

The Son of Man

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[0 : 0 0] You may be seated. Good morning. My name is Matthew Capone, and I'm the pastor here at Cheyenne Mountain Presbyterian Church, and it's my joy to bring God's word to you today.

A special welcome if you're new or visiting with us. We're glad that you're here, and we're glad that you're here not because we're trying to fill seats, but because we're following Jesus together as one community.

And as we follow Jesus together, we become convinced that there's no one so good, they don't need God's grace, and no one so bad they can't have it, which is why we come back week after week to hear what God has to say to us in his word.

We're continuing our series this week in the Gospel of Mark, and you'll remember that the Gospels tell the story of Jesus and his life and his death and his resurrection, and we're now in the second half of this Gospel.

The first half was building up to Peter's confession, which we saw a couple weeks ago. And since then, since Peter has confessed Jesus as the Christ, we're beginning to learn more and more what that actually means.

[1 : 1 0] We talked last week about the fact that Peter knows the word Christ, but he doesn't exactly know its content. He is surprised and scandalized by Jesus' discussion of suffering.

We had that sobering verse in Mark 8, verse 34, where Jesus says, If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

And in the verse before, he has told us that there's two ways to live, for the things of God versus the things of man. In other words, he told us last week that we trade honor now for honor later.

Jesus is coming back, and we look forward to that day. Now, there's two things going on here for Peter. Peter's going to be disappointed in two different directions.

Last week, we saw his disappointment in the fact that Jesus is less than he wants. He didn't realize how low Jesus was going to go. He wasn't prepared for suffering.

[2 : 1 1] He wasn't prepared for crucifixion and death. And yet, Jesus begins to teach his disciples clearly, rather than speaking in parables. This week, now, there's something else that Peter doesn't understand.

Last week, he didn't understand how low Jesus was going to go, but he also doesn't understand how high Jesus goes. In other words, Peter is disappointed on the one hand and surprised on the other hand, that Jesus is not just another prophet ending the sequence.

He is greater and more than Moses and Elijah. At the end last week, we talked about the importance of vision, that it's what we see in the future, that what we look forward to allows us to suffer now.

And in this passage, Jesus is going to help Peter and his disciples understand what exactly that vision is. What is it that helps and enables and empowers Christians to walk through suffering following Jesus?

It's with that that we're going to read now. So I invite you to turn with me to Mark chapter 9. You can turn in your worship guide, you can turn in your Bible, you can turn in your phone.

[3 : 26] No matter where you turn, remember that this is God's word. And God tells us that his word is more precious than gold, even the finest gold, and it is sweeter than honey, even honey that comes straight from the honeycomb.

And so that's why we read now Mark chapter 9, starting at verse 1. And he said to them, 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. And his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.

Verse 5, 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.

For he did not know what to say, for they were terrified. And the cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud. This is my beloved son.

[4 : 44] Listen to him. Verse 8, And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them, but Jesus only.

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. So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead might mean.

And they asked him, Why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come? 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? But I tell you that Elijah has come. And they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written of him.

And I invite you to pray with me as we come to this portion of God's word. Our Father in heaven, we thank you for your promise in Isaiah 55, that your word will not return to you void, but instead it will accomplish all of your purposes.

[5 : 51] We see here the transformative vision of Jesus that Peter and James and John had, and we know that it changed and it shaped them. And so we simply ask this morning that you would give us a vision that shapes and changes us as well.

That you would use your word in a powerful way this morning. That you would grow our love and our affection for Jesus, and you would grow our reverence and our awe. That we would see his glory, and that we would love him, and we would follow him.

We ask these things in the mighty name of Jesus Christ. Amen. Last October, Daniel Craig's final James Bond movie, No Time to Die, came out.

And it's important to note that it is not, in fact, the last Bond movie. It's just the last one featuring Daniel Craig. Because, of course, Daniel Craig comes in this long line of bonds.

Before him, there was Pierce Brosnan. Before Pierce Brosnan, there's Timothy Dalton. Before him, Roger Moore. And then, of course, the greatest, the original, Sean Connery. Now, these are different faces, right, playing this same character in different periods of time.

[7 : 10] But essentially, there's the same thing going on. All of them are strong and impressive. All of them drive British sports cars. All of them use these amazing gadgets that's put together by Q.

In other words, there's not as if one of them is moving up or down the scale. None of them is supernatural, but all of them are powerful. It is this same individual of different men filling the same office.

And so Daniel Craig, he's just another actor in this franchise. And there's going to be someone to replace him. In fact, you see, if you go online, that there are websites that will allow you to place bets on who the next James Bond is going to be.

And there's various odds right now on different actors. I mention this because as people at the time of Jesus thought about him and saw him, as they meditated on the prediction of a Messiah, it would be tempting for them to believe that Jesus is just the next actor in the franchise.

Jesus is just the next prophet. Now, maybe he's the prophet who's going to close out the series. Maybe this is the last season. But he's not going to be radically different from those who have come before.

[8 : 30] Yes, Jesus does miracles. You know who also did miracles? Elijah. Now, you might say, but Jesus raised people from the dead.

Clearly, he's something different from those who'd come before. Only problem with that, Elijah also raised someone from the dead. You might then say, okay, well, Jesus is this great teacher.

He's telling us things that we need to know and learn. You know what? That's great. Jesus follows Moses, who was also a great teacher.

There's this storyline that's going on throughout the Bible, and there's what we see in this passage, some overlap with previous seasons of previous episodes, especially an overlap with what happens with Moses in the book of Exodus.

If you remember, Moses is the leader that God appoints to take his people out of slavery in Egypt and to lead them to the Promised Land. And at one point, Moses has to receive the law from God.

[9 : 31] That's a large portion of the book of Exodus. In fact, it's Exodus chapter 20 where Moses receives the Ten Commandments. But in Exodus chapter 24, Moses has to wait six days on the mountain before God comes to give him the law.

Mark basically never gives us precise timing. Remember, he just likes to use the word immediately, except in this passage, verse 2.

When does this happen? After six days. Exodus 24, God's presence comes to Moses in what?

A thick cloud. Here, Mark chapter 9, verse 7, what happens? A cloud overshadows them. God speaks to Moses out of the cloud.

He also speaks to Jesus out of the cloud. If we've identified Mount Sinai correctly, it is over 7,000 feet in altitude. Now, that may not sound like a big deal here in Colorado Springs.

[10 : 40] It's a much bigger deal in the Near East. What are we told in this passage? Verse 2, Jesus takes them up, wait for it, a high mountain.

In other words, we are living out and looking back to this scene of Moses on Mount Sinai, which is being reenacted by Jesus in this new season, so to speak, of the Bible.

You know that in a good series, in a good franchise, there are going to be references to previous movies and new movies. Some people call these callbacks.

So in No Time to Die, what do we see James Bond driving but an Aston Martin DB5? Where have we seen an Aston Martin DB5 before?

Seven other James Bond movies. So we know the pattern is continuing. This is not an accident. It's intentional. Of course, James Bond can't just drive one car.

[11 : 42] He has to drive multiple cars. Later in No Time to Die, he switches out and drives an Aston Martin V8. Where did you see an Aston Martin V8 before? You've got to go all the way back to 1987, Living Daylights with Timothy Dalton.

Different man. Same car. In fact, it's not just the same car. If you compare the two movies, it is the same license plate. There are references and callbacks to previous episodes and series.

What I am telling you this morning is that as we're looking at six days with the cloud of God on this high mountain, that is Jesus' Aston Martin DB5.

We are being told clearly and definitively, Jesus here is living into this story that's come before. He is part of this sequence of God's representatives throughout redemptive history.

What's critical in this passage, though, is not what's similar. That is simply laying the background for us to notice and understand and be surprised by what is different.

[12 : 57] If you recall the story in Exodus of Moses, you may remember that Moses had to get two copies of the Ten Commandments. Why? Because when he was on the mountain, the people decided to worship a golden calf and rebel against God and instead partake in idolatry.

And so Moses comes down the mountain to meet the people and give them the Ten Commandments. And he's so appalled to see them worshipping this golden calf that he throws down the tablets on the ground and they break.

And so Moses has to go back and meet with God a second time. When he does that, this is all the way forward in Exodus 33, he says to God, I want you to show me your glory.

And God says, I will, I'll do that, but you can't see my face. I'm going to hide you in the rock. I'm going to pass by and you can see the tail end of my glory.

You can't see all of it. You just see a little piece of it. Well, what happens when Moses comes down the mountain a second time? When he's descending to the people, we're told that his face is shining from being with God.

[14 : 11] Moses has this reflected glory. He has seen the tail end of God's glory, and so it's still sort of coming off his face. You can tell as you look with him that he's been with God.

Jesus does something here much greater and more powerful. Jesus does not have external glory that reflects on him. Jesus has, look with me at verses two and three, internal glory.

He's transfigured before them. Verse two, then verse three, his clothes become radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them.

Now we're told here, it's as if no one on earth could bleach them to make sure we know it's not because it had just been laundry day for Jesus, okay? His clothes were so white, so radiant and intense, it was clearly supernatural.

If this color was on a paint swatch and you were trying to pick it, it would be glowing in front of you, and instead of being, you know, muted gray or something, whatever those fancy colors are that they come up with to make you feel like you're buying something that's of great value, it would just say supernatural white.

[15 : 29] And it would pop out from all the other colors. It would not make sense that it was sitting there next to everything else. In other words, Jesus, unlike Moses, has an internal power and glory that comes from inside of him, not from outside of him.

It's as if there's a light shining on Moses, and so you can see him, but Jesus instead has a light that comes from inside of him. When I was a kid, we would do this thing with our flashlights, which I'm not recommending to you, where we discovered that if you point the flashlight inside of your mouth and you close your mouth around the light, your face will glow red.

Kids don't do this at home. Moses has light from someone else that hits him. God's glory is on him, and so it reflects off.

Jesus in this passage is glowing from the inside. Jesus has his own internal power and glory.

He doesn't need to rely on anyone else for it. He is that much greater and more powerful and glorious than Moses. Jesus is not just the next figure in the franchise.

[16 : 43] He is not just the next person taking on the mantle of a prophet and priest and king. No, Jesus is God himself. He has a power that these men have never seen before.

Exodus 24, Moses receives the law. Here in this passage, God gives us the one who wrote the law. Exodus 24, Moses is able to reflect glory.

Here in this passage, Jesus, God shows us the source of glory, the one from whom all glory comes. Jesus is in continuity with all these other figures, and he is much greater than all of them.

To say Jesus is on a greater order of magnitude is an insufficient term. There isn't language to describe how much Jesus surpasses everyone who has come before.

And so Jesus is saying, I'm going to surprise you in two ways. One of them is going to be disappointing. You're not going to want me to suffer. The other one is going to be exhilarating and frightening.

[17 : 56] I am going to be not someone who reflects glory, but the very source of that glory. I'm going to be something greater and more beautiful and more frightening than you've ever seen before.

And so it's no surprise to us here that Peter doesn't know what to do. There's all sorts of theories about what Peter is trying to do with these three tents. We don't know how to go into that because the passage actually just tells us what he's trying to do.

Verse 6, he did not know what to say. Why does Peter suggest setting up three tents? Because Peter is so overwhelmed, he doesn't know what to do with his hands. He just tries to say something.

Peter is clearly an extrovert. Awkward moment, he just starts talking. All of those are great differences between Jesus and Moses, but they are not the greatest difference.

Remember I already mentioned, what does Moses ask God? Exodus 33, he asks him to see his face. What does God say?

[19 : 06] You cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live. In this passage, Peter, James, and John see God in all his glory, and they do what Moses never could.

They look into the face of God, and they live. Jesus is the one who allows us finally to see all of God's glory and to look him in the face and not die.

Jesus is what Colossians chapter 1 verse 15 tells us. Jesus is the visible image of the invisible God. Jesus finally makes visible what people in the Old Testament were not able to see.

Colossians 1 also says this, Peter and James and John are finally getting a picture of who it is that they're actually dealing with.

Jesus is showing them something that Elijah and Moses never did, nor could they have. He is not just another prophet. He is the creator of the world who holds the universe together.

[20 : 36] He is not someone who is simply receiving and delivering a word from God like Moses. No, he is the lawgiver himself. He is not someone who reflects God's glory.

He is someone who is and has God's glory. He is not someone who has light hit him and then he glows. He is someone who from the inside out is filled with everything that God is.

