



# WEEK 4 STUDY GUIDE

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# Monday May 16, 2022

**Read:** Mark 9:2-9

**Scripture Verse:** *“Jesus said to them, “What I’m about to tell you is true. Some who are standing here will not die before they see God’s kingdom coming with power.” After six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John with him. He led them up a high mountain. They were all alone. There in front of them his appearance was changed.” Mark 9:1-2*

## Today’s Thought:

As we prepare for Mark’s description of the transfiguration of Christ and what it means, I want to quickly remind us of the critical lesson Jesus had just taught the disciples at the end of chapter eight. We must understand that the lessons we learn from scripture can sometimes seem right and reasonable to us but are often totally out of sync with God’s ways. We must learn to trust God’s wisdom even when it seems to go against what we perceive as wise or right. God’s ways are higher than our ways, His thoughts greater than our thoughts. We see an example of this in Peter’s reaction to Jesus’ announcement of his impending death. Jesus, with His announcement, is also teaching the guys a valuable lesson concerning true discipleship, and it’s still a valid lesson for us today.

The lesson, acknowledge Christ and live for Him and He will one day acknowledge you before the Father and share His glory with you! The true disciple seeks to progress daily in Christlikeness to one day share in His heavenly glory. But in this world, the battle becomes choosing between Satan’s promises of glory, which leads to eternal suffering, versus choosing God, who promises suffering here and now, but that suffering is transformed into glory. God has determined that we can experience this new life by denying ourselves as Christ did. That means picking up the cross of God’s will, rejecting anything that seeks to conflict with that will, and following Jesus. And following Jesus means living an intimate daily relationship and adopting His commitment to please the Father. When we reject this kind of discipleship, we are holding on to our “old” life, which results in losing eternal life. But when we lose our “old” life, we gain eternal life.

Jesus took Peter, James, and John up onto Mt. Hermon and revealed His glory right before their eyes. It takes incredible faith to accept and practice such discipleship as laid out by Christ. And Jesus has now given

the disciples dazzling proof that suffering in this life will transform into glory in the next. His message to the disciples then and to we who are disciples today is first comes the suffering, then the promise of glory. Although this life can seem complicated the point is simple. The one who rejects discipleship will never know what his or her life could have become if they had turned themselves over to Jesus. Only when we truly commit ourselves fully to Jesus and make the daily choices of true discipleship will we discover the new life and relationship Christ makes possible for us.

- What can sometimes happen as we read and interpret scripture?
- How are God's ways different from ours? How did Peter misinterpret Jesus' words?
- What point(s) was Jesus trying to get across to the disciples leading up to the transfiguration?
- What does it mean to be a "true" disciple? Are you?
- What is the proof for living as true disciples?

**Further Reading:** 2 Peter 1:12-21

## Tuesday May 17, 2022

**Read:** Mark 9:2-9

**Scripture Verse:** *“Elijah and Moses appeared in front of Jesus and his disciples. The two of them were talking with Jesus.” Mark 9:4*

### Today's Thought:

Sometimes, seeing is believing. We have all read the story of Noah and his Ark. The Bible describes the exact dimensions of this fantastic building project in great detail. Knowing it took 120 years to build helps us understand the vastness of this first-ever marine vessel. But seeing it would sure help us to believe it. So when I heard that there was a life-size replica of the Ark being built here in America, I knew I had to see it. In the summer of 2016, on our drive home from vacation, my wife and I stopped in Williamstown, Kentucky, to see it for ourselves. As the bus took us down to the park entrance, we could begin to see the shape of a boat. The closer we got, the bigger it looked. Everything about the Ark we had read about in God's Word was coming to life right before our eyes. We looked like ants as we took pictures standing under the rutter of the ship. After walking for hours through the three interior decks, we were nothing short of amazed by the size and detail of what Noah had built at God's command. Even if it was just a replica, seeing the Ark strengthened our faith and belief in a Sovereign God! I have since led two additional tour groups to the Ark and find myself more amazed each time. I hope you visit the Ark Encounter someday; seeing is believing.

Speaking of seeing is believing that is what Mark is helping us understand by the story of Jesus' transfiguration. Not that the disciples didn't believe in Jesus but to clarify their understanding of who Jesus was and to explain why he had announced his coming death. The sequence of these events is essential to what Jesus was telling them. He has just told them of His impending death and resurrection and pointed out the meaning of true discipleship that would transform them if they lived it out. Then Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God coming in power." Many find themselves puzzled by Jesus' words. Six days after His announcement, Jesus took Peter, James, and John with Him up on Mt. Hermon because they were His closest disciples. Right before their eyes, Jesus fulfilled His words in verse one. Jesus, in the presence of the three disciples, along with Moses and Elijah, removed the veil of His human

shell for them to see with their own eyes, His true glory! In lifting the veil, Jesus transformed Himself into a view of the glory of the kingdom of God come with power! Peter, James, and John were eyewitnesses to this truth and would soon be able to share it with the world around them.

