

(Mark 9:9-13)

(preached 4/19/15 Pine Grove BC)

Introduction

Take your Bibles and turn with me to Mark 9:9.

This is where our journey through the gospel of Mark takes us today.

Last week, Jesus took Peter, James and John up a mountain to reveal His glory to them and appear with a resurrected Elijah and Moses.

Today, we are going to walk back down that mountain with these men and listen to their conversation as they leave this incredible event.

So, let's read Mark 9:9-13 this morning..

⁹ As they were coming down from the mountain, He gave them orders not to relate to anyone what they had seen, ^[u]until the Son of Man rose from the dead. ¹⁰ They ^[s]seized upon ^[h]that statement, discussing with one another ^[i]what rising from the dead meant. ¹¹ They asked Him, saying, "Why is it that the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" ¹² And He said to them, "Elijah does first come and restore all things. And yet how is it written of the Son of Man that He will suffer many things and be treated with contempt? ¹³ But I say to you

that Elijah has ^{li}indeed come, and they did to him whatever they wished, just as it is written of him.”

Let us pray.

I am not really sure when it started in my life, but I have a fascination for brain teasers, riddles, and puzzles.

My first exposure to them came from a great uncle who always had brain teasing puzzles lying around his house.

Every time we would go visit him, I would pick one up and could not put it down until I solved it or we left.

Then as a child, Rubik’s cube became all the rage.

Though I could never solve it as a kid, I went to the internet a few years back and learned how to do it.

But I also love word puzzles as well.

Lateral thinking problems are puzzles that I sometimes play with the girls and Tonya.

Every Sunday contains Parade Magazine, and there is a section of it that usually contains a puzzle by Marilyn Vo Savant, who claims to be the smartest woman in the world.

Now, brain teasers are either something you love or you love to hate.

And I understand that.

Often times, they are simply time wasters that leave you unsatisfied even after you figure them out.

Well today, in the verses that we just read, we find ourselves in a brain twister of sorts.

Very few people read those verses the first time and leave with a complete understanding of them.

And you may leave today with less understanding than before, but that is certainly not my aim.

I want us to look at these verses and try to clear the fog about what these verses mean.

Now, coming to a difficult section like this is helpful for all of us...

First, it makes us appreciate the simple sections of the Bible...

And I would add this...

The majority of the Bible is simple and clear.

If you saved, the Holy Spirit helps you understand most of the Scripture with little or no help.

No one needs a college degree or even a high school diploma to understand the gospel...

The truth that man is a sinner who has broken God's law.

The truth that man is going to be punished in hell forever for his sin.

The truth that Jesus never broke God's law, but was punished on a cross like He did and then died and was resurrected.

And the truth that man can be made right with God and escape hell by turning from sin and believing in Christ...

Those are truths of the gospel that anyone can understand.

Now, they may not be willing to repent and trust Jesus with their life...

But most are able to clearly understand those truths of the Bible..

And the incredible reality is that salvation starts there and then you grow in more knowledge of God after that..

You don't need a complete understanding of every word of the Bible to be saved.

You need to admit your sin, repent of it and believe upon Christ.

Then the learning and growing starts there.

And the truth is that no one will ever understand all of God's Word completely.

That is not permission to never study the Bible, but it is encouraging when you come to difficult passages..

But second, hard passages like the one today remind us of this important truth.

We are not all-knowing like God.

We can't make all the pieces fit in the puzzle at all times.

But again, that does not mean that we throw up our hands and simply give up on certain verses in the Bible without any effort.

It is amazing to me how hard we will use our brains for less important tasks but simply listen to sermons or read our Bibles with our brains shut off.

Men will lie awake at night trying to figure out why the car wont start or why the fish wouldn't bite or why the air conditioner is broken...

And women will all their brain power to find the latest sale and the best deal on that dress...

But then, we won't like one single brain cell to dig into the Bible.

To mine its treasures.

