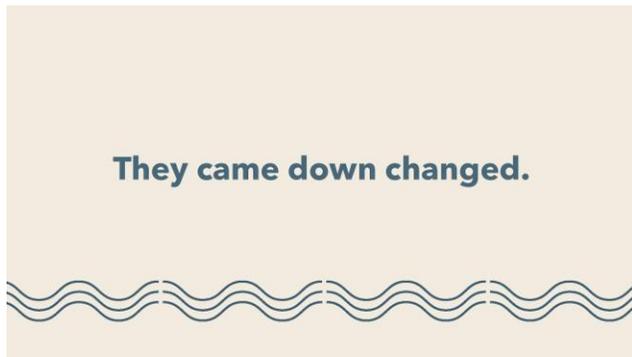
Jesus made this claim in Matthew 5:17, “Do you think that I have come to abolish the Law and the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.” So, Jesus came to fulfill the Law and Prophets. And Moses, representing the law, and Elijah, representing the prophets, appear with Jesus.

Their appearance is confirming that Jesus came to fulfill the Old Testament. And that Jesus is greater than the giver of the law (Moses) and the greatest of the prophets (Elijah).

Mark 9:5-6, “Peter said to Jesus, ‘Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.’ (He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.)”

True to form, Peter responds impulsively. He was greatly moved by the experience but clearly did not fully understand what was going on. He wanted to build a new tent of meeting and stay up there. He did not understand that they needed to come down off the mountain so that Jesus could finish the work that He came to do.

It is good to experience God, but you cannot stay on the mountain. You must come down and complete the job that God has called you to do and serve him.



There is more to this Christian life than just experiencing God, action must follow and be proof of our change. An encounter with Jesus is proven by the actions they are examples of life change.

God is doing great things here at WestPark. God is on the move. We are part of something unique and momentum is building. We gather on Sundays, we sing, we learn from Scripture, and it is a rich, powerful, engaging experience. If that is all that it is about, we are falling short. There must be action, repentance, change, adjustments made to your daily living as a result of your encounter with Jesus and the presence of the Holy Spirit. You cannot stay on the mountain, but you must come down and finish the work that Jesus has called you to and live out your faith.

We must respond in all areas of our lives and become more Christ-like in all of them. Our choices, motives, actions, how we spend our time, serving, being generous with our finances, caring for those in need, our life goals, relationships, priorities, and work should all exemplify Christ. We are on this journey continually pursuing Christ together.

It cannot just be a one-time encounter with God when you become a Christian. It should be ongoing. A lifetime of living in awe of Him. The more that we learn about Him and understand Him, become like Him, discover Him, worship Him, and love Him, the more “in Awe” we can become of Him.

When you look up to someone, you will want to be like them. People who you look up to have an influence on your life. You are affected by who they are, what they do, and what they say. As you get to know God more and more, your lifestyle will be affected by Him.

Mark 9:7, “Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: ‘This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!’”

We see God’s presence in the form of a cloud in the Old Testament. The cloud led the Israelites in the day and fire by night.

This cloud covered the disciples and enveloped them. We need to not just encounter God from a distance but be enveloped by Him like they all were in this moment.

Don’t be a bystander but be all in. I’ve made this comparison before; you are at a swimming pool. The pool represents a relationship with God and the things of God. People are in all different areas of the pool, some are in the shallow end, some are in the deep end, some are dipping their toes in. Go to the diving board, take the plunge, be all in.

We also see that the voice of God saying, “This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!”. At Jesus’ baptism in Mark 1 we see the voice of God, but now this voice speaks to the disciples and confirms to them that this Jesus is the Son of God. Although the Jews would reject Him, He is accepted by God.

This would have built confidence in the disciples that what Jesus was saying and claiming about Himself was actually true. They were about to go through the experience of Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection, and a tremendous amount of persecution to follow.

We are facing a tremendous amount of backlash and persecution in our day as we defend the Gospel with our lives and actions and as we defend God’s truth by teaching it even though it is contrary to society. This is a reminder that we need to make room in our lives to “hear the voice of God” and stand firm on the truth of His Word. To daily make time to be in the Word, and in prayer. Do not be spoon fed the lies and influences of society and media and the values of this world but consume the truth of God’s Word and listen to good Christian thinkers and writers and speakers. We must be diligent and confident and know our Bible well.

Mark 9:8, “Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus.”

Their focus comes back to Jesus. The one who is most important.

They were just a part of this amazing experience and this amazing encounter, and their attention comes back to Jesus. The cloud is gone, the others are gone, and it is just them and Jesus.

We can differ on a lot of things in the Christian faith but remain unified on the critical things of Jesus. All of us in this room have different backgrounds, and worldviews, various perspectives, and different understandings about certain things in the Bible.

We have different priorities in our lives, and we are all at different stages in our lives. Each of us has various struggles and difficulties. We all have different opinions about how church should be and what we should focus on and different views of what the next lead pastor should be like. All of this is a beautiful picture of the church and how God has wired us. But we must work to remain unified as a church, putting Jesus and the message of the Gospel at the front of our differences.

Jesus must remain the main thing. Unity around that must be our focus as a church and we cannot allow the enemy to come in and distract us and tear us apart.

Mark 9:9-10, “As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. They kept the matter to themselves, discussing what “rising from the dead” meant.”

They were given instructions to keep the experience of the Transfiguration a secret until after the resurrection of Jesus. The pieces of the puzzle were coming together but it was not a public matter yet. Jesus still had to finish the work of the Messiah that lies before Him. The disciples obeyed Jesus and kept it a secret but were confused about what it meant “rising from the dead” and how that related to Jesus.

Mark 9:11-13, “And they asked him, ‘Why do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?’ Jesus replied, ‘To be sure, Elijah does come first, and restores all things. Why then is it written that the Son of Man must suffer much and be rejected? But I tell you, Elijah has come, and they have done to him everything they wished, just as it is written about him.’”

Again, the disciples knew the Old Testament writings about the coming of the Messiah. This was important to them. They would have remembered the teachers of the law and their teachings from Malachi 4:5-6, that Elijah would come before the Messiah and restore all things.

Malachi 4:5-6, “Remember the law of my servant Moses, the decrees and laws I gave Him at Horeb for all Israel. See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes.”

This prophecy was not about the person of Elijah, but the spirit of Elijah. John the Baptist comes as the forerunning prophet and in the Spirit of Elijah. So, Jesus answers them that yes in fact he will come and restore all things, but not before Jesus must suffer and be rejected.

Just as Elijah suffered, Jesus must suffer. Just as John the Baptist was rejected, Jesus must be rejected. These references to the Old Testament affirm in the disciples that this master plan is unfolding before them and that it has been set in motion long ago.

Again, they were confused and could not fully wrap their minds around what was happening and did not fully understand until later on. However, they continued to follow Jesus and trust Him that he knows best, and He is trustworthy to follow. As Christ followers, we need to do the same.

We have this opportunity to encounter Jesus each and every day and allow for Him to change us into Christ likeness. An encounter with Jesus must produce life change.