

SERMON

Mark 9:2-9

Transfigured in Glory and Light

Nunawading and Waverley, 14-2-21

Humans have a great need for light and are fascinated by it. It dispels the darkness so that you can find something at the back of a cupboard or under the bed. Light has come a long way since early humans could start a fire. Now torches are hundreds of lumens and LEDs very energy efficient. The lights of our cities can be seen from space and now, light pollution has become a problem. It was only natural that God would reveal his Son through **the dazzling white clothes** that became illuminated from within while he was on the mountain. We can only describe glory by thinking of light, power, beauty and goodness of God shining out of him.

There are lesser lights inside of us. In a modest person, we may not see hidden talents or qualities. That is the fun of getting to know people. What a surprise if your friend could sit at the piano and play a complicated concerto. This was the nature of the light and glory coming from our Lord Jesus. It was as though a veil was lifted and Peter, James and John could see in an instance, who Jesus was. They experienced the light of revelation as their mouths dropped open and with huge astonishment, were looking at Jesus **talking with Elijah and Moses**. Light shows and reveals.

This is like the conversion experiences we witness, which we do not have often enough. It is a wondrous thing to share your faith and carefully explain the gospel to someone. There are objections, lots of questions, even mocking and incredulity but gradually the light and glory of the Lord, his redemption and grace begin to make sense to people. Later John would write, **we have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only**. Peter, too, would write of his experience: **we were eye-witnesses of his majesty**. At first, the disciples did not know whom they were dealing with but the light of Christ's revelation changed that.

Is it easy for us to see the glory and light of our Lord Jesus at work in our lives? I do not think it is easy for us at all. For some Christians, it can be difficult working out what the Lord could be leading you to do with your lives. Which career option should I take? There may not

be so much light and glory for you when a child has a medical issue or an aged parent requires so much attention and minding and your mental and emotional resources feel so depleted. We see riots, military coups, terrorist attacks, innocent people jailed and put before virtual kangaroo courts and think, “Lord, we could do with a little bit of your light here.”

It is so understandable for us that Peter would want this moment to last. Peter had two fellow disciples with him, making three. There before him were three people, Jesus, Moses and Elijah. Three visitors came to Abraham’s tent and he learnt that they were the Lord’s ambassadors. There are three persons in the holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and they were present on the mountain. God gave Jonah three days in the giant fish to understand the compassion of God for Nineveh. Jesus rose from the dead after three days. Three is the number of community and fellowship with God. How beautiful it all was for Peter to be with such people but it would be quickly taken away.

And this is how the light and glory of Christ works. The Father cloaked himself in a cloud and **the cloud covered the three frightened men**. We silly and wrong-headed human beings seek glory to touch, to hold onto the glittering of money or the fame that others have who are called stars. Every scientist, every politician, every wealthy person or talented person is corrupted by it and we who struggle with our ordinariness, seek it. But glory is not to be sought; it is given when God wants to share it.

In a way we live in **the cloud** that obscures God but it is in there that we hear the voice of God. God won’t be seen but he will be heard. And that is why the Father tells us something absolutely important: **This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him**. It is when we live in our baptisms and receive the precious body and blood of Christ for our forgiveness, life and salvation that we have hidden light; glory covered by **a cloud**. Every time you sit quietly with the word of God, for a moment you are in the cloud, hearing the Spirit address you. It means you can cope when pain, or shock, or loss, or hardship shutout the light and glory of Christ. We can trust that just as the disciples trudged on to Jerusalem and all they saw was Jesus resolutely heading towards his cross, we too can cope with not seeing glory and light.

But they will come. I have experienced it in my own life; little resurrections after struggles or when over tired God has arranged a cancellation. The times when I would love to have a clear direction, certainty about the decisions I am making and where things are going to end and then, there God gives me clarity or something to confirm the direction I am taking. I know the light and glory are there, just as there was light behind the skin of Jesus. Behind what I see is Christ's glory as it is just beyond the soil of my grave. Even if there is no light peeking through, I can always hear his voice.