Let me remind us all, the things of the world will pass away but the Word of the Lord will stand forever...

But there is a third point I want to raise before I dig into this passage..

This points to the importance of expository, chapter by chapter, passage by passage, verse by verse preaching and teaching.

The people and the preacher can't avoid the difficult verses.

If I didn't believe in the effectiveness of expository preaching, we would have jumped skipped over verses 9-13...

And I would have preached about the demon-possessed boy of the next set of verses...

But that in an insult to God who said that His every word was pure and helpful in our life...

So, with that said, let's put on our thinking caps and try to get to the intended meaning of verses 9-13 this morning...

To help give us better clarity, I have divided these 5 verses into 3 parts...

I. Hearing from the Savior (9-10)

II. Reading from the Scriptures (11-12)

III. Seeing a Sneak Peek (13)

Let's begin with something that is easy to understand in verses 9-10...

I. Hearing from the Savior (9-10)

In verse 9, Jesus, Peter, James, and John head down the mountain.

This is most likely, Mount Hermon in northern Israel, though we can't be sure of that.

But on that mountain last week, Jesus was transfigured, which simply meant that these 3 disciples had seen Him in all his glory.

Mark said that he radiant and white, and no launderer could make white.

This is whiter than Clorox white.

And while they were on the mountain with a glorified Christ, a resurrected Moses and Elijah joined them.

And we talked about how Jesus may have used this experience in the lives of the disciples to confirm to them who they thought HE was.

Peter had spoken for the other disciples in chapter 8, saying that Jesus was the Christ.

He was the Messiah. He was the long awaited Savior that the OT had predicted.

Yet, as soon as they had made that confession, Jesus says that they are going to get what they expect right away.

Instead, the Christ, the Messiah, the King is going to be rejected and killed.

And on top of that, there will be no crowns for his followers right away as well.

They will need to carry their own cross as well.

And so in a matter of a few verses at the end of chapter 8, the disciples have had their hopes rise and then fall.

And so in chapter 9, Jesus takes them on a high mountain and shows them that HE is indeed who he says He is...

He is indeed who they confessed Him to be.

And now, there are seeing Jesus in all His glory.

And from this point on, they may not want to believe the plans of rejection and death, but they will no longer doubt who Jesus is.

And so as they head down the mountain, Jesus tells them to not tell anyone what they witnessed until after the resurrection.

Though the disciples can't know the future, Jesus knows what is about to occur.

A cross awaits him along with a cruel death and a glorious resurrection.

The story is still unfinished at this point in time.

The gospel is not that Jesus is a miracle worker.

The gospel is not even the fact that Jesus is God in the flesh.

The gospel is that He lived a perfect life, died in the place of sinners, and was raised from the dead to show that God accepted his sacrifice as a substitute for sinners.

Jesus needed the disciples to keep quiet until everything had been accomplished.

This is like taking your cake batter to the cooking contest and entering it.

It may be a good batter, but the finished cake is much better.

The disciples listened closely according to verse 10 and one thing that he said really caught their attention..

“Rising from the dead?”

Now, these disciple knew what it meant to rise from the dead.

The OT taught about a resurrection at the end of the age in Daniel 12.

Job talked about his own resurrection.

Some of the psalms contained the idea of a resurrection.

The Pharisees taught about a resurrection.

So Peter, James, and John knew what it meant to rise from the dead,....

They just didn't know it meant for the Messiah, the Christ, the King to rise from the dead...

Their mind was set on what the Messiah should be and death was not a part of that view and neither was the idea of a resurrection...

That is why we are at such a disadvantage of trying to put ourselves in their shoes here.

If you grew up in church, all you know about Jesus is his death and resurrection.

We are taught that from a young age.

And we see that, but you must remember, this is all news for the disciples.

They've never celebrated Easter.

They never heard of a cross and an empty tomb.

They are before the cross, so they are fighting
against this idea with all their might.

And they begin talking among themselves...

And that is good because Jesus said don't talk about
what you just saw on this mountain..

So far, so good.

We are all understanding this so far I hope..

So let's move from Hearing from the Savior to....

II. Reading from the Scriptures (11-12)

Now, they are thinking about the resurrection and this question comes to their mind...

Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?

Here is what you need to understand about the OT...

It taught that there was a Messiah coming...

There was a king coming, and He was going to establish His kingdom upon the earth...

He was going to restore Israel to all of its glory among the nations.

He was going to rule the nations with a rod of iron.

He was going to defeat the enemies of God and usher in a new era...

Now, I am going to put up a table to help us understand the next set of verses...

This requires your thinking cap a little bit here, but I will try to help us understand what is happening here..

The disciples all had expectations for Messiah's coming to earth.

Yet, their expectations did not meet with what God had said in the OT.

And that is why they are confused here.

So since you are Messiah.

We have confessed that and saw that.

But now you are saying that you will die and be raised..

The kingdom must then come after your death and resurrection.

And if the kingdom is coming soon, where is Elijah.

Now, they had just seen him on the mountain.

But all of a sudden he is gone.

In their thinking, shouldn't he be headed down the mountain with them?

Let's suppose you die and are resurrected.

We still need Elijah to come and announce the arrival of your kingdom when you rise from the dead and bring the Kingdom.

So, if he isn't coming, why does the OT say that he must come before you?

And Jesus answers it in this way.

The OT is accurate.

Elijah will come first and restore all things...

And guess what?

That is a day that is still future even to us in here today.

One day, Elijah will come in the midst of the great Tribulation that is coming upon the earth.

In that 7 year period, Elijah will come as one of the two witnesses to call Israel to repentance.

To restore Israel's relationship to God when they see Jesus as their Messiah.

And Jesus confirms that truth here.

He says the Bible is right about that, and he is confirming that they have done some good Bible study there.

You are right about that.

Good job.

And then he adds, but why can't you also see that the OT teaches that I must suffer and be rejected.

You are telling me that you can get part right about Elijah, but you miss the part in the OT that say Messiah is going to suffer and die?

IT is a fair question too..

Consider this..

The teaching concerning the coming of Elijah before the Messiah is just a few verses in Malachi..

In fact, the prophecy about Elijah is one of the final two verses of the OT...

⁵ “Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord.

Do you see what Jesus is saying?

You are right disciples.

Good work on your Bible study.

That is exactly what is going to happen before the Messiah comes..

Elijah will come and restore all things...

But how can you do such good study of the OT and get that incredible truth out of one verse...

Yet miss a whole chapter in Isaiah that talks about my rejection and suffering.

How can you not see that what I have been telling you comes from the verses found in Isaiah 53, Psalm 22, Psalm 69, Zechariah 12.

You understand that Elijah needs to come but you fail to understand that I need to suffer and die for sinners?

You are more worried about the kingdom coming than you are about your sins being forgiven?

They are more concerned with getting a little glory in the kingdom than they are about getting forgiveness of sin..

Which brings up a point that applies to all of us...

People come to church for various reasons...

Some go through financial problems and think a visit to church will solve them..

Some go through marriage problems and think a little bit of Jesus will make them better..

Some have health problems and come to church hoping for a cure...

While walking down the mountain, the only thing on the disciples mind is what is in this kingdom plan for them.

They now know Jesus is the King.

They have confessed it and now saw it.

They only other thing left to think about is how soon can the kingdom come and how quickly can the honors fall on them...

Their sins are the farthest thing from their mind.

And people walk in to churches with their sins before a holy God as the farthest thing from their mind.

They want a job.

They want a cure.

They want some teaching to make them a better husband or wife...

But what they truly need is a solution for their sin.

Cause guess what?

All the other stuff...their health, their career and even their marriage will all eventually go away and they will simply be standing before a holy God....

With nothing in their hands except their sins...

And without a solution in that day, it doesn't matter how great their job, health, or marriage....

It only matters if they have repented and believed upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

And as they walked down the mountain that day,
the disciples heads were still in the clouds...

Elijah, kingdom, glory and honor for them is all
they were thinking...

But Jesus is saying, you better be thinking about
suffering, rejection and the cross.

That is what will get you into that kingdom.

Without the suffering and death of Jesus, the
disciples have no hope of future glory.

But Jesus does not let their question go unanswered
and he answers their question in verse 13...

And that will be our last section....

III. Seeing a Sneak Peek (13)

In verse 13, Jesus tells the disciples that Elijah has come...

If you look at the screen, I have included a passage from the book of Luke...

Luke 1:17

¹⁷ It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

And who is this verse talking about?

It is talking about John the Baptist...

The angel Gabriel was talking to Zacharias and describing the son that his wife Elizabeth would have...

He would come in the spirit and power of Elijah.

He was not Elijah.

John the Baptist even told people that he wasn't Elijah, but he was a preview of what Elijah will do in the future.

And that was necessary because we now know that Messiah will have two comings.

He came once and to accommodate the truth of Scripture, someone like Elijah came before him in the person of John the Baptist..

And what did John do?

Well, he called the nation of Israel to repentance in preparation of the arrival of Messiah...

And guess what Elijah will do before the Second coming of Messiah?

HE will call Israel to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

What happened to John the Baptist?

They cut off his head because of his preaching.

What will happen to Elijah in the tribulation?

He will be killed in the street.

And that is what Jesus means when he says that they did to him whatever they wished.

So, where is the meat in this for us today?

Conclusions

Two quick applications for us...

First, we need to take Bible study seriously.

Yes, this is a difficult passage, but we must be willing to dig deep and gain as much understanding as possible..

What else in the world offers as much value to our lives as the study of the Scriptures..

¹⁶ All Scripture is ^[h]inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for ^[u]training in righteousness; ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

The Bible is a lamp to our feet, a light to our path.

Is it pure and reliable.

Hiding the word of God in our heart keeps us from sin.

The Bible is the only investment in this world that promises a profitable return...

God says that His Word goes out and accomplishes its purpose.

In this passage, the disciples studied and even understood some important passages of Scripture, but struck out on the big ones..

And that is a lesson to a lot of people.

Don't miss the forest for the trees.

Be gracious on areas of the Bible where there is room for disagreement.

But don't budge on the important areas of Scripture...

The second lesson we need to take from this is that *suffering comes before glory.*

If they killed John the Baptist, Jesus and the disciples, don't expect the world to applaud and honor Christians.

Expect rejection.

Expect suffering.

Expect trouble.

Jesus said, "In this world, you will have trouble, but take heart, I have overcome the world."

Trouble is the story of the Christian life.

IT was predicted for us by our Lord, so we shouldn't be surprised when we see it.

That is why I am shocked when I see so-called preachers stand up and promise health and wealth and nothing but good times for those who get saved.

What Bible are they reading?

What verses are they pointing to?

Jesus told Peter, James, and John.

Stop thinking about all that awaits you in the kingdom.

Get your mind off of the health and wealth and pleasures of the kingdom...

And get your mind on the suffering that awaits Me and awaits you.

Glory is coming, but suffering is coming faster...

And without the suffering and death of Jesus, there would be no kingdom glory.

Dear friends, I would love to promise you a new car and house and perfect health today...

But all I have to offer you is the shameful cross of Jesus that is despised by the world...

The cross doesn't offer treasures in this world, but it does offer treasures in the world to come.

I want to close with Peter having the final word today...

As he come down that mountain, his mind was on glory...

But after the death and resurrection of Jesus, his mind was on suffering and we would do well to listen to his words in this day and age...

Where everyone seems to looking for glory instead of trouble...

1 Peter 5:6...

⁶ Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, ⁷ casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. ⁸ Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹ ^[d] But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your ^[e] brethren who are in the world. ¹⁰ After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. ¹¹ To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen.