A BETTER WORD

THE GOSPEL OF MARK

A Study Through the Life of King Jesus | with Pastor Nick Gatzke

How to Go From Suffering to Glory

Mark 9:2–13

THE BIG IDEA

Listening to the words of Jesus enables you to follow him through suffering all the way to glory.

SERMON SUMMARY

Adoniram Judson reached Burma in 1813 and labored six years before one person came to faith. He spent 19 months in prison, kept alive by a wife who begged and bribed her way to him with food and a pillow holding his Bible translation. His wife and all of their children died within his first fourteen years, and he grew despondent — had God really called him to this? When expectations don't match what is happening, despair sets in.

So Jesus took Peter, James, and John up Mount Hermon, and he was transfigured before them. The word is metamorphosis. His God-ness did not change; the appearance of his glory did. For a few moments the veil was pulled back — and it was not for Jesus, it was for them. Moses and Elijah, the law and the prophets, spoke of the departure he would accomplish in Jerusalem. Then the Father's cloud: "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him."

DIGGING DEEPER

1. Mark says Jesus "was transfigured" and his clothes became intensely white, beyond anything on earth. The word means radical transformation, yet Pastor Nick is careful to say that Jesus' God-ness did not change — only the appearance of his glory. Why does that distinction matter?

2. Ask who the transfiguration was for. It was not for Jesus. Given what he had just said in Mark 8:31 and 8:34, why was a glimpse of glory exactly the encouragement the disciples needed, and what does that show about how God tends to his people in despair?

3. Moses and Elijah both met God on a mountain (Exodus 33; 1 Kings 19) and together represent the law and the prophets. Luke 9:30–31 says they spoke of Jesus' departure. Why that topic, and how does Matthew 5:17 explain what the scene says about the Old Testament?

4. The Father gives an affirmation and a command: "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him." Then the cloud lifts and there is Jesus only. Read Matthew 11:28–30 and John 14:1. What

would it look like this week to listen to him rather than to your own commentary on your circumstances?

5. Judson set out to translate the Bible and plant a church of 100; he died leaving the Bible, 100 churches, and 8,000 Christians — after six years of work for the first convert. Suffering comes as persecution, as frustration, and as waiting. Which type of suffering are you experiencing right now?

LIVING IT OUT

A boy once slipped away from his mother at a Paderewski concert, sat down at the Steinway, and picked out "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" with one finger. The great pianist sat beside him, whispered "Don't quit, keep playing." God is gracious enough to come alongside exactly when we need him.

Heart Check: Where are you asking what the disciples asked — Is this worth it? Does God see my pain? Am I going to make it through this? Be honest about whether you are mainly waiting for the suffering to end, or asking God to make Christ enough for you inside of it.

This Week: Choose one saying of Jesus and read it every day this week — Matthew 11:28–30, John 10:10, John 13:34–35, or John 14:1. At the end of the week, write down one thing that listening to him has changed about how you respond to your difficulty.

REFLECTION & PRAYER

"And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, 'This is my beloved Son; listen to him.'"

— Mark 9:7

Thank God for giving encouragement at the moment it is needed. Ask him for resolve to suffer with grace, for ears that listen to Jesus above every other voice, and for hope in the glory that is coming.

Your Prayer: