

Glory Fades, God's word doesn't

In the year 2001 my high school footballs team won the Wisconsin division three state championship. It was amazing. We were huge underdogs going up against a team that had a pedigree for winning the title year after year. I wasn't on the team because I was 4'10 and 97 lbs. But I was there cheering. At the time it was all anyone talked about. We sang Queens we are the champions on the two hour trip back to our school. The players were heroes that year. It was great. We were just basking in the glory of a great victory. 17 years later, I can't tell you about a single play that happened during that game. I can't tell you about any heroic effort that any of the athletes made. I even had to look up what year it was that we won. Because the glory of that event has continued to fade for me. It's precious. It's nice. But it has become far less significant for me the farther I get away from it. Even the glory that the Eagles players are experiencing this week will slowly fade away.

Glory fades. But the word of God doesn't.

This is the lesson that our God wants to give to us today. Our lesson is from Mark 9:2-9. The last few weeks we have been in the early part of Mark, in the early part of Jesus' 3 year ministry. Our lesson today is nearer to the end. Jesus is starting to talk about the end of his ministry. Mark 8 says

He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. That was tough for the disciples to hear that Jesus was going to have to suffer in that way. No one wants someone to suffer. The disciples especially knowing that Jesus was their God and their savior, didn't want to watch someone they cared about so much have to suffer like that. But Jesus wanted his disciples to know that this was not an accident. Jesus suffering and dying on the cross- even though it wasn't what the disciples would have planned for Jesus, it is what God had planned for Jesus to go through. In order to save you Jesus had to suffer. He had to die. It's easy in hind sight to say, I had to do those things. But only God is able to with perfect certainty predict to his disciples what he has to do before he does it. And that is what Jesus did. He told his disciples this is what is going to happen.

Then Mark 9:1 And he said to them, “Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see that the kingdom of God has come with power.”

Ok, now to the verses that we have in front of us today. After 6 days, six days after he said that, “some who are standing here will not taste death before they see that the kingdom of God has come with power.”

He took some of his disciples, Peter, James and John and he led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. And he was transfigured before them. His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them.

He was transfigured. The way he looked changed. Right in front of their very eyes, Peter James and John got to see God full of power and full of glory. They got to see a glimpse of the kingdom of God. They got to see Jesus not as this persecuted traveling miracle working preacher, they got to see him as the king of kings full of power and glory. And the clothes of the king matched his glory.

We still use clothing to show glory don't we? In our educational systems we do. You graduate from high school and college and you get a robe, if you get your masters degree you get a cool hood, if you get a doctorate you get a cool hat. When you think of a king, there are usually a lot of fancy accessories that he is wearing that show his glory. There is the crown, maybe the scepter, maybe a medallion, or a big cape. With Jesus, it isn't accessories, it is an ornate pattern. It is a simple one color- white. But that white clothing was whiter than any white that could ever be made. Purer than fresh snow. Absolute perfection of just one color.

Talking with Jesus on that mountain were Moses and Elijah. In Luke's account, we hear what they are talking about. They are talking about Jesus' departure, his exodus from this world and going back to heaven. Jesus knows he is getting near the end. And for him this must have been comforting, to be with these faithful servants. I imagine it must have been relieving for him for a moment to stop concealing his glory. To show this side of him.

And then there are Peter, James, and John. Can you imagine how incredible that must have been. At the moment they were terrified. They see Moses and Elijah, somehow they just know who these guys are talking to Jesus. They see this glory of Jesus and they are so terrified, and afraid.

Peter just says something foolish. He says Lord "it is good for us to be here let's put up three shelters, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." Why would Moses and Elijah two men who just came from heaven need a tent? Take a nap from the long journey? Keep warm? Jesus doesn't even respond to his suggestion.

A cloud then comes and covers them up and we hear "This is my Son whom I love listen to him." God the Father is confirming for Peter, James, and John who his Son really is. It is Jesus. And God wants the disciples to listen to Jesus.

And the disciples just seeing Jesus being transformed, his clothes being changed to a bright white, Moses and Elijah appearing before him, having a cloud roll in and cover them. hearing the voice of God come from the cloud, look up and it's all over. Jesus looks just how he did on the way up the mountain. Elijah and Moses are gone. The glory and the honor were real. They were special. They helped those disciples and they helped Jesus, but then in an instant. That glory and that honor in visible form, had vanished. Glory faded.

And as they walked down that hill Jesus turned to them and told them not to tell anyone what they had seen until, the Son of Man had risen from the dead. The glory wasn't gone from Jesus forever, but it was hidden again. He didn't look any longer like someone in dazzling white but he just like your everyday average son of a man.

The glory of Jesus faded for a moment, but the Word of God didn't. The Word of God never fades. It's power never fades. And it is so clear in this lesson. When Jesus needed some support, when he wanted to be glorified. When he was looking at what he had to do to fulfill the will of God and it seemed painful and very difficult. He went up to a mountain with his disciples and he spoke with Moses and Elijah. Not Mary or Joseph his parents who would tell him he was sure a good boy. Not Job who had suffered or Noah who had seen great tragedy. He went to Moses and Elijah. Moses was the one who wrote the first five books of the Bible. Elijah was a prophet and represented the great prophets of the Old Testament. Those two really represented the word of God. They stood for everything that God had taught his people and promised his people that he would do for them. And the greatest thing that God promised to do for his people was to send them a Savior from their sins.

For Jesus when he needed to be lifted up, he didn't look at his perfect life and think to himself, wow I have done a great job so far and I am sure

that I am going to be able to keep this up, nothing can stop me! He didn't look to his friends or family to tell him to not give up and keep going. When he wanted help. He turned to Moses and the prophets, he turned to the word of God. And when he did that he received everything that he needed.

We all need to do that more often. We need to realize where real strength, comfort, healing, and value come from. Because no matter who you are, you live in a world that is going to bring you challenges. And there are many, many places that we think about turning to thinking that is what is going to make us victorious and worthy of glory. But all of them are so weak when compared to the power that is found in God's word. God wants to glorify you. God wants to show you what his true power is. He wants to reveal to you who he really is and what he can do for you. And all of that is revealed for us in God's word. It's a treasure more valuable than any riches on this earth. It's a future that's more desired than any career. It's a level of success that we could never achieve on your own. God wants to give you ever lasting life. God wants to tell you the meaning of life. God wants to remove your guilt and shame. God wants to keep you away from destroying your life and your eternity because you were seeking glory from something other than the love of God. Listen to him.

God the Father. Speaking from heaven and what does he say. He says this is my Son who I love, listen to him. Not remember this very special moment. Or give my son some credit for all that he deserves. Listen to him.

That's why we are hear today. We are here to listen to him. That's why many of you have brought your children here today. To listen to him.

If you are newer to the church you might not know what catechism is. It is a class for 7th and 8th graders of our congregation. They study God's word once a week, and memorize passages from the Bible and the creeds and commandments. And because it is another hour of school for them that not all of their friends have to take, many of them ask their parents, "Why do I have to go to catechism?" And many parents respond with because your older siblings had to do it, so you do too.

That's one of those statements that is true but it could be truer. The reason that 7th and 8th graders go to catechism, is the same reason why we come here to church. It's the same reason that many of you go weekly Bible studies here at church, and it's the same reason that many of you take time each and every day to read some of God's word. It is because a God who knows all things, and who loves us perfectly tells us that this is

going to change your life for the better. He tells us to listen to him. He tells us to study his word. The all powerful God of the universe reveals his love and his plan for you in his word. For the love of God listen to him.

He will transform you. You have Moses and Elijah, not in the flesh but in their words. You have the words of Jesus. You can go to him for strength and healing or guidance or love or assurance or value or for a pick me up whenever you want.

The glory that Jesus had on the mountain it faded as he walked down. The glorious accomplishments of your glory days from High school, college, your career, eventually they are going to fade away to. But the word of God. The promises that he makes to you. Those have never faded and will never fade away. Invest in imperishable. Glory Fades God's word doesn't Amen.