

Mark 9:2-13
September 2, 2018

In 1850, George Rowney and Co., published the fourth edition of 'Water Colour Painting' by R.P. Noble. The book is an handbook or 'how-to' learn to paint landscapes with water colors.

Noble says at the beginning,

"It is only by such careful study the painter is enabled to see nature when he goes to her. Many look, but few see. Sometimes it is vain to try to represent her; she may be said to be always beautiful, but it does not follow that an imitation should have either charm or interest as a picture."

He is saying you have to know where to look in nature in order to really see. Many look but few see.

The same is true for Jesus. Many look but few see. It is easy to look in the wrong place and miss him altogether. Mark invites us to look and see Jesus.

We have looked to Jesus and have seen a lot.
Remember?

- At his baptism we looked on as the sky split and a booming voice from heaven announced, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." And we saw Jesus our the Son of God.
- We looked on as he called his disciples to follow him and become, "Fishers of men." And we saw Christ the Savior.

- We looked on as great and raucous crowds pressed in to be healed. And we saw Christ the King.
- We looked on and heard as he taught about the kingdom of God through the parable of the sower, lamp and seed. And we saw Christ the Great Prophet.
- We looked on and watched as he stilled the storm on the lake and dispatched a storm of demons in a man. And we saw Christ the All-Powerful one.
- We looked on and we saw him call a little girl back from death to the land of the living. And we saw Christ the Giver of life.
- We looked on and watched as he fed multitudes of hungry stomachs from scraps. And we saw Christ the Creator of all things.
- We looked on and listened as—finally—Peter and the disciples recognized Jesus for who he was—the Christ! And we saw Christ the Savior of Sinners.

But in all our journeys with Jesus, today is the most important. Everything so far in this book has been coming to this point.

Today, we will look and see Christ the glorious one.

Many look but few see Jesus for who he is. Today, together we see Jesus the glorious one.

PROP: See Jesus for who he really is. And fix our eyes on him.

Let's and see together.

“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, ³ and his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them. ⁴ And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. ⁵ 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.” ⁶ For he did not know what to say, for they were terrified. ⁷ And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, “This is my beloved Son; listen to him.” ⁸ And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only.

⁹ 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 risen from the dead. ¹⁰ So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead might mean. ¹¹ And they asked him, “Why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?” ¹² And he said to them, “Elijah does come first to restore all things. And how is it written of the Son of Man that he should suffer many things and be treated with contempt? ¹³ But I tell you that Elijah has come, and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written of him.” Mark 9:2-13

PRAY

1. On the mountain with Jesus—(9:2—8)

Mark connects this event that we are about to witness to what has come just before.

Look at verse 2,

“And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John...”

What happened 6 days prior?

It was the eventful day that we witnessed a few weeks ago. In order to refresh our memories look up at 8:27,

“And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” [28] And they told him, “John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.” [29] And he asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Christ.” [30] And he strictly charged them to tell no one about him.

[31] And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again. [32] And he said this plainly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. [33] But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.” Mark 8:27–33

On the one hand the glorious confession but then things go decidedly downhill. Peter says—“No more talking about suffering and death. You are the Christ—set up your kingdom!”

But Peter's thought was anathema to Jesus so he rebuked Peter saying, "Get behind me, Satan!"

Mark says six days later because he wants us to remember that Peter's confession and Jesus' rebuke were just six days ago. Mark is essentially saying, "I'm about to show you another scene but you can't forget what just happened."

So, 6 days later we find both Peter and Jesus along with James and John going up a mountain. Not just a mountain but what?

A high mountain.

The reason I draw your attention to the mountain is because Mark wants us to see that he is painting with the same colors as in the book of Exodus. Mark is saying, "Remember the story in Exodus when Moses was on another high mountain?"

God met his greatest servant, Moses on the top of another high mountain—Mt. Sinai.

"Moses said, "Please show me your glory." [19] And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The LORD.' And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. [20] But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live." [21] And the LORD said, "Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock, [22] and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you

with my hand until I have passed by. [23] Then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen." Exodus 33:18–23

And he did, and Moses caught the faintest glimpse of back of the God but not his face.

And—not incidentally Moses sojourn on the mountain was for 6 days. Mark is nearly shouting—look and you will see something more spectacular than the great Exodus.

Moses could not see God's face but he caught the barest glimpse of the radiance of the holy and his face shone for days.

In the Bible, mountains are the place where God meets men. Men climb up and God comes down.

And here we trek up another high mountain. I wonder what is going to happen?

But look here,

Vs. 2,

"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, ³ and his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them."

Don't be tricked by Mark's spartan manner of communication—"And he was transfigured before them...."

Sounds like ho-hum this is a very normal experience. Jesus—in an instant—POW is arrayed in resplendent, blinding, inexplicable glory.

And it gets even more interesting, just like the most normal thing in the world we read verse 4,

⁴ And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.

Wow. Get this scene. Jesus and three of disciples hike all the way up a high mountain and all of a sudden Jesus changes before their very eyes. And he starts conversing with two long dead prophets.

Woah.

What is going on?

