

RTS Women's Study: The Gospel of Mark

#18: Mark 9:1-29: The Highs and Lows of the Christian Life

Intro: What You See is Not Always What You Get

"[Gandalf's] fame in the shire was mainly due to his skills with fire, smokes, and lights. His real business was far more difficult and dangerous, but the Shire-folk knew nothing about it. To them he was just one of the 'attractions' at the Party."

"His hair was white as snow in the sunshine; and gleaming white was his robe; the eyes...were bright, piercing as the rays of the sun; power was in his hand."

I. The Glory of the Mountain Top (v.1-13)

A. Jesus is Revealed as the God of the Old Testament

- "high mountain"
 - In the OT, Yahweh revealed himself on mountain tops (Ex 24; 1 Kings 19)
 - Moses saw God on the mountain top
- "his clothes became radiant, intensely white"
 - The God of the OT shines in his radiant glory (Ex 16:10; 24:17; Dan 7:9)
 - Moses shone because he had been in the presence of God (Ex 34:29-35)
- "Elijah and Moses, and they were talking with Jesus"
 - In the OT, Elijah and Moses both "saw" God on a mountain top
 - Moses is there because Isaiah predicts a second Exodus (Mark 1:3)
 - Elijah is there because Malachi predicts "Elijah" will return (Mark 1:2; 9:12-13)
- "a cloud overshadowed them"
 - In the OT, God's glory is present in a cloud (Ex 16:10; 19:9; 24:15-17)
 - God often speaks out of the cloud (Ex 24:16)
- "this is my beloved Son"
 - Notice only Jesus is called the Son, not Moses or Elijah
 - Only Jesus is transfigured, no one else

B. What's the point of the Transfiguration Event?

- So that the Disciples would know who Jesus really is
 - We forget that Jesus is not merely a human being but the Lord of all
 - Read Rev 1:12-16
 - **Why is it so important that we remember the glory of Jesus and not just his humility?
 - **What do you make of Peter's reaction?
- As a foreshadowing of the second coming
 - The transfiguration is a taste of what Jesus will be like when he returns; Rev 19: white rider on a white horse!
 - 2 Pet 3:16-18: ¹⁶For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were

eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷ For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," ¹⁸ we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain.

II. The Darkness of the Real World (v.14-29)

Aslan in *The Silver Chair*: 'Here on the mountain I have spoken to you clearly. I will not often do so down in Narnia. Here on the mountain, the air is clear and your mind is clear; as you drop down into Narnia, the air will thicken.'

A. Devil

- While Jesus was transfigured on the mountain, the Devil was still at work attacking God's people
- Until Jesus returns, the main forces in our world are always cosmic/spiritual!
- Key point: without Jesus we cannot fight the devil

B. Division

- When Jesus returned from the mountain top, he found a chaotic scene
 - A "great crowd" surrounded the disciples, "arguing" with them (v. 14)
 - Apparently, there was disagreement over how to help the possessed boy
 - There's an echo here of Moses' return from the mountain where he found his people in chaos too (Exodus 32)
- Key point: without Jesus we cannot heal divisions and disagreement
 - History of the church is marked by division among God's people
 - Unifying factor must always be Jesus himself

C. Doubt

- The theme of doubt is all over this passage
 - The disciples lacked faith to cast out the demon
 - The father lacked faith when he brought forth his son
 - Jesus laments the lack of faith: "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you?" (v.19)
- Remember a few things about doubt:
 - We all struggle with it! The father says: "I believe, help my unbelief!" (v.24)
 - Jesus is compassionate and patient
- Key point: "all things are possible for the one who believes"

Discussion Groups

1. Although we are not able to witness the transfiguration for ourselves, what can we do in our everyday lives to remind ourselves of the true power and identity of Jesus?
2. As you think about the darkness of this world, which challenge troubles you the most: the devil, division, or doubt? Can you share why this particular challenge is a struggle?
3. Take some time to dwell on the promise of Jesus: "All things are possible for the one who believes." Share a current situation in your life where that promise is particularly meaningful to you.