Not only did Jesus allow them to see but to hear. As the transfiguration took place, a cloud from heaven descended upon them, and God spoke to them again, saying, "this is My Son, whom I love. Listen to Him." Additionally, proof of what it meant to be a true disciple and further confirmation that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God, who came to fulfill the law (Moses) and the prophecy (Elijah). These disciples had just been given a preview of the splendor of what was to come after the Cross. Jesus' death would be the pathway to glory for those who believe. I think that this moment brought much-needed reassurance to the disciples, bringing the same to us. The daily cross we each bear as disciples can be challenging with choices involving high costs. Beyond the crosses God calls each of us to bear, and beyond the little deaths that obedience brings is the blessedness of our transformation. As the cross was Jesus' pathway to glory, our pathway to transformation comes through our obedience. If we listen to Jesus' words and do what He says, we will be transformed, even when we don't fully understand.

- When did you ever have to "see" something to believe it?
- Why is the sequence of these events at the end of Mark 8 and into Mark 9 important?
- What is Jesus wanting to do for the disciples by taking them up on Mt. Hermon?
- What is significant of having Moses and Elijah there with Jesus?
- How does the transfiguration strengthen your faith?

**Further Reading:** Luke 24:25-27; Hebrews 1:1-2

## Wednesday May 18, 2022

**Read:** Mark 9:2-9

**Scripture Verse:** *“Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters. One will be for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” Mark 9:5*

### Today's Thought:

We have all had at least one of those events in our lives we can call “mountain top.” That mountain top experience may have been graduating high school or college. Or maybe it was getting your first real job, getting married, or the arrival of a child. Regardless of what that was for you, we have all had one and know what it feels like. And that puts us right up there with the disciples as they had their moment on Mount Hermon.

Peter, James, and John had the mountain top experience of mountain top experiences getting to see Jesus' Transfiguration along with Moses and Elijah, who had their own mountain top events. We are reminded in Exodus 24 that Moses met God on Mt. Sinai. And Elijah heard the voice of God on Mt Sinai and had victory over the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel. But at this mountain top event, the disciples see the glory of the Son God revealed. By witnessing this event, they received confirmation of Jesus' words as recorded in Mark 8:38, "Suppose you are ashamed of me and my words among these adulterous and sinful people. Then the Son of Man will be ashamed of you when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels." They also got a demonstration of the future Kingdom and its glory. Jesus' message was clear. If we deny Him to the world, He will deny us to the Father. And we are now sure of who He is!

Moses was present to represent the Law, and Elijah attended as a representative of the prophets; and Jesus was the fulfillment of both the Law and the Prophets. The Jews would have viewed Moses' Mt. Sinai experience as a royal enthronement, and the early readers of Mark would have understood the Transfiguration as confirmation that Jesus is King. Together Moses and Elijah point us toward Jesus' ultimate experience over death as the true sign of the coming Kingdom. We know that one day soon, Christ will return to raise the dead to life and rapture the saints alive at the time. But first He would suffer, then receive His glory in heaven. Jesus' suffering and death would not stop God from establishing His Kingdom, but rather it would solve the problem of sin, making the

Kingdom possible by the cross. For us it is suffering through this world first, then eternal life in the Kingdom of God!

- What is your “mountain top” moment or experience?
- Why do you think Jesus only took three of the disciples with him up Mt. Hermon?
- What did Jesus’ transfiguration show the disciples? Us?
- What was the order of things Jesus was seeking to show them before the kingdom to come?
- What does Jesus’ transfiguration along with seeing Moses and Elijah do for your faith and spiritual journey?

**Further Reading:** 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

## Thursday May 19, 2022

**Read:** Mark 9:2-9

**Scripture Verse:** *"Then a cloud appeared and surrounded them. A voice came from the cloud. It said, 'This is my Son and I love him. Listen to him!'" Mark 9:7*

### Today's Thought:

#### The Ten Most-Wanted Men

*"Despite what they say, 90% of the chronic patients who see today's physicians have one common symptom. Their trouble did not start with cough or chest pain, or hyperacidity. In 90% of the cases, the first symptom was fear. Fear of losing a job, of old age, of being exposed—sooner or later, this fear manifests itself as "a clinical symptom." This is the opinion of a well-known American internist expressed in a round-table discussion on psychosomatic medicine. This is also the consensus of a growing body of specialists. Sometimes the fear is nothing more than superficial anxiety; sometimes, it is so deep-seated that the patient himself denies its existence and makes the round of doctor to doctor, taking injections, hormones, tranquilizers, and tonics in an endless search for relief."*

In the preceding verse of today's text, Mark shares Peter's feelings of anxiousness and fear at what he sees. We've all been there. Experiences that take us by surprise throw us into shock and anxiety, that turns to fear because we aren't ready to respond. It seems to me that's what just happened to Peter. In his nervous reaction, he offers to build shelters for everyone to spend the night. Somehow, we equate busyness with protection from what makes us anxious. I'm sure this wasn't the Lord's intention for this experience. I think it was to strengthen the disciples' resolve and authenticate their message.

