



The Reverend Dr. David V. Silvernail, Jr.  
Mark 9:2-13

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English Standard Version

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## *“On and Off the Mount”*

The 23rd Sermon in a series on The Gospel of Mark entitled  
*“The King and His Cross”*

Hey. Welcome to our worship service. I’m glad you’ve tuned in. Today, we’re meeting all over Northern Virginia as a church distributed. I hope the service has been meaningful for you so far. Once again, this type of service gives us a small taste of how much of the church has worshipped, from house to house, for much of church history. Before I start, please turn in your Bibles to **The Gospel of Mark, chapter 9**, and listen carefully as I read our Scripture passage for today.

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

*“And after six days Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them,<sup>3</sup> and His clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them.<sup>4</sup> And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.<sup>5</sup> And Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.”<sup>6</sup> For He did not know what to say, for they were terrified.<sup>7</sup> And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, “This is My beloved Son; listen to Him.”<sup>8</sup> And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only.*

<sup>9</sup> And as they were coming down the mountain, He charged them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. <sup>10</sup> So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead might mean. <sup>11</sup> And they asked Him, “Why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?” <sup>12</sup> And He said to them, “Elijah does come first to restore all things. And how is it written of the Son of Man that He should suffer many things and be treated with contempt? <sup>13</sup> But I tell you that Elijah has come, and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written of him.”

***The Word of the Lord***  
***Thanks be to God***  
***Let's pray ...***

*Heavenly Father, this is Your Word and we need it. Thank You for giving us the Scriptures and making us Your people. You have brought us to this amazing Gospel to learn more about your Son, Jesus. We ask You this morning to give us the grace to understand. Life is strange right now, and it looks like it's going to get more difficult before it gets better. We live in a time of fear and confusion, not knowing what another day will bring. We need Jesus. So help us to see Jesus today. Thank You that once again we're learning from Mark, a follower of Jesus, as he brings us the Good News of the life of Christ. Help us to obey Your Word, Worship You, and be patient with all. And so we pray, speak through the Gospel of Mark this morning, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, change our minds and our hearts to be more like Your Son, for in His name we pray, amen and amen.*

**INTRODUCTION: “You do you” <sup>1</sup>**

A few days ago, Dr. Mike Kruger of RTS, Charlotte, wrote an insightful article about this phrase, “**You do you.**” Let me share it with you for there's probably not another phrase that better captures our current cultural moment. Back in 2015, Colson Whitehead of the [New York Times Magazine](#), lamented this phrase, arguing that it “perfectly captures our narcissistic culture.” It's hard to disagree with that. “**You do you**” embodies our culture's commitment to personal fulfillment, self-actualization, and the dismissal of any truth claims outside of ourselves. It means we get to create our own realities, our own right and wrong, and, most importantly, our own meaning. And if we're the creators of our own little worlds, then we're also our own little gods. And no one gets to tell a god what to do. We decide for ourselves. Perhaps it's no surprise, then, that the selfie is now our world's favorite art form. The thing to be celebrated, after all, **is us**.

So ... how does a “**You do you**” culture handle something like the coronavirus? Prior generations, no doubt, would've turned to science as the great solution. Armed with ever more impressive technological advancements, we were told our potential for solving the world's problems was essentially limitless. In the case of the coronavirus, however, the god of science doesn't seem so omnipotent after all. Maybe there will be a vaccine at some point in the future, but for now ... well, we're on our own.

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**1 The Introduction is adapted from the article, “How a “You do You” Culture Has Made Us Vulnerable to the Coronavirus” from the blog [Canon Fodder](#) by Dr. Michael Kruger, President, Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte, 3/19/20, [www.michaelkruger.com](http://www.michaelkruger.com).**

So, what can be done, at least on a human level, to stop the virus? Well, here's where we come to **the great irony** of our current situation — we can only stop the virus by doing **what is best for others** ... not just **what is best for ourselves**. The virus will be curbed when people exemplify a spirit of self-sacrifice. A posture of self-denial. We must **limit** our travel, **limit** our social contact, even **limit** our “fun” so that the virus won't spread. And that requires a worldview that gives us **a reason to deny ourselves**. **A reason** to think more highly of others. In other words, we need a worldview that is about **more than us**.

In short, “***You do you***” won't work. In fact, you might argue that our cultural decline over the last fifty some years has made us **exceptionally vulnerable** to something like the coronavirus. The problem isn't that we're unprepared scientifically. The problem is that we're unprepared **morally**.

