

Sermon Text: Mark 9:2-29**Sermon Title: A Glimpse of Glory**

This morning we will be continuing our series in the gospel of Mark. Up to this point in the gospel of Mark, we have seen Jesus revealing himself and demonstrating His authority and power through his preaching and teaching, choosing the disciples, healing the sick, casting out demons, raising people from the dead, calming the storms, walking on water, supernaturally feeding the multitudes, among other things. Today in Mark 9 we will see something so profound and magnificent in the earthly life of Jesus which was witnessed by three of His disciples. This event left a lasting impression on them. It is my hope that it will leave the same effect on us.

Before we read the text, It is important to mention that at this point of Jesus's ministry he is beginning to make it clear that he will suffer, die, and rise again. We saw that last week in Mark 8:31 and we will see it again today. The disciples were having a hard time grasping that fact, so it is reasonable to assume that the Lord is giving them something to hold on to through this amazing encounter.

Let's look at Mark chapter 9:2-29:

² After six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John and led them up a high mountain by themselves to be alone. He was transfigured in front of them, ³ and his clothes became dazzling—extremely white as no launderer on earth could whiten them. ⁴ Elijah appeared to them with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. ⁵ Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it’s good for us to be here. Let’s set up three shelters: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah”— ⁶ because he did not know what to say, since they were terrified.

⁷ A cloud appeared, overshadowing them, and a voice came from the cloud: “This is my beloved Son; listen to him!”

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

⁹ As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. ¹⁰ They kept this word to themselves, questioning what “rising from the dead” meant.

¹¹ Then they asked him, “Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?”

¹² “Elijah does come first and restores all things,” he replied. “Why then is it written that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be treated with contempt? ¹³ But I tell you

that Elijah has come, and they did whatever they pleased to him, just as it is written about him.”

¹⁴ When they came to the disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and scribes disputing with them. ¹⁵ When the whole crowd saw him, they were amazed and ran to greet him. ¹⁶ He asked them, “What are you arguing with them about?”

¹⁷ Someone from the crowd answered him, “Teacher, I brought my son to you. He has a spirit that makes him unable to speak. ¹⁸ Whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams at the mouth, grinds his teeth, and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive it out, but they couldn’t.”

¹⁹ He replied to them, “You unbelieving generation, how long will I be with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring him to me.” ²⁰ So they brought the boy to him. When the spirit saw him, it immediately threw the boy into convulsions. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth. ²¹ “How long has this been happening to him?” Jesus asked his father.

“From childhood,” he said. ²² “And many times it has thrown him into fire or water to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.”

²³ Jesus said to him, “If you can’?^[a] Everything is possible for the one who believes.”

²⁴ Immediately the father of the boy cried out, “I do believe; help my unbelief!”

²⁵ When Jesus saw that a crowd was quickly gathering, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “You mute and deaf spirit, I command you: Come out of him and never enter him again.”

²⁶ Then it came out, shrieking and throwing him into terrible convulsions. The boy became like a corpse, so that many said, “He’s dead.” ²⁷ But Jesus, taking him by the hand, raised him, and he stood up.

²⁸ After he had gone into the house, his disciples asked him privately, “Why couldn’t we drive it out?”

²⁹ And he told them, “This kind can come out by nothing but prayer.”^[b]

As you might have noticed in this passage, Mark describes to us two events. The first one in verses 2-13 depict Jesus’s transfiguration on what is believed to be mount Hermon and the subsequent interaction with the three disciples.

And the second event in verses 14-29 takes place after they descended from the mountain in which Jesus delivers a boy from an un-clean spirit that the other disciples could not cast out.

We can also see that the main point of this passage is that Jesus reveals his divine identity and his power as the promised Messiah through the transfiguration and casting out of unclean spirit.

Let's dive into the first account in verses 2 to 13. In verse 2 Mark tells us that after six days of Jesus's addressing the crowd and the disciples in Bethsaida , Jesus took Peter, James, and John who were considered the leaders among the disciples up to a high mountain by themselves to be alone with them and He was transfigured before them.

The first question that comes to mind is why did Jesus take the three disciples to a high mountain?

