

Marks of Discipleship

Daily Prayer ■ Weekly Worship ■ Bible Reading
Giving Time, Talents & Resources ■ Spiritual
Friendships ■ Service In & Beyond the Church

March 21, 2021

Day 1: Mark 9:1

And he said to them, 'Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see that the kingdom of God has come with power.'

Verse 1 is really the end of the section that proceeds it (Mark 8:34-9:1). By the time Mark wrote his gospel there has been a gap between the Resurrection and the promised coming again. Mark uses these words of Jesus, originally uttered to give hope to the Disciples, to give hope to the early Christians. We still live in an in-between time. We are between the Resurrection and the coming again. What we are to do in this in-between time is to proclaim the good news.

Question: Was Jesus referring to what was going to happen shortly or to some future event?

Challenge: Read Mark 8:27-37 to see why Jesus said what he did in 9:1.

Scripture: Acts 1:1-26

Day 2: Mark 9:2

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them,

It is the same three disciples that witnessed Jairus' daughter's healing (Mark 5:37) and would be in the Garden of Gethsemane to witness Jesus' agony (Mark 14:33). It is an interesting trio to pick. Peter has already been castigated for rejecting the necessity of suffering (8:33). James and John will show themselves preoccupied with greatness rather than service (10:35-37). All three fail to watch in the Garden. When I think of what these three had seen and how they failed yet still were chosen to be bearers of the Word of God, I am reminded of Paul's words in II Corinthians 4:7 - *'But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us.'*

Question: Why be specific about six days later? Does this have some meaning?

Challenge: What is the treasure we have in clay jars?

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 4:2-12

Day 3: Mark 9:3-4

and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus.

Moses and Elijah represent both the Law and the Prophets. Jesus came to fulfill both the Law and the Prophets. Moses gave the Law and thereby formed the people into a nation. Elijah called the people back to their roots, back to being dependent upon God for their life, and not their army. Moses led the nation to a place where they could work and live. Elijah reminds the nation that they must do justice among themselves and exhibit mercy to those who are in a weakened state. But Jesus is greater than both of these.

Question: What does the white color represent?

Challenge: No one knows so you can make a guess - What do you think they were talking about?

Scripture: Other white robe references - Rev. 3:5,18, 4:4, 6:11, 7:9, 19:14, Zech 3:3-5

Day 4: Mark 9:5-6

Then Peter said to Jesus, 'Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.' He did not know what to say, for they were terrified.

This event is an epiphany - a sudden appearance of the divine. Peter has been having trouble understanding who Jesus is and what His mission is really about. Lest we be too harsh on Peter let us examine our own understanding of who Jesus is and what He wants us to do.

Question: How did they know it was Moses and Elijah?

Challenge: Use just five words to describe Jesus.

Scripture: Luke 9:18-27

Day 5: Mark 9:7

Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!'

At Jesus' baptism the Spirit was launching Jesus on His public ministry. In the Transfiguration God is affirming that one greater than the Law and Prophets has come to bring life eternal. For Christians throughout history it has been a challenge to point people to Jesus and not our own success. This is especially true when the church has a big following. When we are powerful or popular in society we come under the greatest temptation to have people see the Jesus we want and not the Jesus who humbled Himself to death on a cross.

Question: What do you think and why - Does the Spirit mean listen to Him and not the Law and the Prophets, or listen to Him as well as the Law and Prophets?

Challenge: Think of a time when you felt that you heard the voice of God speaking to you - What happened?

Scripture: Mark 1:1-14

Day 6: Mark 9:8-10

Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them anymore, but only Jesus. As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead could mean.

This whole passage compels us to revise our understanding of how God's presence comes into the world. The message of the event on the mountain is now clear. We are to look to Jesus alone for salvation. Even though Jesus suffered and died, while both Moses and Elijah were spared the normal process of death, still Jesus is greater. The disciples are told to withhold telling about this vision because of the tendency to think of God's power in terms of glory, not suffering. Many today want to believe that Jesus was such an overwhelming personality that people were compelled to believe. Jesus is pointing the disciples to the real source of faith - the Resurrection - not miracles and heavenly visions. The sensational often diverts our attention from the cross and resurrection. Jesus had to suffer and die so that He could rise and bring us to new life.

Question: Telling about the Transfiguration could help people believe Jesus really rose from the dead. Why not tell what they had seen?

Challenge: Look at the definition of an epiphany in Day 4. Have you had such an experience and can you describe it?

Scripture: Luke 24:36-53