

95-08-13Mark

It's important that we review where we have been, because to understand the transfiguration of Jesus Christ at the top of the mountain, we have to see it in the context of His ministry and what He's trying to accomplish with the disciples. You will recall that very recently Jesus has come to Bethsaida in chapter 8, verse 22, and they brought to Him a blind man. And this was a very unique healing that Jesus performed because it came in two stages.

Do you recall why it was that we saw last week that this healing took two tries? Jesus had to lay His hands on this man two different times. It's unique. No other healing that Jesus performed did not occur in an instantaneous manner.

But this man was not instantaneously healed. That's unique and therefore important. Do you recall why that was? First of all, we noticed a clue in that this took place in Bethsaida.

What do we know about Bethsaida? Who comes from Bethsaida? Peter, Andrew, and Philip are all men from Bethsaida. John 1.44. So this is the hometown of the disciples. We also saw that Jesus takes this blind man out of the city.

What has He done with the disciples? He's taken them out away from their hometowns and their families, hasn't He? He has taken them out of their villages, out of their former way of life, to follow Him in a new and unique way. This is symbolized for us in the way this blind man is removed from his village and is taken outside. Jesus spit on his eyes and put His hands on him in verse 23 of chapter 8, and then asked him if he saw anything.

Jesus took something from his own lips and placed it on this man's eyes to improve his sight, to give him sight that he did not have before, and He laid His hands on him. Jesus has been teaching and preaching and working with His disciples now for over two years, giving them the Word of God at first hand, personal contact with them. And He asks this blind man, do you see anything? We saw in verse 29 of this same chapter, chapter 8, He's going to ask the disciples a very similar question.

Who do you say that I am? When you look at me, what do you see? He precedes this by saying, what do men see? And they say, well, you're a prophet, you're John the Baptist, you're Elijah or someone. Then Jesus says, who do you say that I am? He's asking them, what do you see when you look at me? What did the blind man see? He said, I see men like trees walking. Did he see men? Yes, he did.

Were they like trees walking? No, they were not. And we saw there that there was a right identification, but a wrong perception. This blind man could look and see men and identify them as men, but his perception of them was completely wrong.

They looked like members of the vegetable kingdom to him. They looked like trees walking

around. An inaccurate, wrong perception of their functions and their purpose.

The same thing is going to be true of the disciples. When Jesus asks this question, who do you say that I am? In verse 29, Peter answered and said to Him, You are the Christ. Is that a correct identification? Yes, it is.

But what happens immediately after that? Jesus strictly warned them that they should tell no one about Him. Now, this seems odd. We take it for granted as Christians that we have the great commission to go and tell the world about Christ.

And yet, over and over again, we have seen Jesus tell a recently healed person or tell His disciples, do not make this known. He will go into a village seeking to not be known. He will tell people, don't tell anyone what you have seen or what I have done.

It is not always the time to witness. That's a fact. You can't escape it.

Everyone is not called to witness all the time. There is a time and a place to witness. There is a time and a place to plant the seed of the gospel.

And that is a place where God the Holy Spirit has plowed the ground. If you go out in your own strength and try to plant the seed of the gospel on hard packed soil, all you're doing is feeding the wild birds who are going to come and pluck it away. We have to be sensitive because the ministry of the gospel is not our ministry.

It's God's ministry. Like everything else in God's plan, it's God's plan, it's God's purpose, and it's accomplished in God's time, in God's power, and in God's way. And if we go out and take the bit in our teeth and decide that we are going to single-handedly save a person or save a community or save the world, we are outside the plan of God.

Now, this is a hard thing. You will not hear this spoken from very many pulpits, but it's a fact of the Word of God. Jesus said, do not tell anyone about me.

He strictly warned them, and this is a strong word in Greek. These are the twelve disciples. These are the ones who are going to get the great commission, but they're not ready to execute that commission.

Why? Because they have a right identification of Jesus Christ, but they have a wrong perception. We are not qualified to go and preach a Christ that we do not ourselves understand. Salvation alone does not commission us to be a witness.