A quick reflection of how people are behaving in the midst of this tragedy bears this out

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- A man flies from New York to Florida knowing he had symptoms of the coronavirus and while awaiting the results. He found out the test was positive while he was on the flight. Later Jet Blue **banned him for life!**
- A man who works for Dartmouth Medical Center had symptoms and was told to self-quarantine, but instead decided to go party with Dartmouth students. Some of whom were later infected.
- A man in Missouri was told to quarantine with symptoms, but instead, he opted to take his daughter to their school dance, exposing dozens of students.
- But perhaps most disturbingly is the recent behavior of some college students over Spring Break. Thinking that young people are least effected by the virus, some students are deciding to party on, defying the orders to stay away from large crowds. With a remarkable level of unawareness and callous disregard for the good of others, one spring-breaker said to NBC News, “If I get corona, I get corona. At the end of the day, I'm not going to let it stop me from partying . . . whatever happens, happens.” In other words, “I'm just going to do me, and ***you do you***.”

Can you imagine, going to the beach on Spring Break and getting the virus, but not knowing it, or not showing symptoms because you're young and in good shape, but bringing it home, where it infects and kills your grandparents?

Here's the point: nothing tests the validity of a worldview like **tragedy** and **suffering**. And the coronavirus, as awful and terrible as it is, has done at least one good thing, namely it has exposed our culture's commitment to **relativism** for what it really is — **an utterly unworkable and unsustainable worldview**.

Even our founding fathers understood that our country could only survive if it had a moral core centered on God. As John Adams famously observed, “Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.” Now that we have a country that has largely abandoned a “moral and religious” foundation of self-sacrifice and service to others, the inadequacy of our system has been laid bare. But there's always hope. Revival rarely comes in the good times. Instead, it often comes in times of need, want, and hardship. It's when our earthly comforts and securities have been taken away that we're willing to turn again to the good news of the gospel which, at its heart, is about a man who laid down His life for the good of others.

If the first Adam embodied the “*You do you*” culture, the second Adam, Jesus, embodies the “*You serve others*” culture. After all, it was Jesus who said at the end of today’s chapter, **Mark 9:35**, “*If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.*” The “*you do you*” worldview may first appear to be life-giving, when actually, it’s life-taking. In contrast, the Christian worldview may first appear to be life-taking, when actually, it’s life-giving. Ironically, then, it’s in the midst of a tragedy like the coronavirus when Jesus’ words from last Sunday ring most true, **Mark 8:35**, “*For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it.*”

So, what does all of this have to do with today’s passage? Well, quite a bit. Because in this passage, **Mark 9:2-13**, we’re going to get **the motivation to follow Christ ... even at the expense of ourselves**. We’re now in the weeks leading up to Easter, both literally as Easter is three weeks away, but also here in the Book of Mark. We’re looking at Christ and some key episodes in His life. Today, we’ve come to a very famous, and very unique, passage called **the Transfiguration**. There’s nothing else quite like it in the Bible. I’m not really sure there’s anything else like it anywhere in ancient literature, or any literature, for that matter. It’s here to teach us, of course, or it wouldn’t be in the Bible. So, what is it here to teach us about? Well, several things. I’m not going to go through the text verse by verse as I normally do but take the passage as a whole and pick out three main points for us to consider.

But before we start, you need to know that in the second half of Mark, we’re going to see Jesus’ life get darker and darker. In this passage, as He’s coming down the mountain the disciples ask Him about the prophecy that there would be a second Elijah who would be the forerunner to the Messiah. What about him? Jesus says, “Yes, John the Baptist is that second Elijah. They killed him, and they’re going to kill Me.” You see, things are getting darker and darker, and yet, for one moment, on the mountain, a shutter opens **and there’s light**, and then it goes dark again. What is this here to tell us? Well, first of all ...

### **THE TRANSFIGURATION TELLS US WHO HE IS** <sup>2</sup>

When God was leading the children of Israel out of slavery in Egypt, what did He use to demonstrate His presence? If you remember from our time in the Book of Exodus back in 2015, He took the form of a glory cloud, a cloud filled with bright light. In the daytime when the sun was out it looked pretty much like a cloud, but it was really bright. At night, when the sun was gone, it looked like a pillar of fire, and it went before the children of Israel. So, cloud by day and fire by night. And it symbolized God’s presence with His people. When this glory cloud came down on Mount Sinai, the mountain shook, and there was the voice of God, and there was fire, and there were clouds, and anyone who touched the mountain died. When Moses asked God to get a glimpse of Him inside the cloud, God said, “No, you can’t. It’ll kill you.”

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2 The **Exposition of the text is adapted from the sermon**, “*The Transfiguration*” by Dr. Tim Keller, Redeemer Presbyterian Church, New York, NY, 3/11/12, *The Tim Keller Sermon Archive*, Logos Bible Software 8.12; and my sermon “*The Transfiguration of the King*” preached here at Potomac Hills on 1/19/14. **And the books**, *Jesus the King: Understanding the Life and Death of the Son of God* (previously published as *The King’s Cross: The Story of the World in the Life of Jesus*), by Dr. Tim Keller, pages 121-129.

Now it's centuries later, and what do we see? We're on a mountain again (**verse 2**). There's the voice of God (**verse 7**), there's Moses (**verse 4**), and Elijah, who also saw the glory of God on a mountain (in **1 Kings 19**). Most of all, as we see here in **verse 3**, the glory of God is **radiant**, but what's different from the account in Exodus? Because there is something very different. The incomparable glory of God is **radiating** from a person now, from Jesus Christ Himself. **Verses 2-3** say, "*And He was transfigured before them,<sup>3</sup> and His clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them.*" And we read in **Matthew 17:2**, "*And He was transfigured before them, and His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became white as light.*" That's astounding. The glory of God, the radiant light, is coming straight from Jesus. When Moses came off Mount Sinai, his face continued to shine, but it was the reflected glory of what he'd seen, sort of like how the moon reflects the sun. But now we're told **Jesus is the sun**. This is depicting in story form something the book of Hebrews says, **Hebrews 1:3a**, "*He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature ...*"

That means Jesus Christ is the perfect expression of the overwhelmingly powerful, unsurpassingly beautiful, vitally important, **glory of God**. **Jesus IS** the glory cloud. **Jesus IS** the radiance of God's glory in human form! The glory is now in human form, and He's the exact representation of God's nature. There's no other way to see the glory of God that surpasses what we see in Christ. I don't know how much stronger the Bible can be in getting across the idea that Jesus Christ is not like Moses and Elijah. He's not one more prophet pointing to God. He **IS** the glorious God to whom Moses and Elijah and all the prophets pointed. What does that mean? Well, to be blunt, I think it means that the glory of God is to be **our primary motivation** for the Christian life. After all, what does the catechism teach? What is the Chief End of Man? To glorify God and enjoy Him forever. And if Jesus is the exact imprint of the glory of God, then Jesus Christ Himself becomes **our primary motivation** to live the Christian life. He becomes **what's most important** to us.

Now, to a "**you do you**" culture, that just sounds weird. I mean, today, most people will tell you, "You need to figure out your passions. You need to figure out what your dreams are. And you need to bring your life in line with that and get in sync with that. What is it you really want? What are your real passions and dreams? What are your capacities? You need to live for that."

Do you see how revolutionary Christianity is? Christianity says ultimate reality is not an abstract dream you have to contemplate, or a passion you have to work hard to line your life up with. No, the Gospel tells us that ultimate reality is found **in a person**. That ultimate reality is a person you can know and love and who can love you, who you can adore and delight in. It's a love relationship!

And for the world of Moses' day, and the world of Jesus' day, and the world of our day — **that completely redefines salvation**. It completely redefines how we find our **purpose** in life ... and how we find **meaning** in life. **The glory of Christ changes everything**. Because Jesus Christ is not just a good guy. He's not just somebody who is **sort of** glorious or who **just** points to glory. He **IS** the glory of God. That means He's our ultimate reality. The transfiguration shows the greatness of who He is, but it doesn't stop there, because ...

### **THE TRANSFIGURATION TELLS US WHAT HE DOES**

The transfiguration shows us what He came to do. I've already said that when the glory of God appeared in the Old Testament, when it came down on Mount Sinai, if anybody came

into contact with it, it killed them. When we hear about that today, it either **offends** us, or **confuses** us. We don't like to hear such harsh warnings. Think about it like this. If you were to look directly into the sun for **a really long time**, without blinking, it would burn your eyes out. It would destroy your sight, because the luminosity, the brightness, the intensity of the sun is too great for your eyes to bear. I mean, you could say, "I'm so **offended** by that idea." Well, you shouldn't be offended. It's a physical law. The brightness of the sun is too great for your eyes to bear. Nothing personal, it's just **physics**.

