

**LENT 2021 - Who Do You Say That I Am?
"A Different Kind of Glory"**

February 28, 2021

Overarching theme: John 20:21, Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' In 2021, as DISCIPLES, we are SENT with the peace of Christ to share with others!

Instructions: When using this material as teacher, feel free to pick and choose the point you want to emphasize in the lesson. The format of the curriculum is designed to have an abundance of information in which to refer as desired.

Core Passage: Mark 9:2-9 NRSV

² Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, ³ and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. ⁴ And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. ⁵ Then Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." ⁶ He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. ⁷ Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!" ⁸ Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them anymore, but only Jesus. ⁹ As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

Commentary:

Details in this episode evoke several Old Testament stories, even though no particular passage is quoted directly. The dazzling white clothing signals heavenly rather than earthly beings. The mountain, cloud and divine voice all remind readers of God's appearance in Exodus 24. Jewish tradition held that Moses, whose burial place is unknown (Deut 34), and Elijah, who was taken up in a chariot (2 Kings 2), did not die but were living in heaven. Peter's immediate response to the vision, "*Let us make three dwellings* (v. 5) seems somewhat confused. The Divine voice in response is more than clear - "*This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!*" (v. 7).

So despite providing the most dramatic evidence of Jesus' relationship to God of any epiphany scene in the Gospel, the transfiguration cannot override the necessity of Jesus' suffering and death. Indeed it sharpens the paradox of the cross. Although God apparently spared Moses and Elijah from the normal processes of death, not only does God's own beloved Son die, but also his death is at the hands of his enemies. Even the affirmation of exaltation and entry into the glory of the Father (8:38) cannot nullify the scandal of the cross. We tend to think that Jesus is more clearly Son of God in glory, not in suffering. This passage challenges us to revise our understanding of how God's presence comes to the world. Jesus came to truly dwell among us, not to merely reign on some mountain of transfigured glory. He does not remain on the mountain, but descends to the valley below, presently to heal a boy his prayer-challenged disciples could not (9:29); and ultimately to make his fateful journey to Jerusalem (10:32).

- adapted from the New Interpreter's Bible, Vol VIII p. 630-632

Questions to Ponder for accountability in the group:

1. If you had been a witness to this astonishing moment on the mountain with Peter, James and John, what do you think your reaction would have been?
2. What do you think of 'terrified' Peter's rambling statement, "*Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah*"? Do you think that Peter wanted to make this glorious moment last? Why or Why not?
3. What do you make of the Divine response: "*This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!* Why the emphasis on listening rather than filling the silence with words (*because "he did not know what to say"*)?
4. After Jesus came down the mountain, he heals a boy that his prayer-less disciples could not (9:28-29). What does this say about Jesus' mission - not remaining on the mountain of glory with Moses and Elijah - but descending to heal the boy? What does it say about his prayer-challenged disciples?
5. What can we learn from this story as Jesus' disciples today? What kind of 'glory' is God calling us to seek?

Activity for the life of a disciple:

1. Remember to find encouragement for the day by reading the daily devotional and spend time pondering and meditating on the challenge.
2. Ponder and pray on this scripture this week: Mark 9:7
Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!"
3. Think of a way that you can 'come down the mountain' to help someone this week. Remember the calling to prayer, not just acting in human strength (Mark 9:28-29). Prayerfully reflect or use your P.E.A.C.E. Planner to journal about this "different kind of glory."