We have to be prepared. We not only have to have the application of Jesus' hands and the application of what proceeds from His mouth to us so that we can identify Him, but we've got to understand Him. So many today turn on your television set to two or three different stations in our area, and you will see people preaching Jesus Christ who do not understand Him.

They don't understand the purpose for this age, and they are under the condemnation of Scripture that falls upon those who not only are in error themselves, but lead many astray. We've got to be careful that not only do we pursue God's purpose, but we pursue it in God's way. And like any other worthy endeavor in life, it takes preparation.

It is a rare case where someone can stand up and adequately exposit the Scriptures without some sort of preparation. We don't give the Gospel to someone, and a week later, he is now standing up and declaring the deep truths of the Word of God to people. Why is that? We recognize that it takes preparation.

It takes time in God's Word. It takes learning before one can teach. If we are going to preach the good news of Jesus Christ, we not only have to identify Him as God's Son, but we have to understand Him.

We've got to perceive Him accurately enough to give that message. And Jesus recognizes that His disciples don't understand that. How do we know? Look at these succeeding verses.

In verse 31, He began to teach them what kind of Christ He is. 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 spoke this word openly.

But Peter, the spokesman for the disciples, took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. Can you imagine? Would any of us, knowing what we know at this point, take the Lord aside and rebuke the God of glory, rebuke Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of God, David's greater Son, the Millennial King, our Savior? Would we take Him aside and rebuke Him and tell Him He's wrong? He's not the right kind of Messiah. He's not the right kind of Christ.

There are people today who effectively do this. They redefine Jesus Christ. He's not the Savior for sin.

He's the solution for earthly problems. He is presented as the great Excedrin Pill, the great Band-Aid. If you've got problems, come to Jesus and He'll fix your problems.

If you're unhappy, if you don't have enough money, if you don't feel prosperous, if your circumstances are oppressing you, come to Jesus Christ. This has an element of truth, but it is leavened with the leaven of the Pharisees and with the leaven of Herod. It is adulterated with a false principle, because what we're really trying to do is motivate people with a false motivation to come to Jesus Christ.

What is the purpose for coming to Christ? Recognizing that we are hopeless, helpless, and useless in the sight of God. That we are eternally damned. That's the reason to come to Jesus Christ.

Not because Jesus Christ offers a quick fix. Not because Jesus Christ offers prosperity, and a new washing machine, and a better car, and getting out from under all of those credit problems, and out from under this oppression from people, and so forth. If we offer Jesus Christ as a problem-solving device for the problems of this life, we misrepresent Jesus Christ, and we probably misperceive Him ourselves.

Why is it so many Christians are disappointed in this life? Why is it that Christians who have once tasted of the good Word of God, and of the wonderful things to come, fall away? Why is it that there's no joy and there's no perseverance in the Christian life? Sometimes we say, well, maybe they were never saved to begin with. It is far more likely that they seek a Christ that offers them things in this life. They're seeking earthly solutions.

They're seeking earthly panaceas. And of course, Jesus Christ never presents Himself that way. And if we present Him that way, we err.

Jesus Christ did not say, I have come to the world to solve your problems. He said, in this world you shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer. Jesus Christ offers something far higher than satisfaction in earthly life, although that will be a by-product.

But He doesn't market Himself that way. He doesn't present Himself that way, and we should not either. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is sin, righteousness, and judgment, and the solution of those problems in Jesus Christ.

We don't like to talk about sin. We don't like to confront unbelievers with the fact that they are wrong, and they are lost, and they are headed to hell under the justice of an almighty, righteous God. That's not a popular message, to tell someone they're wrong.

It isn't well-received. That's not the way to win converts. That's not the way to build a crowd.

And we make this mistake. And we effectively do what Peter does. We say, Lord, this Gospel, the way You've sketched it out here in Scripture, just isn't going to go over.

This is not a popular message. Can't we kind of tone this sin and righteousness business down a little bit and talk about the benefits? We know that there's great blessing. You said, I have come that they might have life and have it abundantly.

Let's kind of focus on that abundant life side and present it that way, and this sin stuff just isn't going to go over. This dying and death and suffering, many things, what's the purpose in that? We've got a great following here. Look at the crowds you're drawing.

You can convince these people to make you the king without all this dying and suffering business and antagonizing the priests and the scribes. Proper identification, wrong perception. What is the correction for a wrong perception? What does Jesus do with the blind man in verse 25 of chapter

8? He put His hands on his eyes again and made him look up, and he was restored and saw everyone clearly.

Renewed contact with Jesus Christ fixes this man's wrong perception, and he sees everything clearly. What does Jesus do in the disciples' case? Peter's got the right identification, you are the Christ, but he's rebuking the Lord and he misperceives Him. So what does Jesus do? He's going to continue to teach them many things.

And now in verse 34 of chapter 8, Jesus is going to give... I would say that there are many commissions in Scripture. We talk about Matthew 28, 19, and we've had handed down to us a label for that passage, that that is the great commission. As you go into the world, make disciples of all nations, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.

We call that the great commission. I would submit to you that that was an instruction given to 11 men in a lonely place just before Jesus departed this life. What is the commission for all believers? What is the commission for everyone who is willing to listen to the voice of Jesus Christ? Well, here is certainly a good candidate, right here in verse 34, because Jesus called the people to Himself.

He's had this episode with the 12 disciples, but now for this next statement, He calls everyone in. He says, everyone, come here, all of you that are under the sound of the voice of Jesus Christ, hear this exhortation. Whoever desires to come after Me.

What does it mean to come after Jesus Christ? That's discipleship, isn't it? That's what a disciple is, one who comes after. That's what the literal meaning of the Greek word, Mephetes, is. It's a follower, one who comes behind.

Jesus says, if you're going to be a Mephetes, if you're going to be My disciple, here's what you do. And He says this to everyone. Now, He gave a commission to make disciples to the 11, didn't He? Later on, He'll give that same commission to Paul on the Damascus Road, and once again have 12 sent forth men to make disciples.

But the first commission is to be a disciple. And this is a commission that's given to everyone. There's no question, there's no doubt, there's no argument here.

He calls the people to Himself and He says, if you desire to come after Me, anyone who desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me. There's a wonderful construction here in the original language of the Bible. By the way, I know sometimes Greek is a little ponderous to take on.

All I can submit to you is it's the language that God chose to couch the revelation of Jesus Christ in. So I think if it's God's choice, it must be a very rich language. It must be a good way to communicate and it won't hurt us to look at it from time to time.

Now in this verse, there's some Greek that's important because there are three things that take place here. It says, let him deny himself, let him take up his cross and let him follow Me. Now in Greek, there's something that we don't have in English.

It's called an aorist tense. And an aorist tense looks at something at a point in time. It doesn't look at it as a process.

It doesn't look at it as an ongoing status. It doesn't look at it like the perfect tense where something happened in the past with results that go on forever. When it says that Christ has died once for us, that's a perfect tense.

It's something that happened once in the past with results that go on forever. But the aorist tense is unique. We have a hard time thinking about it because we don't have an equivalent in English.

But it takes the action and it treats it as a point in time sometimes. Sometimes it treats it as a concept that isn't even attached to time. Don't think about this as an episode or as a process.

Think about it for what it is, a principle. That's what we have in the first two of these, deny yourself. It's an aorist tense.

And what it implies is there's a point that we reach where we have to make this commitment. It doesn't present it as a daily commitment. There may be other passages that do, but this one does not.

It says, look, you've got to come to a point where you recognize the realities of life and decide that God's plan is more important than your plan. That the things of God are more important than the things of man. That pleasing God is more important than life itself.

To be willing to take up one's cross is to be willing to be humiliated. To be willing to take the walk of shame and be spit on by the rest of the world. To be humiliated if necessary.