We're being told here in **Mark 9** that's true on a spiritual level as well. Let me give you another example. You think you're smart until you come into the presence of somebody who's way smarter than you are, or maybe even is way smarter than you'll ever be. And yet, before meeting that person, you thought of yourself as pretty smart. But then you met this genius, and let me tell you, it's not an inspiring feeling. That's true for spiritually too. You think you're a pretty spiritual person, you read the Bible, you pray – certainly more than those lazy people sitting in front of you at church. You've got this. You're fairly spiritual. But then you meet this old guy, very quiet, and you take him out to lunch. You ask him to say the blessing. And he prays in a way that humbles you. He prays like He knows God **intimately**. And you're sitting there thinking, "This guy knows Jesus way better than I do." And now you're wondering if you're even saved.

Hopefully, you can relate to the disciples here. They're not only in the presence of Jesus, but suddenly they're blinded by **the Transfiguration of Christ**. Suddenly, the glory of God **shines forth** from Jesus in **unsurpassed radiance**. This **blinding light** hits them, and Peter blurts out something ... because he just **has** to say something. But we're told what's really going on in **verse 6**, "*For He did not know what to say, for they were terrified.*"

Look at other times in the Bible when God just shows up! When Isaiah begins to get into the presence of God in **Isaiah 6**, what does he say? **Isaiah 6:5**, "*Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!*"

When Job gets into the presence of God, he's not really seeing His glory but He's in the whirlwind. He just gets close. Do you remember what he says? **Job 42:5-6**, "*I had heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You; <sup>6</sup> therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*"

Anybody who gets anywhere close to the presence of God begins to feel the **moral weight** because we're sinners, we're flawed, we're finite. The infinity and glory and holiness of God ... our lives can't bear the weight of His glory. It's as simple as that, and yet we were originally created to see Him and know Him, and to see His beauty and glory, but we can't because of our sin. That's the reason the tabernacle was built. God says, "I want to dwell in the midst of My people, but I don't want to kill them." So what do they do? They built a tabernacle. The tabernacle was a huge tent, and in the center was a small tent, the Holy of Holies, in which the glory cloud dwelt, but it was safe. It was **shielded**. It was in there behind a veil, and outside were all of the outer courts where most of the people were. There were the sacrifices, the alters, and the priests doing all those things.

What was the tabernacle for? It was a **defense** against God, a **shield** against glory, **protection** from the glory of God. You're not going to understand Peter's response to this amazing event unless you see that. In **verse 5**, when Peter begins to see the intense radiance,

why does he say, “*Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah*”? The Greek word for *tent* here is the same as the Hebrew word for *tabernacle*. Peter is saying, “*I will put up three tabernacles, one for you and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.*” What’s he doing? He’s not saying, “We need shelter.” And he’s not saying, “This is great, let’s just stay here.” He’s saying, “We need to build tabernacles. **We need protection.** The glory is too much for us.”

Then, I think the very thing he was most afraid of ... happened. If you know the Bible well, you’ll realize one of the most astounding statements comes in **verse 7**, “*And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, ‘This is My beloved Son; listen to Him.’*” Moses said, “God, can I look inside the glory cloud?” and God said, “No, it will kill you.” But now **it’s on them**. It’s **around** them. It **envelops** them, and the voice of God comes out of the cloud. That’s why **verse 6** says *they were terrified*. Of course, they were terrified. They thought they were going to die. So what happened? **Well, they didn’t die**. Let me repeat that. **They didn’t die.** Why not? That’s what’s so astounding about this. Why not?

The answer is right there. When they opened their eyes ... they probably had their eyes closed in fright, and when they opened them, **all they saw was Jesus**. That’s the answer. In **Matthew 27** ... when Christ died on the cross, it says the veil in the temple (which is the permanent tabernacle) ripped from top to bottom. You see, when Jesus Christ died on the cross, He was the sacrifice. He was the priest. He was the temple itself. He says in **John 2:19** (puzzling everybody), “*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.*” How could Jesus call Himself the temple? Because He is the one **who shields you from the glory of God**, because through His sacrifice He reconciles you to God. He pays for your sin, so now the very glory that used to be **fatal** ... **can come into your life** (that’s why the Bible says *you’re now a temple of the Holy Spirit*).