Well, the reason is that Mountains are frequently depicted as places where God reveals Himself and His will to His people. Some well-known examples include:

- **Mount Sinai:** Where Moses received the Ten Commandments from the Almighty. We find that in Exodus 19-20.
- **Mount Horeb:** Where Elijah encountered God in a powerful way. We see that in 1 Kings 19:8-18.
- **Mount of Beatitudes:** Where Jesus delivered what is widely known as the Sermon on the Mount.

And so it would make sense that Jesus would take the disciples to a mountain to witness one of the most important displays of Christ's glory prior to His death, burial, and resurrection.

The second question that comes to mind is: "what does the word transfigure mean." The word transfigure in the Greek is a form of the verb *metamorpheo*, from which we get the English word *metamorphosis*.

You may have learned in school that the word *metamorphosis* is the dramatic change or transformation that takes place in a caterpillar when it becomes a beautiful butterfly.

So when Mark tells us that Jesus transfigured before the disciples, it means that they got to witness the remarkable transformation of Jesus from his ordinary human form to an amazing display of His full deity giving them a glimpse of His glory.

Mark describes this transformation in verse 3 by telling us that “His clothes became shining, exceedingly white like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them.” The parallel text in Matthew 17, adds that the face of Jesus also shone with the brilliance and the intensity of the sun.

Where else in Scripture do we read of someone’s face shining with such an intensity? In Exodus 34 when Moses was on the mountain with God, the Lord passed by and allowed him to get a momentary glimpse not of His face of God, but of His back because no one can look at the face of God and live.

And yet, that experience was so intense, the glory of God was so radiant that when Moses gazed on this, his own face began to shine like the sun. It was the shining of the face that was now reflecting the radiance of God. Moses’ face was not the source of the light, but rather a reflection of the light of God. However, that’s not what happens to Jesus’s Transfiguration.

The intense brightness of Jesus’s garments indicates not a reflection of the light of God, but an emission of that light from within. The source of the light that the disciples are seeing is coming from inside Christ Himself. It’s not a reflected glory. It’s an internal, inherent glory that is now bursting forth before their very eyes.

Jesus displayed His full deity before His beloved disciples so that their faith may be strengthened, and that they might be eyewitnesses of the glory of Christ, and in due time, to proclaim to all of us so that we may believe.

In fact, John mentions through his gospel that the Word (talking about Jesus) became flesh and dwelt among us and we have seen his glory as of the only Son of the Father full of grace and truth.

And then Peter tells us in 1 Peter 1:16 – 18:”¹⁶ For we did not follow cleverly contrived myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; instead, we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷ For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying “This is my beloved Son,^[a] with whom I am well-pleased!” ¹⁸ We ourselves heard this voice when it came from heaven while we were with him on the holy mountain.”

As if that is not enough, and as the disciples are watching this display of glory, suddenly there appears before them Elijah and Moses talking to Jesus. What is the significance of Elijah & Moses appearing with Jesus?

Let’s look at Romans 3:21-22 it reads:” ²¹ But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been revealed, attested by the Law and the Prophets.^[b] ²² The

righteousness of God is through faith in Jesus Christ^[c] to all who believe, since there is no distinction.”

So here, on this mountain, we have a visual attestation of Jesus, who is the righteousness of God, by Moses who represents the law of God, and by Elijah, who represents the prophets of God.

Next, we see Peter couldn't help himself again, he had to say something, even though he did not know what to say because all three disciples were terrified in the presence of the Holy. He thought it was a good idea to suggest that the disciples build tents for Jesus, Elijah, and Moses and camp there. He totally missed the point of Elijah and Moses appearing with Jesus. Maybe it would've been a good idea not to say anything, but that wouldn't be Peter, would it?

Then in verse 7, and to top it all, Mark tells us that a cloud came and overshadowed them. Where have we seen this kind of cloud before? We've seen it extensively in the book Exodus when God appeared and spoke to His people in the desert, he did so by appearing to them in the cloud of glory.

Let's look at Exodus 19:9 as an example:” The Lord said to Moses, “I am going to come to you in a dense cloud, so that the people will hear when I speak with you and will always believe you.” So here on mount Hermon, we see the cloud of the presence of God comes and surrounds the disciples, Jesus, Moses, and Elijah, and covers them so that they can't see past the rim of this cloud overshadowing them.

