

Jason Upchurch - Mark 9:1-13 - The Good News of Jesus's Glory - Part 1

Let me ask you a question that is really central to the gospel. Here's the question: What do you really want get by following Jesus? What's in it for you? Or put another, if someone asked you "What is the best benefit of following Jesus?" What would you say?

This is important because when things are difficult in life it's often the goal that keeps us going.

Phil 3:13-14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

So what's the goal of the Christian? What's the prize? There are many good things about following Jesus.

Last week we saw that what's in it for us is not going to hell. We escape the wrath of God by denying ourselves, taking up our cross and following Jesus. That's a good thing, Jesus himself says that's a good trade.

But is that the greatest part of following Jesus? What's the good thing at the end of the tunnel you're excited about? Is it enjoying the streets of gold? Is it seeing the saints in glory? Is it the overwhelming worship of God?

All of those are good things. All of those are going to be incredible. But I want to submit that the thing we are looking forward to as believers is seeing the triune God in all of his amazing glory.

The brightness and blazing power of God is what we look forward to. Seeing our glorious God face to face. That's what these 3 disciples saw on the Mount of Transfiguration and it was a little glimpse of the glory they would see in heaven. And what we read here is just a little taste of what we'll see in glory as well.

And there's some other applications here as well. But the biggest thing I think we take away here is that the full glory of Jesus is the thing we should look forward to the most in heaven.

And I want to show you that with a longer introduction this morning. I want to show you that God has crafted us as believers to one day be able to behold his glory for all eternity. **Turn to Gen. 2:5-7**

This is really going to be a theology of glory this morning. A biblical survey of our hope. And I want to start in the Garden because this is where it all started, and unfortunately where it all ended.

I want you to think about what Adam and Eve lost in the Garden when they sinned. Prior to the fall God would come and talk to Adam in the Garden. God's form in the Garden is not described except that he walked and talked and seems to have had some kind of form, much like the Angel of the Lord later on.

Even in creating Adam and creating Eve out of Adam's flesh it seems as though God was there physically in the garden operating on Adam - taking out a rib, closing up the flesh, and fashioning Eve with that rib. Take a look. **Read 2:5-7**

The description here is very intimate, very personal. God fashioned Adam. Just like you and I would make a clay sculpture, God intricately and hands-on made Adam. In fact this word is used of potters making clay pottery in Isaiah and Jeremiah. Very intentional very hands on. It's not just speaking it out of nothing like he did in creation. This is taking what he had already made - dirt - and fashioning that dirt into a man.

And then he breathed into him. Again, very personal and close and hands on. When you're trying to get a fire started and it needs a little oxygen you breath into the fire. That's what God is doing to Adam. Breathing the breath of life into him. So God intimately creates Adam.

And he does the same thing with Eve. Notice the very personal, hands-on, presence of God. **Read 2:18-25**

It's as though God is right there performing the surgery. He's the anesthesiologist, he's the surgeon, he's the healer, and he again intimately creates Eve in almost the exact way he creates Adam, except he uses Adam's

rib. All the descriptions of God are that he's right there present in the Garden. He's not far away, he's not distant. He's very close, personally present.

Even after Adam and Eve sinned it says that the Lord God was walking in the Garden in the cool of the day when they hid themselves. **Read 3:8-13, 22-24**

The immediate punishment we think of with Adam and Eve is that they were expelled from the Garden of Eden - the place of beauty and provision. But the real punishment was actually that they could no longer be face to face with God. God personally drove Adam and Eve from the Garden. **Read 24**

It's as though when they were expelled from the Garden, they were expelled from the earthly residence of God. And actually the Bible often presents the home of God on earth as a Garden. Even the Temple that Solomon made - God's new home - had carvings that would remind people of a Garden.

And what I want to point out here is that what Adam and Eve had was intimate, face-to-face fellowship with their creator. What did God look like? We don't know. Was there bright glory? We don't know. Maybe. It was likely the pre-incarnate Son of God because no one has ever seen the Father or Spirit. So this was Jesus before he was Jesus. It was the second person of the Trinity, in some bodily form meeting face to face with Adam.

When they sinned, that all changed. From that moment on, humanity lost intimate, face to face fellowship with God.

And you go through the Bible and what you have is God showing men how they can come near to him, but they can never come all the way.

The Law was designed to restore, to some extent, fellowship between God and man. Not even face to face, but bring people closer to God not just spiritually, but also physically.

But it was always limited, wasn't it? Who can actually see God in the OT system? Only the high priest and only once a year. The OT system is all about controlling who can get close to God.

The Gentiles are outside the Promised Land - they're very far from God. The average Israelite is inside the Promised Land - closer to God and could even walk around Jerusalem which is where God dwelled on earth. Men, who were ceremonially clean, could come into the Temple courtyard to offer sacrifices. Only priests could go into the Holy Place to offer incense. And only the High Priest could go into the Holy of Holies where the glory of God dwelled and only that once a year.

For the Jews, this was as close as they could get to God. There was always separation, always distance. That's what we lost in the Garden: face to face fellowship with God.

And throughout OT history only a few people had the privilege to see God. Moses saw God. **Look at Exo. 33:7-11. Read**

This is just amazing. Imagine just sitting with God in a tent. Just hanging out with a friend talking about whatever. You guys, there's literally nothing better than that. That's peak life. That's the best it gets.

Look at 34:29-35. This is where Moses is up on Mt. Sinai receiving the Law. And he sees God face to face. This was unparalleled. **Read**

Moses was given an amazing gift in being able to talk with the Lord face to face. The surreal aspect of his face glowing might seem humorous to us, and there's a sense where it maybe is. But what that is is the glow of intimate, friendly, joyful fellowship with God. And Moses experienced it a lot.

Only a few other people in the history of the world have seen the glory of God this side of heaven. Isaiah had a vision. Ezekiel had a vision. Daniel had a vision. Several people saw the Angel of the Lord. The Angel of the

Lord is the pre-incarnate Son of God but it doesn't seem as though there's any manifest glory. Even walking around the earth most people didn't understand that Jesus was God because there was no what? Glory.

There were miracles and teaching and fulfilled prophecy. But his glory was hidden.

At Christmas we sing "Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, hail the incarnate deity" - that's Hark, the Herald Angels Sing. While Jesus was on the earth his glory was veiled by his human flesh. Except for these few short moments recorded in the gospels where the glory of Jesus bursts forth in power and awe.

It's this glory that should drive our lives. We long to see the bright, blazing, beautiful, awesome glory of Jesus. This is one of the primary hopes of the Christian life: that we will see God face to face.

Look at Matt 5:8. These are the beatitudes. A beatitude is a super-blessing. So super-blessed are the poor in spirit. Super blessed are those who mourn. **Read 2-8**

This is the super blessing of believers. Those who are pure in heart. We shall see God. God in all his glory.

Look at Rev. 22:1-5 This is a picture of the New Earth. When God comes and recreates the heavens and the Earth we will live on the new Earth forever and ever. It's described as the new Garden of Eden, the home of God and his people forever. Just as we have glorified bodies - these very bodies we look at every morning will be glorified. So too the earth will be the same basic earth but glorified. And it's described as a new Garden of Eden. The descriptions are all the same except a billion times better. **Read 1-5**

The last little glimpse we get is the New Garden of Eden, in the city of God and what we will be part of seeing God in all his glory forever and ever. Glory so bright that there's no need for any artificial light. No lamps or LED light bulbs. Not even the sun.

We will see God face to face **Vs. 4** says. God in all his glory.

David prays in **Psalms 27:4** One thing have I asked of the Lord, that I will seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his Temple.

David couldn't go into the Temple, he was from Judah. Only Levites of the house of Aaron could go into the Temple. But that's what David wanted. Just to gaze at the beauty of the Lord.

Have you ever seen something so amazing it just captures your whole attention?

Maybe it's a groom looking at his bride on their wedding day. Maybe it's a going to a National park and seeing some fantastic sight - mountains and lakes or oceans. Maybe it's an incredible fireworks show that is mesmerizing. And it's just amazing to behold.

That's what David wanted with God. He wanted to gaze on the beauty of the glory of God. This is truly the hope of the people of God.

Back in **Mark 9**, for a few short moments, three of the disciples got to do that very thing.

I want to make just 3 devotional points this morning, then we'll unpack this next time we're in Mark.

1) The Mount fully unveils the deity of Jesus. **Read 2-4**

What everyone suspected from Jesus's teaching and miracles and even what he said about himself is proven right here.

He is the fully divine Son of God in glory. John actually has the privilege to see Jesus in glory twice. Once here and once again in **Revelation 1:9-20.** Turn there for a moment.

This is now a vision of Jesus in glory. A vision in the Bible is more than a simple dream, but less than physical reality. It's seeing spiritual things through a glass darkly. And what we see here is Jesus now in heaven in full blazing glory. **Read 9-20**

The sash, showing his royal power, bronze feet of judgement, voice of like a massive waterfall - filled with power. Pure, holy, white hair. Face like the glory of the sun at noon - divine glory. And a sword coming out of his mouth for judgement and truth.

Jesus is fully God on the throne. And what follows in Revelation is his judgment, not on the nations, but on who? The churches. Do the churches believe in the glory and power of Jesus? They better, because he is their divine Lord.

2) It is good to see the glory of Jesus. **Read 5-8**

Again, this is very devotional, but it is good to see the glory of Jesus. It is a privilege and honor to behold God and live.

The Bible says no one shall see God and live. Why? Because in our sinful human flesh we're not able to behold God. It'd be like trying to stare at a welder. Our eyes can't contain that power. If you stare at a welder you'll go blind in seconds.

If we were to behold God in all his glory we'd be vaporized. But to see God and live is a privilege and honor. God is revealing himself in a special intimate way for our good. For our joy and satisfaction.

He does it here in a limited way so the disciples don't die. He'll do it for all eternity for us in resurrected powerful bodies. That's good, y'all!

The gospel doesn't just keep us out of hell, it's the only way anyone gets to see the unveiled glory of God in the face of Jesus. That's a good thing. That's the best thing!

3) The glory of Jesus and his resurrection give us hope. **Read 9-10**

Why not discuss until after the resurrection? Because the resurrection would confirm what they saw: the divine Jesus.

For the disciples the resurrection would explain the glory. "Oh, that's what was going on! Jesus was showing us his divine glory."

For us belief in the resurrection is the way we will see the glory. The only way we will see Jesus in beautiful, lovely glory is to believe in the resurrection.

To hold fast that this Jesus is our only hope. Crucified, risen and reigning in glory.

Pray