All because of what Jesus has done. What did He do? You say, “*He died on the cross.*” But more than that, **He gave up His glory**. The whole point of the **Transfiguration** is to show us that Jesus was this glorious being, who, **Philippians 2:6-7**, “*though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, <sup>7</sup>but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.*” Jesus emptied Himself of His glory. The transfiguration is showing us that. Jesus gave up the **beauty** of His glory. He gave up the **impressiveness** of His glory. He gave up the **power** of His glory. He gave up the **invulnerability** of His glory. **He was killable now**. Glory! Beauty! Power! Immensity! It’s all gone. It’s set aside. **It’s been given up.**

Christ gave up His glory. Why? Before Jesus goes to the cross, He says two things in the Gospel of John. First, He says, **John 17:5**, “*And now, Father, glorify Me in Your own presence with the glory that I had with You before the world existed.*” That’s **the transfiguration glory**. And then He says, **John 17:22**, “*The glory that You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one even as We are one.*” He gave up His beauty so we could get it. He gave up His perfection, gave up His glory, so we could receive it. So **glory** could come into our lives. So God could make us beautiful, make us pure, make us glorious, make us perfect. He gave up His glory so we could get it. Just look at Jesus. You can do that now. You can look at His glory ... because **His death keeps us from dying**. That’s what Jesus has done. The transfiguration shows the greatness of who He is, and the greatness of what He has done, but then ...

## THE TRANSFIGURATION TELLS US HOW WE RESPOND

How should we respond? I'm going to suggest three ways. If this is all true, there are three ways you should respond. First, *obey* because He's the Lord of Glory. Second, *worship* because He's the Lord of Glory. And third, *be patient* because He's the Lord of Glory ... and there's more than meets the eye.

First of all, *obey*. If Jesus Christ really is the very glory of God, not just a nice guy ... One of the things the word *glory* means is importance. He must be **all-important**. The New Testament scholar, Dr. N.T. Wright says, "How can you live with the terrifying thought that the hurricane has become human, that fire has become flesh, that life itself came to life and walked in our midst? Christianity either means that, or it means nothing. It is either the most devastating disclosure of the deepest reality in the world, or it's a sham, nonsense, a bit of deceitful play-acting. Most of us, unable to cope with saying either of those things, condemn ourselves to live in the shallow world in between."

What's he saying? He says if Jesus Christ isn't just a good guy or a wonderful teacher, but He's **the very glory of God**, He's ultimate reality, then that means you have to *obey* Him. You can no longer live according to "*you do you.*" Now you have to live according to "*you do Him.*" Everything in your life has to revolve **around Him**. When God says in the midst of the cloud, "*This is My beloved Son; listen to Him.*" — the word *listen* implies that we need to do what He says, in other words, *obey*. What we know is if Jesus Christ really is ultimate reality, if Jesus really is the glory of God in the flesh, then you can't just have Him on the periphery of your life. He has to be the reason you get up in the morning. He has to be the thing everything in your life revolves around. He has to be the axis on which everything turns. He has to be your absolute Lord. You can't just *like* Jesus. You can't just say, "Well, I wish I was a better Christian, but I do believe." What He's saying is that you need to be **all-in** when it comes to Christ.

Second, *worship* Him. The word *glory* sometimes means importance, but it also means *beauty*. If you go to parts of the Old Testament that talk about His glory, there are always colors. There are rainbows. There are sparks. There are lights. It's getting across this idea that we're all seeking beauty. You may look at landscapes, or art, or a beautiful face. I've said for years that babies and brides are beautiful by definition ... but **they pale in comparison**, because ultimate beauty is found in the glory of God. There's nothing more beautiful than that. When you see His beauty, the beauty of what He did, the beauty of who He is ... the motivation for the Christian life is no longer just duty. It's desire. It's joy. It's gratitude for what He's done for you. And that's why we *worship* Him. And that's why you're watching this today. You want to *worship*.

Third, the last thing is to *be patient*. They had just seen Elijah, so they started saying, "Wait a minute. If you're the Messiah, who is the Elijah who is supposed to come? Was that him?" Jesus says, "No, John the Baptist is the second Elijah, but he was killed, and I'm going to get killed." It's dark! It's very dark! Up on the mountain, briefly, the shutter opened and there was light, but now, everything's gone dark. Why? Because Christ's glory is hidden.

Yet it was still at work, wasn't it? Even in the darkness, even in the weakness, even when everything's going wrong, He's working. He saved us. I think this is a way of saying if your life is filled with darkness and everything seems to be going downhill, in spite of appearances there's glory at work. If you belong to Him and trust in Him, there's glory at work.

