

On The Mountain With Jesus?

Sermon - Sunday, February 14, 2021

Life is filled with mountains and valleys. A mountain experience is something excellent that happens in our lives, something great, and something worth remembering.

Can you recall any moments when you would say that, in a spiritual way, you were on the mountains? Your heart was filled with love and joy, and you confessed that “God is good,” and there was no doubt in your mind that God loves you.

Unfortunately we are not spending our whole lives on the mountains. There are the valleys, too.

We often recall those very difficult moments of our lives when we thought that we were in the valley of the shadow of death - medical diagnosis, death of a loved one, lack of success. During those moments, for all of us, it was more difficult to be a joyful believer. When we were in the valley, when our faith was shaken, it was hard to say, “God is good.”

Top of the mountain or low in the valley – where are you right now? Are you on top of a mountain? Or are you in a valley? Maybe you’re somewhere in between?

The disciples of Jesus Christ saw that things with Jesus seemed to be going so well. He had performed miracles and healed the sick. He was walking on the water. He was feeding the 5000 hungry people. He had been surrounded by crowds of people, listening to his teaching. It was easy to be a disciple of Jesus at that time. There was no doubt that this was the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. The disciples were experiencing one high-point after another with Jesus.

But, after witnessing these miracles, the Lord Jesus pointed out his valleys. Jesus began to tell his disciples about his impending death, and that he must suffer many things and be rejected by people. He told them that, after three days, he would rise again. His disciples didn't want to hear about that and Peter, especially, spoke up, objecting to his suffering and dying. After these difficult teachings, the disciples may have felt confused and depressed by all that Jesus was trying to tell them. They did not have any imagination about resurrection and life after death because they were thinking in human terms and were not able to see things and to understand Jesus in the light of eternity.

For this reason, Jesus took Peter, James, and John up to the mountain, Hermon, to pray. While they prayed, something strange happened. Jesus started to change right before their eyes. They knew that it was really Jesus. His previously dusty robe became dazzling white.

Luke's account says that his clothes "became as bright as a flash of lightning." (Luke 9:29).

Matthew describes the transformation as "his face shone like the sun and his clothes became as white as the light." (Matthew 17:2). His face shone with the glory. It is hard for us to imagine such an experience as this. Scripture says it was a good but a frightening experience for them.

Let us look at the purpose of this experience for the three disciples and the purpose of it for us today.

Why would there have been such an experience in the first place for these three? Why not the others, too? What does it say to us today?

1. They were the most **READY** to understand and to accept this great truth with open and humble hearts.
2. They were strong leaders.
3. They were ready to share with power what they had experienced.

Jesus wanted to show the disciples this divine side of him. The transfiguration and his new appearance showed them that he was not just a human being. The change took place GRADUALLY before their very eyes and it started from the INSIDE outward.

The theologian Matthew Henry comments that “the light shone not UPON him but from WITHIN him. He was irradiated with celestial glory and it was HIMSELF glorified and not just his CLOTHES.”

Jesus said, ‘I AM the light of the world’ (John 8:12).

What they saw on that night could help them to understand what happened after the resurrection.

When the Lord Jesus changed GRADUALLY, they knew it was Jesus.

I John 1:1-2 gives us another reason for this experience. “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard and seen with OUR EYES which we have looked at and our hands have touched - this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared and we have seen it and testify to it and we proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the father and has appeared to us.”

It was Peter, James, and John who were eyewitnesses to bear record of Jesus to the world. This is why they could say, “I saw it with my own eyes. I saw the one who came from heaven. I know wherein I speak.”

John was the one who survived them all and told of SEEING HIS GLORY. In John 1:14, he said, “And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld HIS GLORY and the glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth.”

And so did Peter (II Peter 1:16-18). “For we have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus, BUT WERE EYEWITNESSES.”

This experience on the mountain changed the disciples' faith and their whole lives.

I think we all had some kind of faith EXPERIENCE that has CHANGED our lives, and for that we can say, "YES, THIS HAS HAPPENED TO ME. I know that God was there for me. I know that I was not alone, but my Saviour Jesus Christ was there for me, and with me. I know that my life was saved because God kept his hands around me, and this is why I am here today". In those moments, we all have experienced a change from the INSIDE OUT. And, for this, today we can say that we are new creations because of the work that Christ have done in our lives. Since then, we are different.

I am sure you could share those moments with others. You could tell who God was for you. You can tell that God is God and you have experienced the transformation of being surrounded by him. What we are EXPERIENCING in our lives will change us from the inside out, and this is the work of the Lord and not of ourselves.

The disciples needed to climb a mountain to see this. Today, God's Word is our mountain to climb.

Every time you come closer to the Lord, and you listen the Word of God, you are climbing the mountain. On the mountain, you see Christ, who has taken your sins away on the cross and who has risen from the dead, and who declares that YOU ARE GOD'S DEAR CHILD. Let us catch now a glimpse of his glory. YOU ARE GOD'S CHILD. This is our mountain top. It is good for us to be here, because this is where we are strengthened for the days ahead, for all the peaks and valleys that are around the corner for us. Amen