

THE REAL JESUS
A Series on the Book of Mark
“Glory and Suffering of Jesus”
Mark 9:1-13
New City Church of LA
February 8, 2008
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I. Vision of New City

Welcome to New City. We are a multi-ethnic, multi-socioeconomic come-as-you-are church. Share our vision about being gospel-centered.

II. Introduction

We’ve been going through the Book of Mark in a series called the REAL JESUS.

In the last passage, Peter and the disciples confessed that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, the anointed one that was to come into the world. They got it, but they misunderstood what that meant. They thought Jesus was going to be a way to prosperity and power in this world. But, Jesus rebukes that understanding and begins to teach them that His way is the way of suffering, death, and then resurrection. And he told them (and he tells us) that to follow him means to deny ourselves, take up the cross and follow him. It means to face suffering and be willing to go through sufferings. *But how do you do that? How do you handle suffering?*

Life is hard. There are so many hardships and sufferings. Some, you’ve created for yourself: drug addiction and the consequences, your mistakes and sins. Some, other people caused it in your life. She cheated on you. That driver accidentally hit you. Some, you don’t understand who caused it—like illnesses or getting laid off because of a bad economy. There’re a lot of hardships.

Our instinct is to try to become the top dog. At least that way, you’ll suffer less than others. But, Jesus calls us to deny ourselves (deny the “me” of Me), take up the cross (assuming the position of a condemned criminal), and follow him.

How do you do this? How do you handle suffering?

To help his disciples deal with the hardship they will face, Jesus led them into an unforgettable experience that became a powerful source of strength for them later. And that's what we are going to look at today.

Read Mark 9:1-13

This passage tells us: (1) the Glory of the REAL Jesus is; (2) the Suffering of the REAL Jesus; and (2) why the Reality of Glory of Suffering of Jesus changes our lives.

III. First, the Glory of the REAL Jesus is.

6 days later, Mark tells us, and BTW, he rarely tells us timeline in an exact fashion. So, this is a hint that this passage is connected to the last passage. When the disciples were trying to understand what Jesus meant by denying themselves, taking up the cross, and follow Jesus, Jesus led them to an incredible experience.

Jesus took James, Peter and John up a high mountain. Jesus became transfigured and his cloth became dazzling white, brighter than they have ever seen. There were Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus. Then, a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and God said: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!"

In order to understand this passage, you have to understand an experience Moses had when he received the Ten Commandments. He went up a high mountain, Mount Sinai; he was enveloped by the cloud, the glory of YHWH God, and that's where he received the Ten Commandments.

You also need to understand that Moses stood for the Law, the foundation of Judaism, and the author of the first five books of the OT, the Torah. And Elijah was considered the foremost of the prophets because he never died. He was taken up into heaven. The Law (which is also called the Torah) and the teachings of the prophets were the foundation of all beliefs in Judaism.

Jesus transfigured, and the Greek here is the word: metamorph (where we get the word metamorphosis), which literally means "change form" or sometimes "transformed." Jesus transformed into who he really is, his inner became the outer. His true identity is revealed. It's sort of like superman taking off his shirt and revealing who he is. When Moses experienced the glory of God, he became radiant because he reflected the glory of

God, but here, Jesus is the *source* of radiance. It is not coming from someone else.

Hebrew 1:1-2 clarifies:

1In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, **2**but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. **3**The Son is **the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being**, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

Jesus is being revealed not only as the Christ, now, he is being revealed as the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being! The voice from heaven confirms this: **"This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to Him."**

YHWH God is saying Jesus is God in flesh. He is God incarnate! Then, he says, listen to Him. There is Moses and Elijah, but YHWH God says: Listen to my Son! He is saying that the Law and the Prophets are being fulfilled in Jesus. Jesus is the authority. He is what Moses and the Prophets have been waiting for. He is the glory of God. If you want to see what God looks like, look at Jesus. The revelations of Moses and the Prophets pointed to Jesus. They are not equals. It is Jesus we are commanded to listen to.

[BTW, one of the things that this means is that we have to understand Jesus in order to understand God. You have to be weary of getting all of your theology from the Old Testament. You have to listen to what Jesus said first. That's why we consider New Testament as greater authority over the Old Testament because it contains the teachings of Jesus.]

So, this reveals the true identity of Jesus! And it reveals the glory of Jesus. He is the creator of the universe in human form. He is awesome! He is worthy of our praise and honor. He is worthy of all glory.

This experience is an experience of the ultimate reality in the present. It is an experience of the Kingdom of God unveiled. It is a glimpse of heaven. In order to truly appreciate what he has done for us, we have to fully appreciate who he is, and his glory!

IV. Second, the Suffering of the REAL Jesus. What did Jesus Come to Do?

Did this God come down to earth to tell us how to live?

Did God incarnate come to judge us for our sins?

Did God incarnate come to lead this world into living by family values?

Did God incarnate come to bring you prosperity in the material sense?

Did God incarnate come to bring political freedom?

Not exactly. There are tints of truths here, but the primary thing that he came to do is to *suffer, be rejected and die for us.*

As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus told them not to say anything about this until he was raised from the dead. (the disciples had no idea what he meant by this). Then, Jesus says again that: *he must suffer much and be rejected as it is written by the Prophets.*

The primary reason Jesus came is to suffer, be rejected and die. Why?

Hebrews 2:3 told us: he came to provide purification for our sins.

God saw that the greatest problem facing humanity is our brokenness, our evilness, our darkness, the sickness in our heart. All the problems of earth are caused by the selfishness of our heart. The only way we can ever solve the problem of this world is if we can solve the problem of our heart. Our hearts are broken. They're messed up. There are all kinds of messiness. Sin has entered our hearts and we have been separated from God. We need a way to have our sins forgiven. We need some way for us to be purified from our sins. We need a savior. We need a way to enter into his glory. That's the place of ultimate delight. That's the place of ultimate love. That's the place of ultimate security.

Jesus lived a life you should have lived and died a death you should have died to heal us from the sickness in our hearts. To bring us into the presence of the glory of God.

You see, God is not just the creator of the universe, He is not just the almighty God who is way out there in glory, He not just the holy, righteous and just God we can't ever live up to, He is God incarnate, who loved himself, who humbled himself, even on the most humiliating death ever invented by humans.

Apostle Paul put it this way in Philippians 2:6-11:

**6Who, being in very nature[a] God,
did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,**

7but made himself nothing,
taking the very nature[b] of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
8And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to death—
even death on a cross!
9Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
10that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
11and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

The REAL Jesus is God incarnate who came to suffer and die for us. He is the glorious suffering God. If you get this, it's going to change everything about you from inside-out.

V. Third, How the Reality of the Glory and Suffering of Jesus changes Us.

A. This reality of the glory and the suffering of Jesus puts things into the right perspective.

Why do you think Jesus led Peter, James and John to the mountain top? What do you think they learned from this experience? I think when they actually started to deny themselves, take up the cross, and follow Jesus, they walked the road of suffering. Life was difficult. We know according to Acts 12 that James was martyred; he was the first of the Apostles to be killed. Peter was also martyred; the legion tells us that he was crucified upside down. John was also persecute and later exiled to an island. They all walked through the valley of the shadow of death.

But what gave them clarity during these hard times was the glory and the suffering of Jesus. John said in John 1:14: “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

Peter said in 2 Peter 1:16: “We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory.”

They have been to the mountain top and have seen the glory of Jesus, but they also saw the suffering, the rejection, the shame, the cross. They saw both, and this is what helped them endure the shame, the suffering, the cross.

Hebrews 12:2-3 says:

“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”

When we are going to rough times, when we are going through the valley of darkness, it is soooo important to look to the REAL Jesus, not only the glory of Jesus but also the suffering of Jesus. Both/And. It’s not just about this glorious God who is holy, but it is this glorious God who humbled himself, who suffered shame, who suffered injustice, who suffered the ultimate humiliation. When you see this REAL Jesus, that he did all these things for you, it changes the way you view everything, and changes your heart and gives you the strength to go on.

You see if you don’t see the REAL Jesus, both his glory and the humility, we get one of two attitudes towards life: we become glory seekers or we become hopeless sufferers. We have this attitude that life is about avoidance of suffering and seeking glory. That the way to happiness is to avoid suffering. That the way of glory is avoidance of suffering. That being a Christian means somehow God blesses us with the right promotion, the right relationship, money, fame, and security as this world defines them. But when things go wrong, we become hopeless sufferers: we question God. Why God? Why me God? We look to our present difficulties; we look at the reality of our suffering and think either that God is unfair or that God has abandoned us. We go into depression, anger, confusion, carelessness. We get lost.

We’ve got to keep our eyes on the REAL Jesus, the glory of Jesus and the suffering of Jesus. Then, we’ll start making sense out of life.

B. This reality of the glory of Jesus and the suffering of Jesus also gives us hope in times of suffering.

Remember, we learned from Hebrews 12:2 that even Jesus endured the cross and the shame, how?? For the joy set before him. The joy of the glory of God, the joy of sharing that glory with us. He had future in mind as he suffered in the present. I think that's really important. I think sometimes we stop talking about heaven, the eternal life, the completed and fulfilled Kingdom of God when all things will be restored, and just talk about life here and now with God. I think that's really important. But, what we think about the future also affects the way we think about the present as well.

Think about two persons who are working really really hard. Both are working 100 hours a week under really bad working conditions with a bad supervisor under a lot of stress. But, let's say one is told that at the end of one year, she's going to be paid \$10 million for the work and the other is told that she is going to be paid minimum wage for the work. The person who knows that she will get \$10 million is going to have a completely different attitude towards her suffering than the person who know she is going to get minimum wage. What we think about the future affects the way we approach the present.

Paul says in Romans 8:18: **“I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.”**

If we know the joy set before us, the glory of fellowship with God, the glory of delighting in a relationship with God, the glory and joy of loving and being loved by God, then even if someone wrongs us and causes us suffering, we are able to forgive, and even if someone leaves us, abandons us, kicks us out, or cheat on us, we are able to endure the suffering without vengeance and retaliation.

C. The reality of the glory and suffering of Jesus starts a process of transformation.

The word for transfigure is the Greek word “metamorphoo” and it's the same word that Paul used in Romans 12:2 when he said: “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” The word

translated as “transformed” is “metamorphoo.” We are in the process of being transformed. As live in a relationship with God, and experience the power of the spirit of God, the presence of God in our lives, Paul says in 2 Corinthians 3:18: “And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed (metamorph) into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which come from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”

We are in the process of being transformed into his likeness even in our suffering, and maybe through our sufferings. The way to get there is clarify our vision of the REAL Jesus, the glory of God yet suffering in love for us. Let’s keep our eyes fasten on him.