His glory is at work, even if on the outside it looks dark and dreary. **Be patient**, because when you know Jesus and He's in your life, there is always more to life than meets the eye. Tim Keller says in his book, **The Reason for God**, "Jesus' miracles are not just a challenge to our minds but a promise to our hearts that the world we all want, the world we were made for, a world of glory and perfection, a world not marred by sin, the world we all want ... is coming."

Years later Peter and John would write about what they saw that day. Peter would later write, **2 Peter 1:16-18**, "*For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty.* <sup>17</sup> *For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to Him by the Majestic Glory, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,"* <sup>18</sup> *we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with Him on the holy mountain.*"

And one day, many years later, an elderly Apostle John would testify, **John 1:4-5**, "***In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.*** <sup>5</sup> ***The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.***" And in **John 1:14**, "*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*" James was the only one of the three who didn't record the event. Maybe he intended to, but he was the first of the twelve to be martyred, and his life was cut short. Although he didn't write about this intense moment, it surely made an **indelible** impression on Him and most likely sustained Him during His own suffering and death.

That day on the mountain the disciples saw Jesus in a way that they had **never seen Him before**. Before that day, they saw themselves on a fast camel bound for glory. What they didn't see was that the road to glory passed through the tunnel of suffering. Jesus asked His disciples, then and now, to follow Him through that tunnel, which connected this life to the next. They would have to stoop to enter, and they would have to leave everything behind to squeeze through the narrow opening. And that's where the Transfiguration fits in.

It was, quite literally, **the light at the end of the tunnel** — a glimpse of His glory on the other side. And the way to that glory is not around suffering, but through it. And joy is found in the journey to that destination, but not on a detour ... not on any detour. It would be the reward of not only being with Christ but sharing His glory that would give the disciples the strength to crawl through that tunnel. So dazzling was the reward that whatever they had to go through, whatever they had to leave behind, **paled in comparison**.

But to share Christ's glory means we must first share His **suffering**. And trust me on this. **You will suffer**. You may not **suffer** persecution. You may not **suffer** humiliation. But you will **suffer**. At the very least you will **suffer** death. And who knows when that will be? It might not be for years. With the Coronavirus, it might be next month. Death waits for no one. I've now buried more than my fair share of people younger than me. You may live a long time with few worries, and then have to **suffer** through old age. And it's hard to be the very elderly, when your body breaks down and your mind drifts away. **That's real suffering**. **Suffering** doesn't come into our lives **by majority vote**. It's part of our **reality**. It was part of Jesus' **reality**. And He wants us to know that the cross comes before the crown; the humiliation before the exaltation.

And though Peter often said and did dumb things, he did listen that day on the mountain. Years later he wrote to those who were as **confused** as he once was regarding the role suffering plays in the process of redemption. He said, **1 Peter 4:12-13**, "*Beloved, do not be surprised at*

*the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. <sup>13</sup> But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when His glory is revealed."* That's the message of the Transfiguration — *that you may rejoice and be glad when His glory is revealed.*"

The transfiguration is not just another cool miracle to convince the disciples of Jesus's divinity. It's an experience of **revealed glory** that they're going to need for the dark days and hard times ahead. Jesus reveals His glory, to them and to us, so that we would know that denying yourself, and taking up your cross, and following Jesus is **not a burden**. And so that we would know that losing your lives for His sake is **not a chore**. Because Jesus Himself embodies the glory of God, but then He gave up that glory, so that we might see it **and live**. And that's why you no longer live according to "**you do you.**" And that's why we now live according to "**you do Him.**"

Think about that. You need to pray.

Take a moment to do that, and then I'll close.

*Our Lord and our God, thank You that You have spoken to us by Your Son. Open our eyes that we might see our sin and then see our Savior. O Lord, help us to be those who see and understand. Help us to be those who hear and obey. Help us to be those who listen and follow. May Your word be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Teach us how to obey your Son, worship your Son, and trust your Son, even in these dark and uncertain times, so that more and more Your glory can come into our lives and transform us. We pray, Lord, that You would conform our lives into the image of Your Son, who did all this for us. And so, Lord, if there is anyone among us this day, anyone who watches this video, anyone who hears these words not trusting in Christ, we would ask that by Your Spirit that You would draw that person to Yourself, that they might embrace the beloved Son. Help us to know and believe that the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever. Amen.*

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## **2 Corinthians 4:5-6**

*"For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give **the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.**"*