

Recap of 917/23 message by Pastor Chris (Mark 9:1-13):

- Suffering precedes glory. Jesus has just predicted His death, burial, and resurrection to His disciples. He explained that the Son of Man must suffer. The disciples are still learning how this suffering fits into God's plan for redemption. Jesus also explained that following Him means denying self, submitting to His authority, and partaking in suffering along with Him. Our identity in Christ is in all of Him, not only the parts we like or the parts that are palatable to the world. To be "in Christ" is to identify with the whole of Christ's person and mission including His suffering and Jesus leads three disciples up the mountain to give them a glimpse of His glory. Even in times of suffering the glory of God remains, and we have hope of future glory, hope that is assured. Paul writes in Romans 8:17 that we are "heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so also may we be glorified with Him." Jesus knows the disciples will experience difficulty and as they turn toward Jerusalem and the coming suffering of the Son of Man He shows them the glory of God as an encouragement. As a demonstration and confirmation of His power and kingship. The disciples are indeed following the Messiah, the Son of God, and they shan't give up as things get difficult.
- Peter understands the "end times" implications of this revelation and the appearance of Moses and Elijah, but he misinterprets the meaning. Peter offers to build tabernacles for the 3 of them (problematic enough in putting Jesus on equal ground with Moses and Elijah) in order to stay on the mountain top, to remain basking in the glory of God. He mistakenly believes that the eschatological rest in which God and his heavenly retinue would dwell upon the earth had already begun. On the contrary, the voice of God silences Peter and calls for him to listen to Jesus, as we all must. It is not time to celebrate yet, there is work to do. They descend back down the mountain, back to the people, where ministry is necessary.
- Glimpses of glory fade. The glory of God seen in Jesus is veiled again. The glory of God that shone on Moses' face in Exodus 34:29 eventually faded. Even the times when we experienced truth emblazoned before us like a bright gleaming light can fade. Visions come and go, but His word remains. So how do we remind ourselves of the glory of God when we are in the midst of suffering? Developing a rhythm of recalling this glory is important for us as believers. I wrote a prayer that I prayed every time I opened the word as I was preparing this sermon: "LORD, I come before you ready to listen. Show me your glory today and help me not forget that you are near." It was a small rhythm I began to include to help me recall the hope of future glory. I encourage you to try to develop your own prayer, your own rhythm, that will encourage you as you descend from the mountain, back to people, where ministry is necessary, and suffering for Christ awaits.