

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

Date : 21 March 2021

Sermon Title : Out-of-this-World Sneak Preview

Speaker : Rev Eddie Ho

Text : Mark 9:2-13

INTRODUCTION

By Mark chapter 8, Jesus had done many out- of- this-world things. He taught the word with authority, showed authority over physical bodies by healing many and feedings thousands, exercised authority over spiritual forces by driving out demons or unclean spirits to set people free and over forces of nature by walking on water (Mark 6), calming the storm (Mark 4) and raising a dead girl (Mark 5). Those who witnessed how He led the lost out of darkness, restored the broken-hearted, lifted the last and provided for the least 2000 years ago felt Jesus can fix any brokenness in this world.

Then, while in Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asked His disciples “who” people said He was. They replied that some people said He was John the Baptist, others Elijah, and still others He was one of the prophets. When Jesus asked the disciples “who” they said He was, Peter answered that He is the Christ. Jesus did not deny that He was the Christ (Messiah/Saviour) but warned them not to tell anyone about Him. (Mark 8:27-30) Jesus then went on to tell them about what was to come; how He would suffer, be rejected, killed and rise again after 3 days. (Mark 8:31)

The disciples were confused by what Jesus said:

- Whoever wanted to follow Him had to deny themselves, take up their cross and follow Him. (Mark 8:34)
- He would die a wretched death on the shameful cross and they must follow too.
- Some of them would not taste death before they saw the Kingdom of God come with power. (Mark 9:1)

They were confused because Jesus first showed them He could defeat any power and principalities, giving them hope of a supernatural victory over their enemies, but went on to say that He would die on the cross and that the Kingdom of God would come with power, without giving any further explanation.

Jesus' Transfiguration (Mark 9:2)

Six days later, Jesus took Peter, John and James up a high mountain and was transfigured before them, giving them a visual explanation.

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7

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Transfiguration (*Gk: metemorphōthē*) or metamorphosis - e.g. process a caterpillar is changed dramatically from a dull cocoon into a butterfly with colourful wings.

- Jesus' transfiguration was spectacular; His clothes were dazzling white (Mark 9:3) and His face shone like the sun (Matthew 17:2, Luke 9:29) – Jesus was still human but not an ordinary one.
- Elijah and Moses from the past also appeared, glowing like Jesus, and were having a conference with Him on the summit. (Mark 9:4)

The Climax in the Gospel of Mark – from this high point:

- Jesus would set His face south to Jerusalem, heading for His lowest point in history - the cross.
- He gave the disciples a sneak preview of the future to encourage them as He knew they would soon be greatly discouraged and eventually persecuted.

A Sneak Preview into the Future

Jesus is the Christ

To the Jews like Peter, James and John, it is very significant that God chose Elijah and Moses to appear with Jesus as it verifies that Jesus is the Christ:

- Moses represented the law which God gave him on Mt. Sinai. The law spells out explicitly what God's righteousness means and Jesus fulfilled every letter and spirit of the law with His perfect righteous life.
- Elijah represented the prophets. To the Jews, Elijah was the epitome of the prophets, associated with the end times; the only prophet taken to heaven in a chariot and would come before the dreadful day of the Lord. (Malachi 4:5)

The Jews knew all of Moses' laws point to Christ. This explains why Philip said to Nathanael that they had found the one Moses wrote about in the law, and about whom the prophets also wrote--Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. (John 1:45). Every Jew knew the Christ will bring about the Kingdom of God on earth.

What Jesus, Moses and Elijah were talking about:

- They were talking about Jesus' imminent departure in Jerusalem; His death plan – not any insurrection plan to establish the Kingdom of God. (Luke 9:31).

God's idea of Kingdom differs from ours which is about physical conquest and control of worldly governments. God's idea of Kingdom is taking over the control or government of our heart. Jesus' battlefield is not physical but what is in our heart. Every good and evil intention or action comes from within us. Because we are made in the image of God, even the most evil man has strains of goodness. But because of the fall of man, even the most righteous man can harbor evil thoughts. The fight between God and the devil is in our heart, the battlefield between good and evil.

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So, to redeem the world, Jesus is going to fight the war in our hearts. God's plan is the cross where Jesus took all our sins, failures and iniquities upon Himself and nails them on the cross. Jesus would die on the cross on our behalf in exchange for our souls. On the cross, God gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him, trusts and have faith in Him will be transformed, found righteous, and not perish but have eternal life.