At his transfiguration, for an ever so brief time Jesus reveals all of his glory to the three disciples up on that high mountain. Jesus is showing Peter, James and John a full view of all his natural glory.

Jesus is talking to Moses and Elijah. Moses was the great law giver who led the people of Israel out of slavery to Egypt to freedom in the promised land. Elijah was the greatest of the prophets who led the people of Israel away from the worship of Baal idols.

What does this mean?

The testimony of the Law and Prophets find their fulfillment in Jesus Christ. The greatest leader and

prophet point to Jesus the King of Kings. Jesus is not an afterthought. He was not plan B. History has been marching from Eden to this point on this mountain where Jesus is seen to be God the son.

Glory radiated outward from Jesus—he was the source of glory. He was not merely a leader or a prophet who reflects the glory of God. No. He has the glory of God because he is God.

Think about Moses standing up there on that mountain. 15 centuries after he asked to see the glory of God—he sees the face of God in the glory of Christ. I can imagine Moses saying to Jesus—wow. This is much better than last time. I can see your face.

The remarkable thing about this scene is that the disciples are still alive watching and listening to Jesus talking to Moses and Elijah.

Mark doesn't tell us how long the three of them talked or what they talked about. Mark otherwise doesn't report anything about the conversation, instead he reports one of the most stupid and dunderheaded comments of all time.

⁵ 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.” ⁶ For he did not know what to say, for they were terrified.

No duh. That is in the Dunderhead comment Hall of Fame.

Now, you might be thinking that Peter is stupid and a nervous talker. Anyone here a nervous talker? Be honest. Peter probably was too. But there is more going on here too—

When he says—let's build three tents (tabernacles) he is assuming they are going to stick around and need a place to hang out. He is assuming that Jesus is going to stay transfigured and Moses and Elijah will kick it with him up on the high mountain. Shining forth to all who come.

And he wants to give them a place to be.

Why?

Peter thinks—here we go—this is what I was talking about. The end of all things is at hand. Let's set up tabernacles so we can visit and maybe bring others back and see as well.

Each of you needs a place to be—we'll build some shelters for you.

Again, Peter is convinced Jesus should not suffer and if he stayed this shiny and the world got to see him this way—he won't. Imagine, people will come and bow and he will be able to rule from this mountain with Moses at his left and Elijah at his right hand. Let's make three tabernacles here to worship—

But he misunderstands,

⁷ And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him."

The same cloud that enveloped Mt. Sinai came upon this mountain. The same voice that spoke to Moses and said,

"The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, [7] keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin..."
Exodus 34:6-7

That voice said from the same cloud said to Peter, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him." God speaks from the cloud and the disciples do not die.

Peter wants his own program for what Jesus should do in the world and the voice from heaven shouts—LISTEN to HIM!!

Don't just look—see.

The law and the prophets spoke of one who would come and make all things right. He is here. Listen to him.

⁸ And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only.

The disciples clearly did not know what happened or what to make of it, but they did know this. Jesus stayed with them.

Though Jesus is the glorious one who clothes himself with light—he freely chooses to associate with his disciples. He does not abandon them for glory. Jesus does not depart.

Peter and the disciples didn't understand what all of this was about—but they understood one thing—Jesus stayed with them.

“The one who calls disciples to follow him does not abandon them for glory, but turns from glory to accompany them on the way to Jerusalem to the cross.” James Edwards

Departing to glory would mean no suffering. No rejection. No beating. No mocking. No cross. No death.

But Jesus stayed.

Verse 8 is Mark's way of saying—focus all of your attention on Jesus. Make your vision single and your focus clear—so that you see Jesus only.

If you don't look and see Jesus you won't understand who he is NOR will you understand who you are. Jesus is the one to focus on.

Jesus is greater than Moses the great law-giver. Jesus fulfills and upholds the law perfectly on our behalf. Jesus only.

Jesus is greater than Elijah the great prophet. Prophets speak on behalf of God. Jesus does not merely speak on behalf of God—he speaks as God. Jesus only.

And this Jesus—the glorious one—freely chooses to be with these disciples. Jesus veiled his natural glory and put on flesh. Peter, James and John did not understand all that they just saw—but they understand that Jesus is still with them.

And with Jesus they head down the mountain.

2. On the way down the mountain with Jesus (9:9-13)

Jesus changes back to what he normally looked like—and it was time to go.

⁹ 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 risen from the dead. ¹⁰ So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead might mean.

They looked and saw Jesus shining like the sun but they didn't understand what he had come to do.

They seize the matter of the resurrection and talk about what he meant amongst themselves. They bandy this idea about and bat it back and forth trying to find out what he meant.

Rise from the dead?

They still didn't understand what he was talking about. Jesus had told them that he was going to die and rise again but they still didn't understand. The penny had not yet dropped.

Spoiler alert—they never understand in this book. That is later. See Acts.

Last time when the topic of his suffering and death came up Peter pulled Jesus aside and gave him what for—and Jesus gave it back in spades.

Peter gets a little more diplomatic. He hints around.

