



**WESTLAKE HILLS**  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## ***“Revealed and Sent”***

***Sermon Series: “The Way of Jesus”***

*Mark 9:2-13*

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### ***Mark 9:2-13 The Transfiguration***

***(New International Version)***

<sup>2</sup>After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. <sup>3</sup>His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. <sup>4</sup>And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus.

<sup>5</sup>Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." <sup>6</sup>(He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.)

<sup>7</sup>Then a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and a voice came from the cloud: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!"

<sup>8</sup>Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus.

<sup>9</sup>As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. <sup>10</sup>They kept the matter to themselves, discussing what "rising from the dead" meant.

<sup>11</sup>And they asked him, "Why do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?"

<sup>12</sup>Jesus replied, "To be sure, Elijah does come first, and restores all things. Why then is it written that the Son of Man must suffer much and be rejected? <sup>13</sup>But I tell you, Elijah has come, and they have done to him everything they wished, just as it is written about him."

This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

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What a beautiful and powerful text. This is the scripture in our study of Mark, and at first I had no clue how to see this passage and Mission Sunday as a congruent message. But, after meditating on this passage, God began to reveal some powerful, deep truths as a appropriate message for this day.

I'm not sure what comes to mind when you think of "Missions Sunday" but I want to say this so some of you can relax; This morning, I am not going to try to convince you to do more, I'm not going to guilt you into serving the poor. I don't care to use fear or emotion in trying to persuade you that you need to serve the poor or outcast or move to some country far away.

What I would like to do is somewhat simple, I am to look at the passage for what it is and **see how this passage might shed light on two things: Who God is. And who WE ARE as we are found in Christ.**

Prayer

***2After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. 3His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them.***

Jesus was constantly taking his followers on an adventure. Can you imagine the excitement and wonder of never knowing where he might be leading you. On this day, Jesus begins to lead the three disciples closest to Jesus up a mountain secluded from everyone else. In that remote place, removed from the cares and conflicts within the world, Jesus is transformed.



This is a **transformation different** than that of a butterfly or the transformation that we notice within the greenbelt during the months of March and April. This transformation is more like being exposed. Like a child playing hide and seek; allowing a foot to pop out from behind the curtain, something about Jesus is revealed. And what is revealed about the Christ. Brilliance, holiness, radiance. Here it is put to rest, **Jesus was not only a miracle worker, a good teacher or a moralist.**

Can you imagine what the transfiguration **might have meant to the disciples?** Think about it. The disciples had left everything to follow Jesus. In many ways, they bet the farm on a no name. Think of the great sense of confirmation this moment must have been. All they gave up... This really was the Messiah! God's Chosen One who is to save the Nation. Not only that but Jesus is interacting with **Elijah and Moses**. 2 of the greatest leaders of Israel's history. Think of the excitement that welled within the disciples; this one who they had sacrificed everything on REALLY is the Christ. They hit the jackpot!

Not only that, but they heard the **audible voice of God** the Father speak a blessing over His son!

To give us some insight on this, **what other time** did God do this? Where else in the Gospels did God the Father speak a blessing over His Son Jesus?

At His Baptism.

**Transition Point:** Both times of blessings came at a time of transitions in the life and ministry of Jesus. At the time of the baptism, Jesus was just about to enter into His public ministry. Here, Jesus is also in a time of transition. What we find after this passage is that Jesus' demeanor changes. Later on we will hear this description; Jesus turned his face towards Jerusalem. He was on a mission. It was time for him to begin to step with fortitude towards the cross.

He begins to speak more clearly about his death and suffering.

And like we find after His baptism as Scripture says that with his hair still wet from his baptisms and the Echoes of the Voice of God still ringing in His ear, Jesus was **lead** into the desert... It is clear that Jesus is now with the brilliance of Jesus' robe in the disciples mind, and once again the voice of God's blessing echoing through the canyons, we see Jesus is on a march straight to Jerusalem to finish the task that he was **sent to finish**.

That word "sent" is an important word, not only for us to understand the task of the Cross, but also to understand who God is.

The Word "sent" is translated from the latin word, Missio.; where obviously we get the word mission.

A phrase that I have heard often is the phrase, "Missio Dei".

More rightly translated- The Missioning God.

It is God's character.

We see in the beginning that God created the world by "sending His spirit"

We see that when Adam and Eve had sinned and were kicked out of the garden, that God began a plan of redemption by sending his presence.

We see His presence leading the nation of Israel through the wanderings.

We see that when the time was right, "God sent His only Son..."

There is a sentness to God's character. This isn't a part of what God does as much as it is a part of WHO HE IS. This is also where Christianity is somewhat different from world religions. Religions is a pursuit of man. And Christianity is a story of the Creator of world who pursues and is sent to be with His People.

**But, it doesn't end there.**

In John 20, the crucified and raised Jesus shows Himself for the first time to the disciples as a group.

**"Jesus showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.**

**21Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."**

Being filled with His Spirit. (We are sent.)



God's master plan was that His sentness... would be within His people. That His Holy Presence; His Spirit would not only be present in the person Jesus, but Jesus died so that His Spirit would be in millions and millions of people throughout time so that He could dwell with his people.

In looking at this, I get how God is a sent God; I just have a hard time seeing myself as a sent person.

The disconnect is not theological, I think even in my narrow-mindedness; I get it. **The disconnect is within me.** God is sending me? Why me? There are too many faults in my life. There are too many things that I need to deal first before I am sent to be God's presence in the world.

If believe in Scripture, "that we are hidden in Christ." Brothers and sisters; your sentness is who you are!

Interestingly, what is Peter's response to the transfiguration of Jesus? **5Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." 6(He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.)**

What was Peter's response to the transformed Christ?

1) Fear. 2) Building the shelter.

I get it. When men don't know how to interact (he didn't know what to say) or just listen, we are tempted to just go and build something.

And yet, it is that comment that triggered the voice of God.

**7Then a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and a voice came from the cloud: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!"**

In looking at this, I puzzled with this question... **Who was this blessing meant for?** I feel like the first blessing at baptism was meant to confirm John's declaration and bless Jesus, but it seems like this blessing was meant for Peter and the disciples.

"Listen to him!"

What I find interesting is that Peter's intentions were good right? He didn't say even 6 shelters, or 4 (the three of us will just take one). Yet it seems like there was a point to this that He was missing.

An insight might be that word "shelter". That word is also translated "tabernacle". It would make a good Jew think of the portable sanctuary much like the one used in the wanderings.

I want to make you a holy dwelling, separate from people like me and these 2 disciples.

But for some reason, this idea received a rebuke from God?

I think that, well-intended or not, **Peter's agenda was completely opposite from God's agenda.**

Peter wanted to stay on this mountain, and God's plan was not to tabernacle on this mountain... but head down from this mountain and go straight to the cross.

This is also the same word that was used in the beginning of the Gospel according to John.

**14The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, [d] who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.**

The Word, who is Jesus, not only was in the beginning, not only was God, not only created the world... but the Word became FLESH and MADE HIS DWELLING AMONG. "Made His Dwelling" is the same word as tabernacled. Jesus tabernacle among his people in flesh.

The tabernacle that Peter was suggesting was on high on a mountain, removed from the rest of the world, from the cares and concerns, the suffering... and I wonder if he knew of what was awaiting them when they were coming down. Jesus didn't care for a tabernacle; He had within Him a sense of SENTNESS.



You see, within us all is a desire for comfort and control. To find the easiest way. And if we wrestle with a desire for comfort and control, we wrestle with God. For to be in God's presence and to call Christ as Lord means you release comfort and control. True?

How might we as Xians try to retain comfort and control... two options stand out...

We can do it through sin. (Hide in a bottle for a couple of days. Or like the Prodigal Son, leave home for a while). Have a secret affair...

Or we can flee the world through our religion. We can go to the comforts of religion. We can fashion a Christian lifestyle that shelters us from the notion of BEING SENT, being called to follow Jesus regardless of where he might send us. To go into the pain, and suffering of the world.

What does it mean for us to follow the identity of God and dwell in the world? That means that we might have to leave the comforts of religion and step into the darkness.

### Story of Enoch...

But the reality is this. If Jesus didn't choose the shelter; neither can we. We cannot claim to be a child of God and still choose a life estranged from others. We are a sent people. It is who we are. When we are not embracing the sent mission of God; we are disconnected from our identity.

### So what is going to hold us back from experiencing and claiming our identity as God's loved and sent people:

1) I don't have enough time.

This is not about an add-on. Living missionally does not mean that you have to spend 2 hours a week serving someone poorer than you. What this means is that where you go, remember YOU ARE SENT! It means into your home, you are sent. Into the workplace, you are sent. Or into the prisons/homeless shelter/Alzheimer ministry/Nicaraguan medical mission trip, you are sent.

**Progress.** With the sole purpose not of changing them but of loving them and when an opportunity presents itself to share about who Jesus is.

I even had one barista come into the prison with me. He told me, I don't want to go to your church, but I will go to prison with you. What I have found out is that it is so easy to break up the stereotypes; it is intriguing. Being someone who is comfortable in calling myself a Christian is intriguing. They bring it up.

I didn't do anything special. I just want to know them and love them. I want to have them over for dinner. I want to hang out where they hang out.

2) That is not my thing.

It is about being aware of who God is and who you are. This is not about duty. This is about identity. What is your identity? God has sent you to be His presence of hope, love and purpose in the world. Just try to see the world as God sees it. Reorder your purpose to be about bringing the life of Jesus where you are. It might be simply being present with people. Looking at people the way Jesus did.

I think this explains why there might be so many bored Christians. The individuals who faithfully attend church, living a moral life, and yet still have a sense of restlessness within them asking, "Is this really it?" **Perhaps it is because Jesus is looking up at you waiting for you to come down from the mountain and join Him there.** I want to stress that is not about duty as much as it is identity. This is who you are because this is Who He is!

3) I am not "there".

God is in the habit of using the least likely people. If you are not there, it is ok. God is there.

**Death comes to the Archbishop.** Willa Cather. 1913. 2 Catholic Missionaries were called to be Pioneer Priests in NM. An emissary comes from NY with the word that this missionary is being called to be a professor to the seminary



there. The missionary told this emissary that he could not return, he had to defy the Archbishop this request. This emissary responded; Tell me what I am supposed to tell the Archbishop in why you did not return with me...  
"Tell the Arch Bishop that down near Tucson, an Indian convert once asked me to go into the desert with him because he had something to show me. He took me into a place so wild that a man might... fear for his life. We descended into a terrifying canyon of black rock. There in the depths of a cave, he showed me a golden chalice, vestment, and cruets; all the paraphernalia to celebrate mass. His ancestors had hidden these sacred objects there when the mission was sacked by Apaches he didn't know how many generations ago. The secret had been handed down in his family, and I was the first priest who had ever come to restore God to his own. To me that is the situation in a parable. The faith in this wild frontier is like a buried treasure, they guard it but they do not know how to use it for their souls salvation. A word, a prayer, a service is all that is needed to free those souls in bondage. Tell the Arch Bishop that I am covetous of that mission. I desire to be the man that restores these lost children to God. This will be the greatest happiness of my life."

God is going before you. If you aren't there spiritually/maturity/ take heart, because God is there. In Matthew when Jesus said that he was fed, clothed, sick and in prison; I think we should take that literally. Jesus is waiting for us in places like that. In the same way that this priest found the makings of a mass in a cave, we should not be surprised when I see the fragrance of Christ in the darkness. Remember, this is not OUR MISSION. God is inviting us to Join HIM!

The question remains... Will we? Will we come to embrace who we are? Will we come to know more and more this Sent God.

On this day, let us not be surprised to not find Jesus in shelters on the mountain top, but the transfigured Christ might be laid down upon a cross, inviting us to join Him there.

*2 Cor 3:18 And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

Amen.