He is the one who allows us to see God and live. And so he finally bridges the gap between God and man. Jesus is more than Peter had ever dreamed of.

More than Peter can imagine. And so what's happening in this passage is that the curtain is being pulled back and so that they are able to see for a moment the greatness and glory and holiness of God.

Peter, James, and John see Jesus for who he is. This, by the way, explains verse 1 for us.

[21 : 49] What does it mean when Jesus says, Not all, some, right?

Because it's only Peter, James, and John. And they get to see the kingdom of God come with power on that mountain. In other words, verses 2 through 8 explain and fulfill verse 1.

They get to see it six days after Jesus says it. They get a glimpse, they get a taste of what Jesus was talking about last week in verse 38.

Remember he said, For whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

Jesus is talking about his second coming, which is meant to be a vision that motivates them and helps them make it along the way. Now, six days later, Jesus gives them a small glimpse of what that second coming will look like.

[23 : 03] He lets them peek into the future. How do we know that? Because Jesus doesn't look like this after he's raised from the dead. We don't hear reports of Jesus after his resurrection with his clothes glowing white.

That is saved and reserved for his second coming. Peter, James, and John get to see it for a moment. The point is this.

Suffering and glory go together. Suffering and glory go together. Never forget the glory.

It is the glory that allows us to make it through the suffering. How can the disciples bear up under the words that Jesus has just spoken?

How are they going to be able to live up to denying themselves, taking up their cross and following him? Because Jesus lets them see not just his humiliation, but his exaltation.

[24 : 11] Jesus doesn't just tell them about his suffering. He shows them his glory. He shows them how great and powerful he actually is.

Now, we are not Peter, James, and John. And we didn't get to see Jesus' transfiguration on the high mountain. So what do we do with this today?

What did the original witnesses do with this? Well, thankfully, the Bible doesn't leave us to wonder. Both Peter and John actually write about this experience later in the New Testament.

You'll see this on page 6 of your worship guide. In 2 Peter 1, Peter is telling this church about the fact that they can believe that Jesus is coming again in glory and power.

He tells them, look, I'm not making stuff up. We did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

[25 : 16] And then he goes on to talk about what it was like to be on top of that mountain and see Jesus changed before him. For when he received honor and glory from God the Father and the voice was born to him by the majestic glory, this is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased.

We ourselves heard this very voice born from heaven for we were with him on the holy mountain. Peter holds this experience in his heart and his mind for the rest of his life and his ministry.

And in this situation, as he talks to this church about the fact that Jesus is coming again with power and glory, he could have talked about Jesus' resurrection, but he doesn't. Instead, he says, we saw what it's going to be like on that mountain.

We know how powerful and glorious he is. Don't let anything else get in the way. Keep that vision in front of you.

And then he goes on to say this in the next verse, 2 Peter 1, verse 19. And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed to which you will do well to pay attention as a lamp shining in a dark place until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

[26 : 38] In other words, he's saying this, look, this is a dark place that you live in and there is one place that you can go for light. And that is the word of God.

You can trust that it's not a myth because we saw his glory on the mountain. We keep that vision in front of us. You, church, keep that vision before you as well.

Confidence in his power and his coming. Didn't just make an impression on Peter, it also made such an impression on John that he writes about it as well in the very first chapter of his gospel.

You'll see this also on page 6. And the word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen what? His glory. Glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

And what else is John talking about in that chapter? Well, he's talking about the fact that Jesus is the one who created the world. Jesus is the one who gives life and light in the midst of darkness. Jesus is the one we're supposed to receive and believe in.

[27 : 40] And then he ends that discussion by talking about the fact that Jesus is the one who provides grace. And so Peter and John are both saying this. We saw him on the mountain, and so we can testify that what verse 7 says is true.

This is my beloved Son. Listen to him. So how do we respond to this passage? We do the same thing that Peter and John did.

We remember who Jesus is. We're reminded of how glorious and powerful he is. We know that he's the one who doesn't receive light and glory from the outside, but he actually emanates it from the inside.

We know he is the one who finally allows us to see God face to face and not die. We know that he is the one who is greater and more powerful than anyone who has come before.

