

Mystery on Mount Hermon

Mark 9: 2 – 8

June 27, 2010

I. Introduction

1. Have you ever stood near a window or been outdoors when lightning flashed nearby
 - a. What was your reaction to the bright flash or the boom of the thunder
 2. That may be something similar to the reaction of the disciples
 - a. When they saw Jesus transfigured on the top of Mount Hermon
- A. Someone has said that our souls are “enclosed in the realm of our senses”
1. So that when we see glimpse of the splendor of the spiritual realm
 - a. Our mind is overwhelmed, and we tend to draw back in fear and trembling
 - b. Taking refuge in the world of sensory and human things
- A. There is a mystery that is beyond our human understanding
1. Revealed in ever so tiny a glimpse, in this scripture passage
 - a. That we have for our consideration this morning
 2. Jesus, fully divine, Word of God made flesh among us
 - a. Who took on the nature and appearance of a human man
 3. Is transfigured, or in other words, his appearance is changed/transformed
 - a. So that the beauty of his divine nature is displayed before his disciples
 - (1) For a brief time
 - b. Dressed in clothing that can only be described as brighter and whiter
 - (1) Than anything known in the physical world
 4. And the laws of nature, as we know them, are also suspended for a time
 - a. So that Moses and Elijah, men who have been dead for centuries
 - (1) Also appear to Peter, James and John on the mountain
 - b. It is no wonder that those disciples were terrified
 - (1) And didn't know what to say
 - c. The wonder is that Peter could even find his voice to say anything
 - (1) And I wonder if they didn't all have to laugh a little about what he said
 - (a) Later on, when they talked about it to the other disciples of Jesus
 - i. After his death and resurrection
- A. There could be many reasons for why this event happened -
1. In the accounts in both Mark and John, it takes place shortly before

- a. Jesus begins the journey to Jerusalem, where he would be arrested
 - (1) Tortured and put to death on a cross
 - 2. In his human flesh, I believe Jesus may have needed the encouragement
 - a. Of talking with those men of faith who had lived this life
 - (1) Died and been received into eternal glory
 - 3. And surely it must have been a tremendous encouragement for Jesus
 - a. To hear those same words that were spoken at his baptism –
 - (1) This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Listen to him
- A. But, as a result of this transfiguration being witnessed
 - 1. And recorded by these disciples of Jesus
 - a. We also benefit from seeing just a tiny bit
 - (1) Of the glory that awaits us when we leave this world behind
 - b. And these physical bodies that we live in now are transformed
 - (1) Into the glorious bodies of our resurrected life with Jesus
- A. That, in itself, should serve as an encouragement to us
 - 1. Especially when we are facing the struggles of this physical life
 - a. Disease, disfigurement, the limitations of aging bodies
 - 2. This is not the end for those who believe in Jesus
 - a. There is more to come, and it will be beautiful in a way
 - (1) That we cannot possibly imagine now
- A. There is a hope for the future in that understanding
 - 1. But I believe that this glimpse of eternity
 - a. Can give us encouragement for life here and now, too
 - 2. Because, while our physical bodies must wait to be transformed
 - a. Our spiritual beings are already undergoing transformation
- A. That is essentially what we saw symbolized this morning
 - 1. In the ceremony of baptism for Olivia
 - a. An outward sign of washing and cleansing
 - 2. That we believe God is performing, through the power of the Holy Spirit
 - a. In Olivia's life, and in the lives of each one of us
 - (1) Who have placed our hope and trust in the saving blood of Jesus Christ
- A. We are born into this world, as were Adam and Eve, in the image of God
 - 1. We share in God's divine nature with all its beauty and goodness

- a. But we are also born with a human nature
 - (1) That natural human tendency to rebel against authority
 - (a) The instinct that drives us to put ourselves first
 - (2) To place ourselves on the throne of our lives, and demand our own way
 - (a) Even when it goes against God's desire and plan for our lives
- A. If that nature is not changed, not made subject to God's authority
 - 1. We will go though life involved in a constant struggle
 - a. Between our human nature and the call of God in our heart
 - (1) The Apostle Paul wrote about that in the famous words –
 - (a) What I want to do, I don't do
 - i. And what I don't want to do, I do anyway
 - (2) But, remember the words that follow - ... thanks be to God!
 - (a) Who gives us the victory!
 - 2. We will never totally escape the struggle against temptation and sin
 - a. Not while we are living in these earthly bodies
 - 3. But we can live a victorious Christian life
 - a. When we allow God's Spirit to dwell in us and change us
 - (1) Transform our hearts and minds into God's likeness
 - (a) Commit ourselves to be followers of Jesus in everything we say and do
- A. In a sense, I believe that our lives can be transfigured, too
 - 1. So that the beauty of God's goodness and light shines out in us
 - a. Even while we are living here in this physical world
 - (1) Where the light so often is blurred and distorted
 - (a) By our human reasoning and limitations
- A. In a little while, we will celebrate communion together
 - 1. Partaking of bread and juice that represent to us the body and blood of Jesus
 - a. Reminding us that Jesus' blood is not only sufficient to cover our sins
 - (1) But the love that took Jesus to the cross is the power
 - (a) That makes it possible for us to live for him here and now
 - (2) And reminding us of our constant need to be nurtured and fed
 - (a) By the nourishment of his love and grace
- A. This morning, as we share in the communion emblems
 - 1. I suggest that we are mindful of the change God is working within us

- a. Perhaps that change will not be as obvious as the transfiguration
 - (1) That the disciples observed in Jesus up on the mountain
- b. Perhaps it won't come with the fierceness or intensity of a lightning flash
 - (1) But it is happening, as we submit to God's power and control of our lives
- A. There is a mystery in that transformation
 - 1. That we may not fully understand in this life
 - a. But faith gives us the ability to accept as truth
 - (1) Even what we may not be able to fully understand
- A. And that is a good thing
 - 1. Who would want to serve a God that is not, in some ways
 - a. Beyond our human understanding