To die if necessary for an ideal, for a principle, for a truth. So to deny oneself and take up the cross, those are both in the aorist tense. It says this is something you've got to reach at some point and do.

But that third one is not an aorist. When he says, follow me, it's like a lot of the present tenses that you have in John's first epistle. It's a pattern of life.

Keep on following. Be a follower. These decisions have to precede that pattern of life.

You have to decide at some point in your life that the goal of your life is to stand before Jesus Christ at the judgment seat and be approved. That means denying earthly desires, earthly goals, earthly pleasures in some cases. It means taking up a cross and perhaps being actively persecuted.

Being actively thought of as a fool for not conforming to the wisdom of this world. That's a decision that we make at a point and based on that decision and that establishment of priorities, now we follow and we keep on following Jesus Christ. There's a beauty in the way Jesus describes this because following Him is staying in contact with Him.

That is the contact that will continue to improve our sight and improve our perception of Jesus Christ. So now here we come to one of the first big questions. Having said all of that, and that all sounds great and that sounds fine, it's a worthy goal, let's do it.

How do we do that? When we leave here and go home and start living for some more days, how do we do that? How do we maintain contact with Jesus Christ so that the scales fall from our eyes and we not only identify Him but perceive Him clearly? God has given us a supernatural resource in His Word. He's given us another supernatural resource in God the Holy Spirit. That is our access.

That is our contact with Jesus Christ. Christ comes to dwell within us by faith. What is faith? Faith is looking at a proposition from Scripture, a truth, a statement, a promise, a principle, something that God says or something that God has done, some characteristic of God Himself.

And we latch on to that and we say, you know, because God is faithful, because God has promised that He will provide, I'm not going to try to provide for myself. I'm not going to try to solve this problem with a human solution. I'm not going to compromise integrity.

I'm not going to compromise the truth of God's Word, even though it looks like it's going to end in disaster. It looks like I'm taking up my cross and heading for Golgotha here. I'm going to believe that that unseen reality is greater than my experience in this life.

It's greater than the advice of people who don't know the Lord. It's greater than human wisdom. It's greater than human tradition or human solutions.

That's faith. By faith, Jesus Christ dwells within us and that's contact. That's His touch.

That's what renews that cycle of perception and faith that enables us to live and reflect God's glory. Now, that's important because some of us do that and some do not. What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul? Jesus says in verse 35, whoever desires to save his life or deliver his life will lose it.

That word for life there is *psuche* or *psyche*. It is used for one's physical life. It's also used for our self.

We talk about psychological things and someone's *psyche*. That's their inner self. That's their self-awareness and their sense of being and so forth.

And a lot of times we feel like we are going to be destroyed if we pursue a certain course of

action. We are going to lose our life. We're going to lose the respect of our family or our friends.

We're going to encounter economic ruin, whatever it may be. I would point out for you that these verses, 35 through 38, are not talking about salvation, although they are often presented in that light. It's easy to look at this and say, well, losing one's life, saving one's life, that must be salvation.

But this is addressed to followers of Jesus Christ. This is addressed in response to that need for perceiving Him accurately. And if you work salvation into this, you will wind up with salvation by works, which we know is wrong.

Do we really believe that in order to be saved, one must deny himself and take up the cross and follow Jesus Christ? That's what the Lordship Salvation crowd would have us believe, that you've got to add your works to the work of Jesus Christ before salvation is effective for you. It just won't wash. This is a commission for believers.

This is a challenge for believers. It is possible for a believer to lose his life because he does not follow Jesus Christ. He's not willing to deny himself.

He's not willing to take up his cross. Denying and taking up and following are not conditions of salvation, but they are conditions of discipleship. They're conditions of being a true follower of Jesus Christ.

Isn't that our goal? If we look at ourselves, what else does our life count for if we're not a good follower of Jesus Christ? Well, this is the key. We always ask at the end, well, how do we do this? This is how. We've got to make the decision.

We've got to stack up the chips, count the cost. And say, what is the point of life? What if I gain everything? What if I become well known and well respected and well loved? What if I am renowned for being great in this field or in that field? And people say, oh, he had such a great impact in my life, or she made such a difference in my life. And we pursue that.

