

How To Get Through It — Mark 9:1-9

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Beauty

1. What's the absolute most beautiful thing you've ever seen?
2. The beauty of God's creation is stunning and goes beyond our ability to put into word.
3. I've seen some sights in the Sierras that literally took my breath away.
 - a. a flower covered meadow in the morning light,
 - b. a snow-capped peak reflecting off the mirror-like surface of a high mountain lake at sunset.
4. Flying to Russia, skirting the edge of the Arctic circle and looking out the window to see the Northern Lights hanging like a rainbow curtain in the sky just a few miles away — stunning.
5. God has surrounded us with beauty & delights He intends would bring us great pleasure & joy.

B. The Greatest Beauty

1. But the greatest beauty we will behold is not to be found in this world or this life.
2. It awaits those who have put their faith in Jesus Christ.
3. They will see it on that day they step from this world into the glory of heaven.
4. God intends that the hope and promise of that future beauty would help us to endure the ugliness & troubles that all too often try to eclipse our vision & faith.
5. We see that in our passage today.

II. TEXT

A. Set The Scene

1. Jesus is wrapping up His work in Galilee & shifting His focus from the crowds to spend more personal, intimate time with the 12 disciples.
2. They are about to face the heavy ordeal of Jesus' betrayal, arrest, torture, & brutal execution.
3. He wants to make sure they're well prepared, not only for that trial, but after He returns to the Father, for carrying on His mission in a world that will be no less hostile to them than it was to Him.
4. The first thing He needs to do is warn them of what's to come, so in 8:31 we read...

And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

5. Of course, suffering & death were not what they thought the mission of the Messiah was about.
6. They thought Jesus would go to the capital of Jerusalem & there, finally declare Himself Israel's King.
7. Once He defeated the Romans & took His throne, as His closest friends they

- would be assigned important positions of power in the new Kingdom.
8. This is what they were counting on, & Jesus knew it.
 9. So He patiently informed them again & again as they made their way South that it was suffering, not glory that awaited them in Jerusalem.
 10. While the disciples were vying for who would sit on thrones to His left & right in the Kingdom, He told them it was a cup of suffering they would be facing, not a throne.
 11. But Jesus wanted to let them know that while suffering was ahead, that was not the end of the story.
 - a. past the trial, on the other side of the cross, was the Resurrection.
 - b. the throne would indeed come and His reign as King would begin.

B.V.1

1And He said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power.”

1. Jesus knew the cross was going to be a huge trial, not just for Himself, but for the disciples.
2. Their belief in Him would be put to a sore test when they saw Him fixed to a Roman cross.
3. They needed something to “steel” them for the coming challenge to their faith.
4. He tells them here that some of them will indeed see His glory & power.
 - a. and it won’t just be in the afterlife- after they die and go to heaven.
 - b. no — they would witness it in this life.
5. What Jesus was referring to took place less than a week later.

C. Vs. 2-3

2 after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them.

1. There is really only one “high mountain” in this area — Mt. Hermon.
2. At 9,200 ft. it’s covered with snow for most of the year & provides most of the water for the Jordan & Israel.
3. The only time the mount is clear of snow is in late August-early Sept, & that’s when they climbed it.
4. From the top of Hermon one can see the length of Israel to the South, the plains of Syria to the east, & the blue-green Mediterranean to the west.
5. It would have been quite a hike for the 4 as they went up the Mount.
6. After the arduous adventure of climbing the Mount, suddenly the appearance of Jesus went through a dramatic change.
 - a. His clothes took on a luminous aspect, like the whitest snow.
 - b. if you’ve ever seen pure, white snow when the sun shines on it you get the idea.
 - c. you can’t look at such whiteness for long or you’ll go blind.

D. Vs. 4-6

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

Jesus.

1. Elijah was the first & accounted as the greatest of the prophets.
2. Moses was esteemed by the Jews as the greatest man to have ever lived.
3. It was through him that the law of God had come.
4. The Jews referred to their scriptures as the “Law & the prophets.”
 - a. Moses represented the Law, Elijah the Prophets,
 - b. & they were now both standing alongside Jesus, talking to Him.
5. P, J, & J could not have missed the implications — Here was Jesus, shining in glory, flanked on each side by the 2 greatest men of their history.

5Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah”— 6 he did not know what to say, for they were greatly afraid.

6. Peter blurts out the first thing that comes to mind, all because he didn’t know what else to say.
7. Have you ever said something you later regretted?
8. Have you ever thought back to some comment you made & said to yourself— “Why did I say that?? What an IDIOT!”
9. Mark’s main source in composing his Gospel was Peter, who no doubt told him why he said what he said —
 - a. he was scared & felt like he needed to say something at such an important moment.
 - b. but looking back, he realized it would have been better to keep his trap shut.
10. A piece of advice - When in doubt about what to say — Don’t say it!
 - a. don’t feel the need to come up with something.
 - b. better to remain silent & let people think you’re stupid than to open your mouth & remove all doubt.
11. Peter proposed building 3 shrines to commemorate this awesome event!
 - a. one for Jesus, one for Elijah, and one for Moses.
 - b. by saying this, he showed he wasn’t getting the point of the vision.
 - c. that was made quite clear by what happened next...