While Peter stands there dealing with his fear and anxiety, God sends a cloud surrounding them. The cloud blocks the outside world and its distractions, temporarily removing them from their sight to concentrate on what is about to be said. The cloud covered them so densely that they could only see what was right in front of them. Maybe it was God, sensing the disciple's fear, sending them a sign of His comfort and protection. And now, with their full attention, God's voice coming from inside the cloud, said, "This is my Son and I love him. Listen to him!"

Sometimes, God must surround us with "a cloud" to get our attention. With God having Peter and the disciple's full attention, He confirmed Peter's earlier confession and Jesus' prediction. This event brought them the full assurance of Jesus' words about His impending death, burial, and resurrection and His return to glory. The visible proof brought on by Jesus' transfiguration and God's verbal command made the disciples' commitment to Christ well-founded. Yes, there would be present suffering as they spread the Good News of the Gospel, but the future glimpse of heavenly glory would make it all worthwhile. I pray that this grabs our attention, confirming that placing our faith in Jesus Christ is well worth whatever suffering we might face in this world for the future glory He promises.

- What is it that causes you the greatest anxiety and fear?
- What kind of "cloud" has God used in your life to get your attention?
- What feelings did you experience under the covering cloud of God's presence?
- What did God confirm to you concerning your spiritual journey?

**Further Reading:** Matthew 17:1-13

## Friday May 20, 2022

**Read:** Mark 9:2-9

**Scripture Verse:** *"They came down the mountain. On the way down, Jesus ordered them not to tell anyone what they had seen. He told them to wait until the Son of Man had risen from the dead." Mark 9:9*

### Today's Thought:

As I thought about today's text found in Mark 9:9, the first word that came to my mind was the word "anticipation." The dictionary defines "anticipation" as a feeling of excitement about something that will happen in the near future. The second thing that came to my mind was "ketchup." Don't tell me it didn't happen to you too. Well, unless you are younger than 50, I guess. Heinz ketchup hit the commercial airwaves back in the late 70's using Carly Simon's song "Anticipation" to sell us on their tomato-based condiment's rich, thick taste. It was so thick; it seemed like forever before it got from the bottle to your burger and fries. The ad featured just the song's chorus in their commercials which read, "anticipation, anticipation; Is makin' me wait; It keeps me waitin'...." I know you want to grab a burger and fries and start pouring the Heinz! I know, blast from the past.

When I reread Mark 9:9, I still couldn't shake this idea of anticipation as Jesus spoke to His disciples on their way down the mountain. Here is a look at the first stanza from Carly Simon's hit song "Anticipation:"

*"We can never know about the days to come,  
But we think about them anyway  
And I wonder if I'm really with you now  
Or just chasin' after some finer day  
Anticipation, anticipation  
Is makin' me late  
Is keepin' me waitin'"*

As I think about the words to the song, it sounds like something that might have been going through the disciples' minds. Jesus, once again, after something miraculous happens, says, "don't tell anyone," at least not yet. Doesn't that feel like the ultimate definition of anticipation! It's like the transfiguration has been placed into a bottle, and the guys are pumped at pouring out this great news, but as they think about pouring out the thick and rich truth to the people, Jesus holds back the pour. Anticipation is making them wait until after the resurrection!

Interestingly, this is Jesus' last command of silence recorded by Mark, and it is the only one we find with a time limit attached. Jesus knew a time would soon come when a proclamation would trump this temporary silence. But why wait? Is there still a bit of misunderstanding concerning Jesus' messianic mission? Why would Jesus want them to hold back such confirming proof of who He is? Only from the perspective of Jesus' Resurrection would the disciples genuinely understand the transfiguration and be able to proclaim what it meant correctly. It can be this way in our journey as well. Sometimes we just have to wait in anticipation for the Holy Spirit to inform us, in His timing, before proclaiming to us the truth He wants us to know and share. And so, as it is recorded, "Be still and know that I am God." The anticipation of our future glory is well worth the wait!

- What comes to your mind when you think about "anticipation?"
- Do you think the disciples could relate their situation to the lyrics of Carly's song?
- Why do you think Jesus asked them to be silent about the transfiguration until after the resurrection?
- What might the disciples be misunderstanding about what they saw?
- How will the resurrection add to the credibility of their story of the transfiguration?

**Further Reading:** Psalm 2:4-7

# NOTES







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