

Mark 9:2-9
Transfiguration Sunday
February 14, 2021

Have you ever bought something online only to be a little disappointed when the item came? I suppose that was what we kind felt this year when we bought our grandson, Henry, a basketball hoop that he can play with in the bath tub. I guess, we expected something to be bigger, not just this size. (Show in hands.) I have to be honest we were a little disappointed, but he wasn't. Before we gave him this little hoop set, his parents could hardly get him to stay in the bath tub, now they can hardly get him out. So, I guess, our expectation didn't bring him disappointment.

Have your expectations ever brought you disappointment? Have you ever researched the purchase of a car to death before you bought it, only to find out that that perfect car wasn't so perfect for you? Have you ever bought the home that was your dream home, only to have it now become a nightmare? Have you ever had that happen to you? Your expectation was way up here, but reality was way down here. Have your expectations ever let you down?

We've all been there at some point in life. However, how do you feel when there are let downs that are much bigger than the purchase of a car, a boat, a house or some other physical thing? You expected your marriage to be nothing but a smooth ride down the road of life, off into the sunset, but it didn't take long for the road bumps and potholes to shake your confidence. Lies, loss of trust, and a head full of bad memories leave you wondering where that "loving feeling" has disappeared to. You had hoped for the perfect family, but at least from your perspective, it hasn't worked out that way. When you had children, you expected a "Leave it to Beaver," but it didn't happen. Now the relationship is strained, the kids have walked away from you and maybe from the church. Expectations not matching experience can be devastating. You expected your health to remain great in retirement, only to find yourself disappointed? This wasn't part of your plan. Have you ever been disappointed with God? You have prayed and prayed that God would change some circumstance in your life, and it seems like God isn't fixing it? Have you ever been there or maybe you are there now? It's not fun, is it?

If you have ever experienced any of those kinds of disappointments, maybe you can get a little bit of feeling for how the disciples in our text felt. They were disappointed with Jesus. 6 days before the words of our text is spoken, Jesus had asked his disciples: **"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"** Jesus had been telling his disciples for almost 3 year who he was. Peter makes this tremendous confession. **"Peter answered, "God's Messiah."** Then Jesus says to his disciples: **"Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."** (Mt. 16:17-19) If you were standing there listening to those words of Jesus, you would hear words of power. Their expectations were through the roof. Jesus is telling them that nothing will be able to stop them.

Then Jesus completely blew up all those high expectations. **"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. He spoke plainly about this... "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."** (Mark 8:31-32; 9:1) *I'm going to die and you are going to die.* Peter then says to Jesus: **"Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!"** (Mt. 16:22) In other words – *"This is crazy talk Jesus. You are just getting started. You are about to set up your kingdom. Stop with this dying talk."* For six days, Jesus leaves them feeling crushed. Ever felt like that? Ever felt like you are on this rollercoaster of life? They had gone from way up there to way down there.

Jesus knew that they needed a changed perspective. They had seen Jesus do miracles, raise the dead and drive out demons. They knew who he was. But for a moment on that mountain top, he let those 3 disciples see who

he truly was. **“After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus.”** There he pulled back the veil and they saw Jesus as the Son of God, not the son of Joseph from Nazareth. Day after day they had walked with Jesus. They saw him eat, sleep, laugh, talk, cry, etc. In so many different ways he was just a normal guy. But on that Day of Transfiguration, their perspective changed. They saw God.

Have you ever watched the TV show, *“Undercover Boss?”* Some CEO of some big company goes undercover in disguise to see what it would be like to work at his company at a much small status than him. He sees the good and the bad. Then comes the end of the show where the disguise is remove, and he shows them who he really is. Jesus knew that his disciples needed to see who he really was. They needed to see his glory. Six days earlier their world came crashing down around them when he told him that he was going to die and they were going to die.

This was all part of God’s plan. **“Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: ‘This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!’** God had promised this world a Messiah. Moses had brought God’s law to this world, and wrote the first words of the Bible. Elijah was the greatest prophet in the Old Testament. He proclaimed how God’s word would be fulfilled. The two biggest people in the Old Testament are standing there next to the Son of God talking about God’s plan for this world. God wanted not only his disciples to hear and see this plan on that mountain top. He wants you and I to see that same plan as well.

He wants us to know that when our expectations are higher than the reality of life, Jesus is going to take those expectations and give us so much more than we can even imagine. When it feels like our world is crashing down around us, he wants us to see his glory. He wants us to see who he really is – the Son of God. Not just the Son of God on that mountain top, but the Son of God who came down that mountain to go up another on a cross. Jesus knew what laid ahead of him, and he doesn’t even hesitate to go to the cross. He knows that the cross is not the end – the empty tomb is. He will pay the price for sin with his death and he will prove by rising from the dead.

Jesus was looking past the cross. He wants you to look past the cross. Look past all the suffering and troubles of this world. Look past it all and see the glory of Jesus in heaven. On this day of Transfiguration we can join Peter in saying: **“It is good for us to be here.”** Amen.