E.V.7

7And a cloud came and overshadowed them; and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!”

1. This wasn’t a fog bank that suddenly rolled in.
2. It was an increase in the glory that was unloaded by God upon the scene.
3. The veil between heaven & earth was pulled aside & for a brief moment P, J, & J were allowed to see the glory of Christ.
4. Picture a remote hillside far from the city. It’s a moonless night & the darkness is thick.
 - a. on that hillside is a cottage with shuttered windows; it looks completely dark.
 - b. but suddenly the front door opens & bright light comes pouring out
 - c. standing just inside the door is the owner of the house.
 - d. the light shines on & around him, piercing the darkness.
5. That gives you only the slightest idea what these men saw.

6. It was mid-day, yet the noonday sun became dark compared to the glory that was suddenly revealed in Jesus.
7. Then they heard the announcement of the Father's approval, "This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!"
8. This put the kibosh on Peter's plan for 3 shrines
 - a. they understood that as important as Moses & Elijah were, they had only served to set the stage for Jesus.
 - b. the Father didn't say, "These are my 3 special servants, listen to THEM."
 - c. He said, "This is my beloved SON— Hear HIM!"
 - d. Moses' & Elijah's whole lives & missions had been to prepare the way for Jesus.
 - e. they were the shadow — He is the substance.

F. Vs. 8-9

8 Suddenly, when they had looked around, they saw no one anymore, but only Jesus with themselves.

1. In the time it takes one second to become the next, the glory they'd witnessed was removed.
2. The rent in the veil between heaven & earth was resealed & they were left standing there blinking their eyes in amazement.

9 Now as they came down from the mountain, He commanded them that they should tell no one the things they had seen, till the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

3. This revelation of the identity & glory of Jesus was to be kept under wraps until after the Resurrection.
4. It was meant to be something that would help sustain them through the trials to come.
 - a. first for the trial of the crucifixion,
 - b. then for the trials of their own suffering they would endure when He returned to the Father and His mission was turned over to them.
5. Through all the confusion, all the trouble, all the opposition & hatred they would face, this vision of the glory of Jesus would keep the anchor of their hope firmly secured to Him.

G. The Purpose of the Transfiguration

1. While the Transfiguration served to encourage & equip Jesus for the ordeal that He was about to face,
2. The reason He took F, J, & J with Him up the Mount was so they would be encouraged & equipped too.
3. In Hebrews 12 we read—

1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

4. It was here at the transfiguration that Jesus was steeled for His trial.
 - a. Moses & Elijah came to encourage Him.

- b. the Father's voice brought affirmation & comfort.
 - c. the renewal of the glory He'd enjoyed as the eternal Son of God & that awaited Him when He finished His mission & returned to the Father fired His resolve to walk faithfully forward into the trial of the passion & the cross.
5. The writer of Hebrews calls us to follow Jesus' example — & to look to Him & His glory as our goal.
 6. We'll be able to run our race, following its course through whatever trials & trouble it may lead, if we'll do one thing — keep our eyes on the prize, the goal.
 7. And what is our goal? What is the prize that awaits us just across the finish line of this life? Our goal is nothing less than the glory of Jesus Christ! 8 If you watched the Olympics you saw how when the medalists were given their medals, a wreath of laurel leaves was placed upon their heads.
 - a. in the ancient Olympic games, there were no medals;
 - b. that wreath was all the victor was awarded.
 - c. he made his round of the stadium, wearing his wreath of bright, green leaves glorying, while the crowds cheered his physical prowess.
 - d. the Greeks made their trophies of victory that which only lasted for a short time for good reason.
 - e. the fading green and wilting leaves of the laurel crown was a reminder that youth & strength do not last, & man's glory is a fleeting thing.
 9. As Christians, we do not live our lives for an earthly crown or passing worldly glory.
 - a. our eyes are not on a gold, silver, or bronze medal.
 - b. our sights are set on Jesus, the Author & Finisher of our faith.
 - c. He waits just across the tape, with arms held wide to embrace us.
 - d. that embrace is all we could hope for — all we want.

H. Plowing

1. Every Summer when growing up, my family took a 2 week road-trip vacation.
2. We lived near Chicago but would pile into the family car & drive all over the country visiting relatives.
3. Trips to my uncle's farm in North Dakota were the best because he let me help with the chores.
4. My favorite was to clear the barn of manure.
 - a. with a huge shovel I would scoop up the cow pies & toss them into a wagon called a "spreader."
 - b. after the barn was clean & the spreader full,
 - c. he let me climb into the driver's seat of the tractor and tow the spreader to one of the many fields he had under cultivation.
 - d. at the moving of a level, paddles in the spreader chewed up & flung out the pies to fertilize the field.
5. The first time I drove the tractor, the path I took across the field was a huge zig-zag.
 - a. I kept looking back to watch the dung fly, but whenever I did, my short little arms tugged the steering wheel & the tractor turned.