Then they hear the voice of God the Father thundering from the cloud, “This is My beloved Son, listen to Him.” The other time when God the Father is heard speaking audibly in the New Testament is during Jesus's baptism. We are told in Matthew 3 that when Jesus came out of the water the heavens opened, the Spirit of God descended on Him like a dove, and a voice from heaven said pretty much the same thing:” This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased.”

This divine affirmation assures the disciples, and all future believers, of Jesus' divine approval and his unique relationship with the Father as being the only begotten Son of God. If God were to speak aloud today from the heavens, you know what He'd say? He'd say to us, “Listen to My Son, My Son in whom I am well pleased.”

And so, brothers and sisters, are you listening to Jesus. Yes, Jesus is not here with us today in the flesh, but he continues to speak to us through His Word, the bible. Are you listening to Him? Are you taking time regularly to read the word, to study it, to hear it preached, and to meditate on it? Not only that but are we relying on the Spirit of God so you can obey Him? Are you loving God and loving others as Jesus commanded us to

do? Are you applying this Word to every area of your lives, in your personal walk with Him, in your marriages, at church, in the work place, and in your communities? And as you disobey Him and fall into sin which is inevitable, are you coming humbly before our God in repentance asking for his forgiveness and His mercy?

And for those of you who are here and may not know Jesus, He wants to speak to you today through His Holy Word. Please listen to these precious words of Jesus. In John 14:6 Jesus proclaims "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

And again in John 6:40 ⁴⁰ "For this is the will of my Father: that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him will have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day." And in John 11:25" Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me, even if he dies, will live."

Friend, the only way that any of us can be delivered from our sins, from death, from the wrath of God and be reconciled to God and spend eternity with God is through Jesus. He is inviting you today to believe and trust Him as your Savior and Lord because of his sacrificial death on the cross.

Well, moving on, in verse 8 we are told that suddenly the cloud of glory lifted, Moses and Elijah were gone and only Jesus was left there along with the three disciples. I believe that this symbolically points to the continuity of God's plan of salvation and restoration through Jesus alone as a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies.

Then in Verses 9 -13 Mark records a conversation between Jesus and the disciples on the way down from the mountain. First, in verses 9 & 10, Jesus tells them not to say anything to anyone about what they saw until He is raised from the dead. So they kept that to themselves but still wondered what the rising from the dead meant.

Up to this point the disciples knew that Jesus was the Messiah, but still hadn't figured out yet what the real mission of Jesus was. They still were thinking along the lines of the popular theology of the day that the Messiah was coming as a political figure, as an earthly king to deliver them from their earthly enemies and restore Israel militarily to the land that was promised to them generations before.

There was not yet room in their theology for Jesus suffering and dying, so of course they also would not have room for Him rising from the dead even though Jesus explained it to them plainly in Mark chapter 8 after He had rebuked Peter.

Second, in verses 11-13 the disciples brought up Elijah probably since they had just seen him on the mountain. "Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" they

asked Jesus. For context, this is based on a well-known prophecy in the Book of Malachi 4:5-6, which says:

"⁵ Look, I am going to send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. ⁶ And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers. Otherwise, I will come and strike the land^[a] with a curse."

Jesus's response was yes, "Elijah does come first to restore all things." Then he asked the disciples a question:

"Why then is it written that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be treated with contempt?" I believe by asking this question, Jesus continues to challenge the disciples' presupposition of the Messiah being a political figure who will come to deliver Israel from all her earthly enemies. Because this kind of thinking undermines the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies, the divine purpose of redemption, and the true nature of God's kingdom. Jesus wants to prepare his disciples for the reality of Jesus' mission.

Then Jesus tells them in verse 13 that "Elijah has come, and they did whatever they pleased to him, just as it is written about him." Jesus was referring to John the Baptist whom the angel of the Lord prophetically said about him in Luke 1:17 that he is coming in the Spirit of Elijah to prepare the way of the Lord.

And of course we know from Mark chapter 6 that John the Baptist was killed just like many other prophets that came before Him.

Now let's turn our attention to the other event that Mark recorded for us in verses 14 to 29.

Let's read again verses 14 – 18:" ¹⁴ When they came to the disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and scribes disputing with them. ¹⁵ When the whole crowd saw him, they were amazed and ran to greet him. ¹⁶ He asked them, "What are you arguing with them about?" ¹⁷ Someone from the crowd answered him, "Teacher, I brought my son to you. He has a spirit that makes him unable to speak. ¹⁸ Whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams at the mouth, grinds his teeth, and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive it out, but they couldn't."

So as Jesus and the three disciples came down from the mountain, they found the other disciples embroiled in a dispute with the scribes and unable to heal a boy possessed by an unclean spirit. This sets the stage for Jesus to address both the spiritual and faith-related aspects of the situation as well as demonstrating His power and authority by casting out the unclean spirit from the boy.

Jesus' exclamation in verse 19, "You unbelieving generation, how long will I be with you? How long must I put up with you?" expresses his frustration with the general lack of faith he encounters, not only among the crowd but also implicitly among his own disciples.

This highlights the importance of faith in his ministry and the challenges he faces in fostering genuine belief, especially among His own followers.

Jesus then asked the father to bring the boy to him. When he brought him to Jesus, the spirit recognized Jesus's authority and power and threw the boy into convulsions.

This has been happening to the boy from childhood. The father expresses a mix of desperation and doubt as we see in verse 22 "But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." The father's statement reflects a common human struggle even among believers—seeking help while wrestling with unbelief and doubt.

Jesus responds by challenging the "if you can" statement, emphasizing that belief or faith is the key to experiencing God's power: *"Everything is possible for the one who believes."* Jesus's response points to the relationship between faith and the manifestation of God's power. It highlights that faith opens the door to divine possibilities, not because of the believer's power but because of God's unlimited power.

Here's a warning to us though, *"Everything is possible for those who believe"* can and has been abused by so called believers. It should be understood within the framework of God's will and purpose. Genuine faith seeks alignment with God's will, we need to recognize that faith does not equate to presumption.

Believers should avoid treating God like a genie who is obliged to grant all our wishes on demand. Faith involves trust in God's will, wisdom, and timing.

The father's response to Jesus's challenge is, in my opinion, one of the most profound statements in the bible, "I do believe; help my unbelief!"

It is a powerful expression of the coexistence of faith and doubt, a theme that resonates deeply with all of us who believe doesn't it. I cannot tell you how many times through my walk with the Lord, when I was facing uncertainty in life and doubt about the Lord, I have prayed this prayer and experienced the love and the power of God in my life as a result.

So, brothers & sisters perhaps you are currently facing what seems to be an impossible situation in your life similar to what this man was facing regarding his son. It could be a sickness of a loved one, financial difficulties, feeling trapped in a troubled marriage,

stubborn sin in your life, deep depression, general fear in your life, or some other difficult circumstances, and you are having a hard time trusting in God and believing that the Lord can or will act on your behalf.

I want to encourage you to respond in the same way that this father did: “I do believe Lord, help my unbelief.” This is such an honest, humble, and heartfelt admission and prayer that will help your faith to grow and unleash the power of God in your situation, either in resolving it, or giving you the power and grace to endure it.

In verses 25 and 26 we see that Jesus proceeds to command the unclean spirit to leave the boy, and it had no choice but to leave him demonstrating Jesus’s authority over evil and the spiritual realm as He has done over and over again throughout His earthly ministry.

The spirit's violent departure and the boy appearing like a corpse highlight the intensity of the spiritual battle, and the hold that this spirit had on the boy. But Jesus' act of raising the boy by the hand, when many thought he was already dead, symbolizes restoration and new life.

The disciples' private question, "Why couldn't we drive it out?" and Jesus' response, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer," in verses 28 and 29 suggest two important points:

- **Dependence on God:** The need for prayer points to the importance of relying on God’s power rather than their own abilities.
- **Spiritual Readiness:** Some spiritual battles require deeper spiritual preparation such as prayer and fasting to see favorable results.

Let me conclude with a quote that I came across this week that summarizes the message of Mark 9:2-29 beautifully:” the passage from Mark 9:2-29 reveals to us the divine nature of Christ and His power and authority over evil powers. It also teaches us about the transformative power of divine encounters and the vital importance of faith in our daily lives.

Just as the disciples witnessed Jesus' glory on the mountain, we too can experience moments of profound spiritual clarity as we seek the Lord. Yet, it is in the valleys of everyday life where our faith is truly tested. We can carry the lessons of the Transfiguration with us, believing that with faith, everything is possible, and trusting in the power of prayer to overcome any challenge.” Let’s pray