

Meet Jesus and encounter the glory of God

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[0 : 00] Amen. So, if you'd like to open your Bibles, if you've got a Bible, we're in Mark's Gospel, Mark chapter 9.

And I'll read from verse 2. Mark chapter 9, from verse 2, page 844. And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John and led them up a high mountain by themselves.

And he was transfigured before them. And his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah and Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.

And Peter said to Jesus, Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.

For he did not know what to say, for they were terrified. And the cloud overshadowed them. And a voice came out of the cloud, this is my beloved son, listen to him.

[1 : 09] And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them, but Jesus only. And as they were coming down the mountain, he charged them to tell no one what they had seen until the son of man had been risen from the dead.

So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead might mean. And they asked him, why did the scribes say that first Elijah must come?

And he said to them, Elijah does come first to restore all things. And how it is written of the son of man that he should suffer many things and be treated with contempt.

But I tell you that Elijah has come. And they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written of him. I wonder if in your mind's eye, you could imagine that you're tending some sheep in the first century.

Could you do that? Imagine you're a shepherd tending some sheep in the first century. And you've been climbing this hill. You're thirsty. You're ready for your lunch.

[2 : 18] And you're just sort of, you're settling down to sit down and have a drink and your lunch. And you look and suddenly you can see verse 8. And suddenly looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only.

And so you're curious. And you slowly walk in and you go into verse 8. And the text says, doesn't it, that the disciples saw Jesus only.

Just he and them. But of course we're there now as well. And then you notice something odd.

There's three disciples and they're all looking at the one person.

Their eyes are wide open. They look terrified. And you turn your head to look with them at this fourth person. And well, you're surprised because you expected your pulse to race.

You expected your stomach to churn. But to you, he just looks like an ordinary bloke. Sort of like a carpenter's son. And you're perplexed.

[3 : 28] So there's four people looking at one man. Three of them are terrified. But one, that's yourself. You're not. What's the difference? Why is there that different reaction?

And why is it today? People react differently to Jesus. Why are your work colleagues largely apathetic about Jesus? Why is the world in such a mess?

Why do I find it so difficult to talk to my sisters and my brother about Jesus? Well, the difference is, friends. The difference is that some people have engaged with him and others haven't.

Do you see the difference? They've engaged with the revelation of God. And other people haven't yet done that. And the passage before us is billed as an engagement with the revelation of God.

The trailer is in verse 1. Jesus had given this trailer six days previously. And he said to them, And truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they have seen the kingdom of God after it has come with power.

[4 : 40] And now's the time. We're in this environment of revelation. And we go with Peter, James and John. Jesus has drawn them to himself.

And he's drawing us into an encounter. Let's look at the language of verse 2. It's relational language. It's the language of intimacy. It's Jesus visiting his planet to draw us to a different place. Just look at the language, friends, in verse 2. Merge it with your life. Verse 2. And after six days, Jesus took them. Do you see? He's leading them. He's leading these three disciples. He took them with him. Peter, James and John. And he led them like a shepherd leads a sheep. He led them up a high mountain. By themselves, do you see?

Away from the crowd. And he was transfigured. Intimacy, isn't it? Before them. So here we are, friends. No longer looking at the disciples from the outside, but sharing this encounter with them.

[5 : 48] Do you see? You know, we're not looking at the effect that Jesus has had on their lives in verse 8, but we're actually sharing the encounter ourselves.

Mark's got us sort of looking over his shoulder as he writes his gospel. Are you with me? Peering into the scene before us. We've got two points.

The first point is rather long, and the second point, if you blink, you'll miss it. Our first point is seeing the kingdom of God. And I'd like us to notice three things.

Firstly, Jesus transcends realms. Jesus transcends realms. Here's a carpenter's son, and he's walking up the hill. He's been walking up this hill with his disciples, and I guess he was just as sweaty as his disciples.

He eats the same sort of food as his disciples do. He wears the same sort of clothes. I guess he cuts his toenails, and yes, he will go to the loo.

[6 : 53] And he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, said Isaiah 700 years previously. No beauty that we should desire him.

Yet it's like here, the disciples, they see him as he is. Sort of his status from zooming into view. Are you with me?

And what a privilege, friends, you know, for this bunch of fishermen to suddenly come to a place where they can see into the realm of the kingdom of God.

Jesus is bringing it in visually. It's not that it wasn't there before. Just the disciples couldn't see. They couldn't see it before. Yes, they saw Jesus controlling nature, giving life to the dead and all that sort of thing, but well, he just seemed a normal bloke, so it threw them.

And wouldn't it? From heaven you came, entered our world, your glory veiled. Now, though, they can see more. It's like they're seeing into where Jesus has come from.

[7 : 59] Just look there at verses 3 and 4. And his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah and Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.

And Mark's hoping that we've worked it out. Mark's hoping that we'll say, well, Jesus must be the root into the kingdom of God. He's the point on earth where the two kingdoms are merging together. Let's just, friends, remind ourselves of why Jesus came. The Bible tells us that outside intelligence created the whole of the cosmos.

The cosmos, the earth, which we're perched on just now. And he also created humankind. We're created, think about it, and therefore we're owned by God.

But we all reject him, don't we? We do things our way. Just look around at the world, and look within ourselves. Paul writes, And sometimes, friends, as human beings, our moral consciousness tells us that something is wrong.

[9 : 20] So humankind, we've always made up religions. Humankind have always done it. We try to cover this sort of deficiency we have, the broken relationship with our creator.

But religion says things like, you need to eat the right sort of food. You need this compass, because when you pray, you need to be pointing in the right direction. Or you need to be good, or else you'll come back as a rabbit.

Let's hum together, and I'll rattle a tambourine. And friends, perhaps your work colleagues, perhaps your family, they can't bring themselves to say what they're thinking.

They think it all sounds daft. You know, they just keep their heads down, and they get on with things. But in the midst of the Roman Empire, in history, we could have seen it all ourselves if we were there, someone visits.

He visits, listen, from another realm. Are you with me? And in him, the realm of the creator and of humanity, they're integrated together.

[10:25] You know, we don't need made-up religions anymore. Suddenly, coherently, the creator is before us.

And so Peter's pulse is racing. Peter doesn't yet know how to assimilate all of this in his thinking, but he knows that here on earth, he can encounter the kingdom of God.

Oh, what a mystery, meekness, and majesty. Jesus transcends realms. Secondly, in this point, Jesus transcends time.

You remember Elijah and Moses. Can you remember chatting there? You know, they'd sort of died hundreds of years, had separated them on earth when they died.

But here, think about this, they're united, aren't they? Chatting together. Think about this, it's the same Jesus chatting to them, who's been chatting with Peter, James, and John.

[11:24] And now here he is, he's chatting to major figures of the Old Testament. You know, he switches between the two, just like that. Moses and Elijah are in their heavenly realms, yet they're chatting with Jesus, as if they chat every day, as if they've always known each other.

So here they are, Peter, James, John, Elijah, Moses, Jesus. Seems Jesus is bringing them together, doesn't it? Think about it.

He's the integration point. Peter later wrote this, about these characters. Just listen to this, it's from 1 Peter. Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours, searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time, the spirit of who?

Christ, in them, was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ, and the subsequent glories. So friends, Jesus transcends time, which means, think about this, he, the one person, Jesus is behind everything.

One unfolding plan. You know, he's behind your life just now. Whatever's going on. It means that in chapter 8 of Mark's Gospel, Peter was wrong to rebuke Jesus about the cross.

[12:50] It wasn't failure. It isn't defeat. It's a transaction that Jesus is living for. And James, Peter, and John are amazed.

Verse 6, they're terrified. Well, wouldn't you be? The author of the Bible is the Jesus they know. So Jesus transcends realms, Jesus transcends time, and now Jesus transcends Adam.

Adam's sin. Well, it has separated us, humanity, from our creator. And we're all stamped, aren't we, in the mold of sin. That is, we reject our owner.