The cross is not the end of the story

- The transfiguration was a brief moment when God “drew back the curtains” to separate current reality from eternity so that the disciples could have a glimpse of eternity; the future after the cross. They saw a peek of Jesus as God who is from eternity, who could supernaturally heal, drive out demons and transform depraved man from the inside out.
- Peter wanted to put up three shelters or tabernacles—one for Jesus, one for Moses and one for Elijah. (Mark 9:5-6) His intentions could be so they would remain with supernatural powers to heal and restore man, but this was not God's plan. Jesus is not taking the easy way out, to convert by magic. He is going to win over our hearts and overcome evil inside us.
- God then interrupted Peter by telling them to listen to His Son who is in charge (Mark 9:7-8) and will direct the war and fight the battle. Jesus will give His life for their souls and they were to follow His instructions and obey His commands.

After this, they returned to their current reality and Jesus was the only one with them. They got ready to work, with Jesus heading towards the cross in Jerusalem. The disciples would soon face persecutions and many would lose their loved ones and even die. The transfiguration was a sneak preview of eternity to edify them; to show them that Jesus is indeed the Christ, the Son of God, and despite their trials, glorious things would come after that.

What the transfiguration mean to us

God as the author of the story knows what He is doing and how the story will end. At another mountain in Jerusalem, when Jesus hung on the cross, the curtain was torn from top to bottom. The transfiguration event was repeated and on the third day, Jesus was raised from the dead and gave us His Holy Spirit; the power of the Kingdom of God!

CONCLUSION

No matter what we are going through in our lives, let us take heart that God knows how our story will end. The battle line separating God and us is in our heart. Jesus has taken our sins and failures to the cross with His life. God wants to unleash the power of the transfiguration and resurrection on us and to redeem us for eternity. Let us surrender our heart to Him and proclaim Him as our king.

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As a group, spend some time to share your success and struggle in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do at the previous meeting.

A. Review Sermon Content

Purpose: Reflect on one key takeaway.

Appoint someone to read Mark 9:2-13 twice, slowly.

1. At the end of the reading, the reader will say, ‘This is the Word of the Lord.’

All to respond, “Thanks be to God.” Our response reminds us that this is the Word of the Lord. Just as God had spoken to His people in the past, He is still speaking to us even today, right now.”

- a. As God's word was read, which verse speaks to you the most?

- b.
 - (i) What is the key takeaway for you from the sermon “Out-of-this World Sneak Preview”?
 - (ii) How will you align the way you live to your key takeaway?

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B. Relate Sermon Content

Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.

- 2a. Why were the disciples confused when Jesus said that He would die on the cross and that the Kingdom of God would come with power?
- 2b. How does the “sneak preview into the future” at Jesus’ transfiguration impact:
 - (i) your conviction of who Jesus is?
 - (ii) your resolve to follow and obey Jesus in His salvation plan?
 - (iii) your faith in trusting Jesus with your future?
- 3a. God’s idea of Kingdom differs from ours which is about physical conquest and control of worldly governments. God’s idea of Kingdom is taking over the control or government of our heart. Is God’s Kingdom what you seek in your life?
- 3b. What is one thing you need to change so that you will seek God’s Kingdom following Jesus’ plan instead of your own?
- 3c. How can your group members encourage or help you achieve 3b in the following week(s) until your next meeting?

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C. Testimonies and Prayer

Purpose: Give glory to God and seek Him.

4. Share your testimony on how God won the battle in your heart to redeem you from a challenging situation.

OR

Give thanks to God for sending His Son to die on the cross on your behalf so that the “sneak preview of eternity” at the transfiguration can become your reality, because anyone who believes in Him, trusts and have faith in Him will be transformed, found righteous, and not perish but have eternal life.

5. With a prayer partner, bring all that have been shared in 3b and 3c to God asking for the power of His transfiguration and resurrection to help you make the changes that are pleasing to Him. Commit to encouraging one another to persevere in seeking God’s Kingdom for the week(s) to come even when faced with trials so glorious things would come after that.

As a group, pray for the Holy Spirit’s revelation on how your group can follow Jesus’ salvation plan in your One Mission 2021 outreach and resolve to follow only the Son of God who knows how the story will end.

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