Why are you here this morning? Why are we here this morning? We're here because we need to be reminded every week of how glorious and great Jesus is.

[28 : 51] We need to see this vision over and over again because it is the only vision that is enough. It is the only glory that is enough.

It is the only power that is going to be enough for God's people to follow after him until the very end. Jesus knows that his disciples need to hear much more than deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me.

They also need to see how great and beautiful and powerful it will be at the end. Later, Peter will forget this when he betrays Christ.

Peter will be in need to be reminded again and again. Brothers and sisters, we need to be reminded again and again.

We come back week after week to sing together to God and to hear from God in his word, to be reminded and stirred up over and over about what is most true and beautiful and glorious and powerful in this world.

[30 : 03] So that that would eclipse what is small and insignificant. Last week I told you we take up our cross because our eyes are on Jesus.

This week I'm telling you and as our eyes are on him, we're remembering his glory and his power. The glory and the power that we're told about at the very end of chapter 8, that he's coming on the clouds with the holy angels.

Peter, James, and John will have to hold on to this vision. Brothers and sisters, if we are going to make it as we follow after Jesus, we hold on to this vision as well.

We need to see and know and taste Jesus' greatness and his glory. Now we're not told everything that happened when they came down from this mountain, but I can tell you this, guarantee you, that as Peter, James, and John went off that mountain after seeing Jesus transfigured before them, they were not thinking this.

Man, wouldn't life be better if I were more famous? Wouldn't life be greater and worth more if I were rich? If only I could have that relationship with that person.

[31 : 36] If only I was able to have that experience or accomplish that thing. There's no way that could be filling Peter, James, and John's mind because they had been overwhelmed with the vision of how great God is.

The same is true for us, that we want to be filled and consumed and captivated by Jesus' glory and his beauty and his power.

That vision would be better and greater than any other vision. It's God's glory. It's Jesus' beauty that chase away sin and ugliness in our lives and in this world.

The disciples did not need greater instruction or more commands. Disciples needed the same thing we need to see Jesus.

In his book, *The Silver Chair* in the *Chronicles of Narnia*, which I have to confess is actually my least favorite of all of the series, partially because as a young child, I didn't like hearing about people crawling around underground.

[32 : 52] We pick up the story of Eustace. You'll remember Eustace shows up in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. He's the character who was turned into a dragon. Aslan had to come and rip the scales off of him, which was this allegory about sin and redemption.

Now Eustace is reformed and he meets this new character in the silver chair named Jill. Aslan gives them this task that they have to accomplish. They have to go find this lost prince, Rillian.

Now Rillian's been missing for 10 years, and Aslan gives them a few signs that they need to look out for on their journey. These signs are going to guide them, and he gives them a specific action that they're supposed to take after each sign.

So they're looking for the lost prince, they're searching after Rillian, and these four signs are the only thing they have to go by. At the end of his instruction, Aslan has this to say to Jill, and I invite you to turn with me to the back of your worship guide.

He's told her the four signs, and now these are his final instructions. But first, remember, remember, remember the signs. Say them to yourself when you wake in the morning, and when you lie down at night, and when you wake in the middle of the night.

[34 : 10] And whatever strange things may happen to you, let nothing turn your mind from following the signs. And secondly, I give you a warning.

Here on the what? Here on the mountain, I have spoken to you clearly. I will not often do so down in Narnia. Here on the mountain, the air is clear, and your mind is clear.

As you drop down into Narnia, the air will thicken. Take great care that it does not confuse your mind. And the signs which you have learned here will not look at all as you expect them to look when you meet them there.

That is why it is so important to know them by heart and pay no attention to appearances. Remember the signs and believe the signs.

Nothing else matters. How do we follow Jesus in suffering? We remember his glory. We know the signs, and we believe the signs.

[35 : 15] Remember the power and the glory and the beauty of Jesus Christ. Nothing else matters. Let's pray.

Our Father in heaven, we praise you, and we thank you again for your word. That you know that we're only dust, and we need not just your instruction, but we need a greater and bigger and more glorious vision of you and your beauty and your glory.

We ask that you would grow our vision of you, that we would see your beauty more and more, that we would love you more and more, that we would follow you more and more. We ask these things in the mighty name of Jesus Christ.

Amen.