- b. after that first trip across the field, leaving a winding course,
 - c. my uncle told me a secret — when I started a new pass across the field, I needed to pick a point on the far side & aim the tractor right at it.
 - d. he told me not to look back — but to keep my eyes on my goal, & my path across the field would be straight.
 - e. sure enough, it worked just as he said.
6. Christian, your life, your course is laid out before you & one day you too will cross the finish line.
- a. don't wander — don't meander.
 - b. don't let your vision be clouded by the field of this world, or by the dung flying around you.
 - c. keep your eyes on the glory that awaits you in the arms of Jesus.
7. Listen to how Paul explains his grasp of this in Philippians 3:7-14. After listing all the things the world would consider as his privileges, he says..

7 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. 8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ be found in Him, not having my own righteous-ness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; “that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. 12 that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. 13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do. forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

III.CONCLUSION

A. Keep Your Eyes On Jesus

1. Let's learn the lesson of the Transfiguration.
2. The way through our trials, the way to endure when all seems confusion & hopeless, is to look to Jesus.
3. When it's dark & the way is hard — keep following Jesus up the hill for a revelation of His glory is surely coming.
4. Hold on to Jesus — He is the way out of your trial. He is the solution to your trouble.
5. He is the light at the end of your tunnel.
6. We call Him Savior —
 - a. but do we realize He wants to be far more than just a Savior from sin.
 - b. in the Bible, the word “salvation” means “to be made whole.”
 - c. Jesus is our Savior in EVERY situation.
 - When lonely — He's our best friend.

- When distressed — He's our comfort
 - When fearful — He's our defense
 - When in need — He's our supply
 - When tempted — He's our true satisfaction
 - When erring — He's the Good Shepherd who leaves the 99 to come after us
7. I don't know what your particular need is today — but I do know the answer — Jesus.

B. My King

1. We don't have a video of the transfiguration, but we do have the Word of God which describes the glory of our King.
2. Some years ago S.M. Lockridge gave a message in which he was moved to declare the glory of Jesus as the heavenly King in all the ways the Bible describes it.
3. I want to share his words with you today.

The Bible says my King is a 7-way king.

- He's the King of the Jews — that's a racial king.
- He's the King of Israel — that's a national king.
- He's the King of righteousness. He's the King of the ages
- He's the King of heaven. He's the King of glory.
- He's the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

That's my King.

David said the heavens declare His glory and the firmament shows His handiwork.

My King is a sovereign King.

No means of measure can define His limitless love.

No far-seeing telescope can bring into visibility the coastline of His shoreless supply.

No barrier can hinder Him from pouring out His abundant blessing.

He's enduringly strong. He's entirely sincere. He's eternally steadfast.

He's immortally graceful. He's imperially powerful. He's impartially merciful.

He's the greatest phenomenon that has ever crossed the horizon of this world.

He's God's Son. He's the sinner's Savior. He's the centerpiece of civilization.

He stands in the solitude of Himself. He's august and He's unique.

He's unparalleled. He's unprecedented. He is the loftiest idea of literature.

He's the highest principle of philosophy.

He's the supreme problem of higher criticism.

He's the fundamental doctrine of true theology.

He is the corner and necessity of spiritual religion.

He's the miracle of the age.

He's the superlative of everything good you choose to call Him.

He's the only one qualified to be an all-sufficient Savior.

He supplies strength for the weak. He's available for the tempted and the tried.

He sympathizes and He saves. He preserves and sustains.

He guards and He guides. He heals the sick. He cleanses the lepers.

He forgives sinners. He discharges debtors. He delivers the captives.

He defends the feeble. He serves the unfortunate.
He blesses the young & regards the aged.
He rewards the diligent. He beautifies the meek.
He's the key to knowledge. He's the wellspring of wisdom.
He's the doorway to deliverance. He's the pathway to peace.
He's the roadway of righteousness. He's the highway of holiness.
He's the gateway to glory.
His office is manifold. His promise is sure. His life is matchless.
His goodness is limitless. His mercy is everlasting. His love never changes.
His word is enough. His grace is sufficient. His reign is righteous.
His yoke is easy and His burden is light.
I wish I could describe Him to you. But He's indescribable.
He's incomprehensible. He's invincible. He's irresistible.
You can't get Him out of your mind & you can't get Him off your hands.
You can't outlive Him & you can't live without Him.
The Pharisees couldn't stand Him but they found they couldn't stop Him.
Pilate couldn't find any fault in Him.
The witnesses couldn't get their testimonies to agree against Him.
Herod couldn't kill Him.
Death couldn't handle Him. The grave couldn't hold Him.
That's my King, & His is the Kingdom & the power, & the glory forever & ever.