We do things our way, and reject his wisdom. You know, we can't have it both ways. We can't reject him, and expect him to accept us, into eternity.

In court these days, you know, the accused often want it both ways, don't they? Have you noticed that? You know, they wanted the crime, but now, well, in the dark, they seem to concoct, all sorts of, bizarre smoke screens, don't they?

[14:01] You know, hoping that their actions, won't have consequences. Are you with me? But friends, God's justice, won't allow us, to have it both ways, on judgment day.

And the made up, religions of the world, they all grind to a halt here. You know, a just God, can't sweep sin, under the carpet, as if it didn't happen.

He has to deal with it, and that's why Jesus, has come, that's why he's before us, here. So, so what? Well, naturally, we're excluded, from God's kingdom.

The Bible says, that we're naturally, in Adam, we're in his mould, but, all's changed here, here, here, here, is a human being, here is a human being, well, yes, he is like us, but gloriously, friends, he's at one, with God.

More than that, here is a human being, friends, who is what? He is God, verse 7, and the cloud, overshadowed them, and a voice came out, of the cloud, this is my beloved son, listen to him.

[15:11] So, here he is, friends, he's come to, to get us, realms are transcended, time is transcended, and now, that isolation, that Adam, brought about, it's transcended, boundaries are crossed, and God is with man, there's this communion, together.

And Peter writes, about that, in 2 Peter, he writes about his experience, just listen to this, for we did not follow, cleverly devised myths, when we made known to you, the power and coming, of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses, of his majesty, for when he received, honour and glory, from God the Father, and the voice was born to him, by the majestic glory, this is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased, we ourselves heard, this very voice, born from heaven, for we were

with him, on the holy mountain, you know, what Peter's saying, he's saying, what I'm telling you, is, it's got its basis, in reality, this really happened, so that was our, our first point, seeing, the kingdom of God, and now that quick second, point, hearing, the king, what were the instructions, verse 7, it's the only instructions, we've got in the passage, listen to him, said God, listen to him, and unlike, Adam, the citizens, of God's kingdom, have to listen, to their king, do you see, it's exactly, what Adam didn't do, it's what Peter, didn't do, earlier on, in chapter 8, and it's the one, imperative, of the passage, listen to him, you know, we can't really, go home today, without not knowing, what to do, from this passage, can we, it's quite easy, I hope you read your Bibles, friends at home, I hope you, listen to God, through his word, at Cornhill training course, we were, we were taught, that there's, never an imperative, in the Bible, without an indicative, God never tells us, what to do, without telling us, why, to do it, and here, the disciples, have just encountered, haven't they, why they should listen, to Jesus, and now, verse 8, it's like the curtains, are closing, Moses and Elijah, have gone, but Jesus, remains, and today, friends, think about it, what's the continuity, Jesus, is with us, isn't he, through his word, and through his spirit, we have him, with us, this lunchtime, God says to us, each one of us, listen, to him, but will Peter, listen to him, this time, you know, the cross, was sort of a spanner, in the works for him, wasn't it, in chapter 8, and Jesus, reintroduces, his death, and his resurrection, and just notice, the reaction now, as we, finish, verse 10, so they kept, the matter to themselves, questioning, what this rising, from the dead, might mean, think about this, before, Peter had rebuked, Jesus, hadn't he, but now, he's not rejecting, Jesus' words, it's really, that he knows, he doesn't fully understand, do you see the difference, in verses, 10 to 12, they're asking questions, about the sequence, of events, rather, than rejecting, the revelation, entirely, it's clarification, they want, don't we all long, for that, friends, in our lives, and so, here he is, clarification, incarnate, God has visited, planet earth, and he comes to us, through his word, God says, listen, to him, you know, we can spend, all of our lives, can't we, searching for purpose, searching for meaning, but then, like, Moses, Elijah, John, Peter, James, we encounter, Jesus, and suddenly, friends, it all fits together, doesn't it, listen to him, says God.