And that's earthly. And we pursue that rather than pursuing the approval of God, which is often found in secret when the left hand doesn't know what the right hand is doing. It's done in the closet.

It's not done on the street corners. It's not done to be trumpeted and paraded before men. Are we satisfied with the approval of God or do we seek the approval of men? That's a tough test because our instincts, every fiber in our body, craves the approval of our peers, the approval of those around us.

That's the way we are. Fallen nature is organized and it takes a conscious decision to set oneself aside, to set one's goals aside and put God's goals first. And that may mean laboring in obscurity.

That may mean that the good that you do and the faith that you have and the joy and the peace that you experience aren't appreciated, aren't recognized, aren't known. You don't get a thank you. You don't get a well done from someone who ought to.

Someone that you feel you deserve at least a nod of thanks from and you don't get it. Remember the hymn that says, so send I you to labor unrewarded. That's the challenge.

Deny oneself, take up the cross and keep on following Jesus Christ. Verse 38, whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation of him, the son of man also will be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his father with the holy angels. Now, here's another clue that this is talking about believers and not unbelievers.

If the first set of principles did not convince you, this one should. If you were at the study last Tuesday, we talked about the resurrections. Now, if this is unbelievers who are going to be ashamed, how many unbelievers are they going to be at the second coming of Jesus Christ when he comes in glory of his father with the holy angels? Zero.

All the unbelievers that might have survived the tribulation will be slain by the breath of his mouth. All of the unbelievers of every other age live not until the end of the thousand years. So who's left to be ashamed at the coming of Jesus Christ in glory with the angels? It's only believers, resurrected Old Testament saints, raptured church age saints who return with Jesus Christ at the second coming.

That's the only people you've got. And people say, oh, no more tears, no more pain and so forth. You look at where that passage is located in Revelation, and that is after the millennial kingdom, that's after the Gog and Magog rebellion, it's after the great Great White Throne judgment, there will be sorrow, there will be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth at the coming of Jesus Christ.

And that weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth is believers. Look at those passages. We've looked at them in the past here in our studies, and we have seen that that outer darkness is not the lake of fire.

It's not the punishment for unbelievers. That is distance from Jesus Christ. If we do not draw near to Jesus Christ in this life, he's not going to draw near to us in the life to come.

We have our salvation, but our tradition and our assumptions have told us, well, everyone's just going to be blissfully happy and it's all going to be great and we'll know everything and we'll be everything and we'll all be one big, happy, equal family. And Jesus says, no, there's going to be inequality in the kingdom. There are some who will be first and there are some who will be dead last.

There are Jews to whom were given the promises of the kingdom that won't even be in the

kingdom. They'll be living off in Tibet or Africa or southern Brazil or someplace. They will not live in the kingdom because when they knock at the door, Jesus is going to say, I never knew you.

I never had contact with you in your life. You're saved. You claim the righteousness of God.

He that comes to God must believe that he is and that he rewards those that diligently seek him. And you believe that God is, but you didn't get the reward because you didn't diligently seek. There's a lot on the line in this life.

What we decide today and tomorrow and the next day is going to make a big difference in the millennial kingdom. Do you want to be last? Do you want to be excluded from privilege? Do you want to be excluded from the opportunity to reflect the glory of God? Read what Jesus says to Israel, because the principle is there for us as well. He tells Israel, you are going to see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob sitting down in the kingdom.

You're going to see many from the north and the east and the south and the west come and sit down in the kingdom. Now, unbelievers aren't going to see that. How do we know that? Because we know the doctrine of resurrections.

We know our Bible and we know that the unbelievers are not alive when Jesus sits down in the kingdom. It's only saints. So who is it that finds themselves cast out of that kingdom that is centered in Israel? Who is it that's going to live in Put and Mitzrayim and Rosh and all of the other far off kingdoms and will send emissaries and send tribute to the ruling king in Jerusalem? Some of them will be Jews, some of them will be people to whom this promise and covenant were made and they missed it because they did not walk in faith.

They're like their forefathers who died in the wilderness, not having entered the land. Those Jews that dropped in the wilderness in that 40 years of wandering, they picture believers, don't they? They came out of Egypt, the place of bondage, under the blood of the Passover lamb, picture of salvation. But they did not enter the land of promise.

Why? Because the promise of God was not mixed with faith in them that heard it. Now, it's a serious issue. It should confront us.

We don't want to be ashamed of Jesus Christ in this life. What does it mean to be ashamed? It means to not aggressively pursue, to not give something its due importance, to not give something the recognition that it deserves. We have a great passage, turn over to.

Second, Timothy, chapter one, this idea of being ashamed. A familiar verse there in Second Timothy one, seven, God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. We're going to see that in Mark nine one, Jesus says there are some of you standing here who will not taste of death until you have seen the coming of the Son of Man in the kingdom with power.

Why does he say with power? He could say with glory, he could say with a lot of things, but he says you'll see the coming of the kingdom with power. Why is that power important? Because that power is something that we're supposed to think about today. It's the object of our faith now and the fulfillment of that power of God and the manifestation of it will be in the coming kingdom.

Paul says here, God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, of love, of a sound mind. Therefore, do not be ashamed of the testimony. Very same word.

Do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me, his prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God. Now, we look at this and we say, well, you know, there might be some missionaries that are captured and tortured. That's suffering for the gospel.

I will submit to you this thought, if you are actively pursuing God's will and God's plan in your life, any suffering that you endure is suffering for the sake of Christ, because that is suffering that God is using in your life and in my life to teach us something that is suffering for the sake of Christ, because we live for the sake of Christ. And if our life is oriented to Jesus Christ, then the suffering that we undergo is under this category. We don't have to wait to be persecuted because we handed someone a tract or we shared the gospel with someone or because we're a believer and people think we're off our rocker.

Any suffering, your physical limitations, your physical sufferings, the suffering that you endure because of family members, because of friends, because of associations, because of circumstances and pressures that is suffering for the cause of Christ. If you are living for Christ, everything in your life is for the cause of Christ in that situation. And we can claim these wonderful promises, share with me in sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.

Look down in verse 12. For this reason, I also suffer these things. Nevertheless, what? I am not ashamed.

Same word. He tells Timothy in 1.8, do not be ashamed. In 1.12, he says, I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed.

Can we truly say that? Do we know our Lord? Do we know the way he thinks? Do we know why he did what he did? Do we know why he told some people not to proclaim the word and others to proclaim it abroad? Do we understand the plan of God? Do we understand God's real purpose in our lives and in the lives of others? Is God here simply to run a pyramid organization like Amway and we just live to reproduce? And once we have gotten the product ourselves, now we simply live to pass that product on to others. Is that the total of God's plan? We have labeled that the Great Commission. You've received the gospel.

Now go give it to others. Is there anything wrong with sharing the gospel? It depends. It depends on the motivation of the person who shares it.

It depends on the gospel that they preach. Paul said, if someone comes to you with any other gospel than the one I delivered, watch out, shun that person, stay away from them. It's got to not only be the gospel of Jesus Christ, but we've got to perceive him correctly and present him correctly.

Some of us are not qualified to do that. And what we need to do is sit and let Jesus Christ teach us about himself so that we can perceive the time and the place to proclaim the good news of the gospel. Look down here in verse 16 of Second Timothy one, this, you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes.

The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiporus, for he often refreshed me and he was not ashamed of my shame. Three times in one chapter, Paul talks about this concept of being ashamed. And what does it mean? It means that you let nothing stand in the way of your commitment.

Will Jesus be ashamed of us at his coming? That should be a big part of our motivation. That's why the transfiguration takes place. Turn back now to Mark, chapter nine.

I'm sure if you have spent more than four or five Sundays in church, you have covered the transfiguration of Jesus Christ at some point. My purpose this morning is not to reacquaint you with all of the details, but to point out something in the light of what we have just seen. He said to them, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power.

Let me ask you something. Why the transfiguration? Have you thought about that? If you were going to construct an itinerary for Jesus ministry, God says, OK, look, I'm going to put my son, Jesus Christ, on the earth for three and a half years, line out a program for him, figure out what he's going to do, where he's going to go. Miracles that he will perform, cities that he will visit and so forth.

Would it occur to you to say, I think I'll have him go to the top of a mountain, have Moses and Elijah appear, have the glory of God revealed? And my reason for doing that is blank. Why do you suppose the transfiguration takes place? Why here? Why now? And why with only three of the twelve disciples? If I was going to put on a production as big as the transfiguration and call two Old Testament prophets out of the grave, I would tend to assemble the biggest crowd I could find. Look, you're only going to see this once.

So everybody gather around. Here comes Moses and Elijah. Here comes Jesus Christ in the glory that he will reflect in the millennial kingdom.

How many people saw this? Three. Why? That's the burning question of the hour. After six days, Jesus took Peter, James and John and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves.

Jesus knew this was coming, didn't he? He knew it a week ahead of time. He said, some of you are going to see the kingdom by implication, we can fill out what Jesus leaves unsaid. Some of you are not going to see the kingdom coming with power.

Now, out of the twelve disciples, why is it only three see this? You can ask the same question about the raising of Jairus' daughter. We saw a few chapters back who were in the room besides the parents of the girl when Jesus raised Jairus' daughter, Peter, James and John. What is it that marks out Peter, James and John for these special privileges? Why is it that they see the transfiguration and the other disciples don't? Not only that, but they see something so glorious and so tremendous.

And Jesus says, don't tell anyone until after I've been raised. It's another one of those do not tell passages that we've got to deal with. We can't just gloss over this and say that was then, this is now, go ye into all the world, etc.

We've got to understand our God and rightly perceive Jesus Christ to be effective for him in this life. He was transfigured before them, his clothes became shining, exceedingly white like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them. And Elijah appeared to them with Moses and they were talking with Jesus.

We know from Luke, I think I mentioned last Tuesday, I thought it was in John, but it's in Luke chapter nine, I believe, where it tells us that they were talking with Jesus about his arrest and trial and crucifixion upcoming in Jerusalem. They talked with him. Peter answered and said to Jesus, Peter has observed this now and Peter's trying to figure out the answer to this very question.

Why are we here? Jesus has made the three of us climb this mountain just like he did when he called us to be disciples. Remember that, the calling of the disciples? Jesus made them climb the mountain to come up, didn't he? He's made them climb again. Now, here's this glorious sight, Jesus in his post resurrection, royal glory.

Like he will be when he appears to John on the Isle of Patmos in Revelation chapter one, like he will be when he returns and descends from heaven to take the kingdom of his father, David. Why are they there? Peter scratches his head and tries to figure this out himself. And he says, well, we must be here to do something.

This must call for some response on our part. Peter, being a pretty good student of the word of God, catalogs back to his mind and he says, well, this is obviously this kingdom of God coming with power. What is it in my library of knowledge about God that talks about that? Well, we've got the feasts.

We've got the Feast of Booths, the Feast of Tabernacles. That whole feast pictures God dwelling among us. I've got it.

Let's build booths. Let's build tabernacles. This is the millennial kingdom.

Three guys, three appearing in glory will build three houses. Each one of us will construct a hut, one for Christ, one for Moses and one for Elijah. We're here to do something.

And so that's what he proposes. He says, Rabbi, it's good that we're here. You need some labor to build these huts.

Let us make three tabernacles, one for you, one for Moses, one for Elijah, because he did not know what to say. He did not know. He didn't understand the purpose.

And so he came up with a purpose on his own. They were greatly afraid and a cloud came and overshadowed them and a voice came out of the cloud saying, this is my beloved son. Hear him.

You are not here to do. You are here to learn. You are here to be changed.