Kids are expert level hinters. They don't want to come out and ask—for something. So they will have a conversation like this—

Dad, it sure is hot today.
Something cold sure would be nice. Because its hot.
Good thing we live right down the street from
Bahama Bucks.
Bahama Bucks is my favorite.

Clearly the kids want me to say—oh that is your favorite? Your piercing logic is so compelling—get in the car kids! Let's go!

Peter does something similar. He says—Elijah is my favorite. I just saw him.

Peter is still hinting around that Jesus need not die.

At least he shows a whole more tact. But he is still off-base.

Vs. 11,

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

What is going on here?

Peter is asking about a prophecy from Malachi 3 that predicts Elijah would come before the Christ and make the way ready.

Peter reasons, I just saw Elijah, just a second ago shiny and resplendent—let’s go. Set up your kingdom and let’s get on with it. If people saw you like that—you would rule all things.

You would not have to suffer if everyone saw shiny you and shiny Elijah and shiny Moses! Boom. You don’t need to suffer—lets get on with you ruling.

But Jesus answers in verse 12,

¹² And he said to them, “Elijah does come first to restore all things. And how is it written of the Son of Man that he should suffer many things and be treated with contempt? ¹³ But I tell you that Elijah has come, and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written of him.”

Jesus answers—good try Peter. Wrong again. Elijah has already come and they killed him. The promised forerunner who would have the spirit of Elijah was John the Baptist.

Just as they killed John they are going to kill me too.

I will suffer and the John the Baptist, the one carrying the spirit of Elijah has already suffered. He is dead. I will die too.

You see, Jesus was transformed before their eyes both for their benefit and his. They need to see him for who he really was and understand that though he will die upon a cross—he is the glorious one.

Jesus received a foretaste of the glory that would be his again after his suffering, death and resurrection.

From this point on, Jesus points himself to Calvary which brings suffering, death and then resurrection. And that brings us to a conclusion—to something we can hold onto and see.

The glory of Jesus is seen in his suffering, death and resurrection.

- We've seen Jesus on the mountain arrayed with glory.
- We will see him down in the valley of death engulfed by total darkness.
- We've seen Jesus arrayed with blinding light.
- We will see him stripped naked in total darkness.
- We have heard the voice of God, "This is my beloved Son, listen to him!"
- We will see Jesus cry out, "My God, my God why have you forsaken me?" And hear total silence.

He will suffer and die, but rise again to glory.

The road to glory ALWAYS involves suffering.

We get this glimpse of the glorious Jesus and we can take at least a few things away from it.

What can we take away from this?

1. The pattern of the Christian life is first suffering then glory.

Peter didn't want Jesus to suffer because he knew that meant he would have to suffer too because he followed Jesus.

None of us want to suffer. All of us need to realize that following Jesus will mean that we will suffer like our savior did.

“If our king was tested, tempted, opposed, rejected, and eventually crucified by this world, should it take us by surprise that belonging to this kingdom involves us in a heroic struggle?” Sinclair Ferguson

This life is hard, harder than we like to think. Hard enough that you will have moments, you will have hours, you will have days where you think, “I don't think I can make it.”

For days like that—look at this picture.

Glorious Jesus. Bright and shining. Guess what, not only is that what he looks like now—it is a glimpse of our own future too.

John, one of the three disciples with Jesus that day on the mountain writes,

“Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.” 1 John 3:2

First comes suffering then unspeakable glory.

2. Christians will not always understand where Jesus is leading.

Peter, James and John had no idea what was going on—what was Jesus doing.

They were confused.
They were bewildered.
They were puzzled.
They were dazed.

But they followed Jesus.

Christians there will be many days were we will be—

Confused
Bewildered
Puzzled
Dazed

Confused by how much you are discouraged at life's losses.

Bewildered by how often people who call themselves Christians hurt you.

Puzzled at how hard it is just to get out of bed sometimes.

Dazed as you seem to be dashed again and again against the rocks of hardship.

But we follow Jesus.

Those disciples didn't understand much, but they kept following Jesus.

You won't always understand where he is leading but keep following him.

3. In all things look and see Jesus

Fix your sight on Christ.

Look here at the pages of scripture and see the glory of Jesus Christ and build your life around him.

The Bible's first author—Moses (Genesis) and the Bible's last author—John (Revelation) both stand looking and seeing Jesus.

We should too.

We are tempted to look in a great many different ways, but may we look and see Jesus.

- Look not to that same old sin that seemingly always trips you up—Look and see Jesus who always forgives.
- Look not to your fears that speak with such dark certainty—Look and see Jesus who speaks a better word.
- Look not to your discouragements that pile in a heap—look and see Jesus shines forth, unchanging.
- Look not to your flaws that push you to despair—look and see Jesus who only has love for you.
- Look not at all the regrets from your past—look and see Jesus who has removed all your sins from you as far as the east is from the west.
- Look not at the future with all its looming uncertainty—look and see Jesus who stands like a rock to build our lives on.
- Look not to the specter of death—look and see Jesus who has defeated death and us life abundantly.

Look and see Jesus.

PRAY

“Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, [25] to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory,

majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen." Jude 24–25