You are here to have something happen inside your soul that's going to make a difference for the rest of your life. We could go into the reasons why Moses, why Elijah. Jesus is going to talk about Elijah a little later on in this chapter.

Why Moses? Turn back to Deuteronomy chapter 18, Deuteronomy chapter 18. In about the middle of that chapter, Moses is speaking 18:15 of Deuteronomy. The Lord, your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren.

Him you shall hear. Him you shall hear. According to all you desire to the Lord, your God, in Horeb and the day of the assembly saying, let me not hear again the voice of the Lord, my God, nor let me see this great fire any more lest I die.

I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brethren. I will put my words in his mouth and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And it shall be that whoever will not hear my words, which he speaks in my name, I will require it of him.

Our requirement is to hear. Our requirement is to learn, to become disciples so that we can make disciples. We don't skip the becoming step.

We don't simply say now that I'm a believer, I've got the great commission to go and recruit others. There's a middle step that we like to skip and we can't afford to skip it. We have got to become of the twelve disciples.

There were only three that were close to being on that road. There were only three who could even begin to comprehend that hope that God is putting in front of them here in Mark chapter

nine. That view of the coming kingdom would do them no good.

They haven't reached that point. But Peter and James and John are ready for this revelation. They are the closest companions of Jesus Christ.

They've had the most contact with him and they perceive him most clearly. So God puts this vision in their souls and he says, you keep this. You can talk about it after Jesus Christ ascends to his father.

Peter remembered it. It stayed with him the rest of his life. Turn over for our last passage this morning to second Peter, second Peter, chapter one, verse 13, I think it is right as long as I am in this tent to stir you up by reminding you of all the things he's talked about in the first part of the chapter, the truths of the word of God, the things that we know about Jesus Christ, knowing that shortly I must put off my tent just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me.

Moreover, I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease. For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. What was Peter's commission to make known the power and the coming of Jesus Christ? We were eyewitnesses of his majesty, for he received from God the father, honor and glory.

When such a voice came to him from the excellent glory, this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. We heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with him on the holy mountain. And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

This is a process that believers go through. The day doesn't dawn and the morning star does not rise in our hearts at the point of salvation. The day dawns, we see clearly the morning star rises in our hearts when we set aside our interests.

We deny ourselves, we take up our cross and we keep on following Jesus Christ and we make it our first obligation and our first priority to be what God wants us to be. All of these other things flow out of that. We will be great witnesses.

We will know when and how to minister the word of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ to others. But we can't skip that all important intermediate step that Jesus is now putting his disciples through. What is the means of living the Christian life? A little pop quiz here for those of you that went through Colossians.

What is the means of living the Christian life? You've got a 33 percent chance, you know, it's either faith, hope or love. What is the means? Faith, faith is the means. What is the motivation for living the Christian life? Hope.

What is our hope? It's the glorious return of Jesus Christ and not being ashamed at his coming.

That's why the transfiguration, that's the great purpose that was planted in the hearts and the minds of Peter and James and John and by extension to us. To remember that we live our lives in the light that shines from that mountaintop, and when he does fulfill that beautiful foreshadowing of his coming in glory, we will not be ashamed and he will not be ashamed of us.

That's the motivation that propels us into the life of faith. That's what enables and empowers us and gives us not only the opportunity, but the means of fulfilling God's purpose for our lives. Let's close here in prayer.

Father, we thank you for the truth of your word. We thank you for the vision of our Savior, Jesus Christ, returning in glory, robed in light that is beyond our ability to perceive. We thank you for the testimony of the law and the prophets that are pictured in Moses and Elijah.

We thank you for the fulfillment of all of those things in Jesus Christ and his coming to work on our behalf. We thank you that you are not ashamed to be called our God. We thank you that Jesus Christ is not ashamed to call us his brethren.

And Father, we pray that you will enable us to live in such a way that we will not be ashamed at his coming. We pray that these truths will shape us and mold us and make us in the image of our Savior. We ask these things in his name.