

“This Is My Beloved Son, Hear Him”

Mark 9:1-8

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Introduction

In our Mark sermon series we have seen how Jesus began to tell His twelve disciples that it was necessary for Him to suffer, to be rejected by the highest church court of the Jews, to die, and to rise again.

- This was very perplexing to the twelve, for they had just confessed that He was the Christ, the Messiah that God had promised to redeem His people.
 - Suffering and dying was not at all what they expected the Messiah to do.
 - Peter even rebukes Jesus, who in turn rebukes Peter most severely.
- Then Jesus summons the crowd and tells all of them if they want to come after Him, they must deny themselves, take up their own crosses, and follow Him.
 - He then graciously speaks to us to encourage us about how reasonable it is to follow Him and about how we will lose everything if we don't.

But still, suffering? rejection by the church? crosses?

- This is not easy to hear.
- Our gracious God knows that.

So as Mark continues his narrative in chapter 9,

- he records for us the confirmation that God gave to us that Jesus was indeed His beloved Son and the one we should listen to if we wish to be saved.
- It is a marvellous confirmation that continues to speak powerfully to every age of the church, especially when we have crosses to bear.

When these things fell upon Jesus, it could make them question if He really was the Messiah that God sent to save His people!

- And when such things have fallen upon the church in subsequent history, it can make us call into question God's love for us, the followers of Christ.
- It did wonders to fortify Jesus and His disciples and it continues to do wonders for us today who receive these words with faith.

Our reading begins in Mark 9, verse 1, and I will read through verse 8.

- Here is the Word of God.

Mark 9:1-8: And He said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power.”² Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves; and He was transfigured before them.³ His clothes became shining, exceedingly white,

like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them.⁴ And Elijah appeared to them with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.⁵ Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah” —⁶ because he did not know what to say, for they were greatly afraid.⁷ And a cloud

came and overshadowed them; and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!”⁸ Suddenly, when they had looked around, they saw no one anymore, but only Jesus with themselves.

May the LORD add His blessing to the reading and now to the preaching of His holy word.

I. Here we have the testimony of God concerning His Son, that He loves Him and that He should be heard.

A. This is declared plainly at the heart of this magnificent revelation.

- At the end of verse 7, God, in a voice from heaven, declares:
 - “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!”
 - Three things are affirmed concerning Jesus—by God Himself.
- 1. That Jesus is “My Son.”
 - He did not look much like the Son of God as He carried out His ministry.
 - He was poor and did not have a palace or an impressive entourage.
 - All He had were some lowly disciples.
 - But what was really challenging this narrative was His talk about suffering and being rejected by the highest court of the church—and crucified.
 - God is making it clear in the face of these coming sorrows that He is indeed His Son.
 - We know, of course that He is God’s Son in the fullest sense—as the second person of the Trinity who is now clothed in flesh.
 - God the Father affirms that this is so.
 - It is because it is so that Jesus could declare that following Him or not would determine the final destiny of every soul—in heaven or hell.
 - That whoever believes on Him will not perish, but have everlasting life and that the wrath of God will remain on anyone who does not come to Him.
 - He is truly the Son of God.
- 2. The Father affirms secondly that He loves Him. “This is My beloved Son.”
 - Again, when His disciples heard of suffering and crosses and death, and when shortly they were to see such things come upon their Master,
 - It might call into question whether the Father really loved Him.
 - Indeed, they would see Him cursed and rejected—as we know, as a sacrifice for the sins of the world.
 - But despite all this, the Father declares very plainly that He loves Him—He loves Him as our Mediator.

- He loves Him as the one who has come in human flesh to represent His people—and that means that He loves His people too—the church that He came to save.
 - It means everything to us that the Father loves Him!
 - If He did not, we could not be saved by Him.
 - He is our righteousness which we do not otherwise have.
 - He is our atonement for sin which we do not otherwise have.
 - And He is our source of life-giving virtue who imparts new life to us by His Spirit.
 - Though union with Him, we are dearly loved of God the Father because He is dearly loved of the Father.
3. Thirdly, the Father declares plainly that we should hear Him.
- We should hear Him, even when He speaks about self-denial and cross bearing and death because He is God’s beloved Son.
 - And God has sent Him to us to proclaim salvation to us—to call us to come to Him believing that He is the Son of God that we might be saved.
 - All of you must either hear Him or be condemned—as the LORD said to Moses in Deuteronomy 18:18-19:
 - **Deut 18:18-19: “I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. ¹⁹ And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him.”**
- The Father’s words are very direct and clear: “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him.”
- These words are the heart of the revelation that is here given.
 - But the Father gives us more...
- B. Look at how He enforces this testimony by revealing the glory that truly belongs to Jesus—the glory that is now veiled.
1. First, He is transfigured before them so that they can see His glory as Mediator.
- a. Mark declares it as a matter of fact, as an event that occurred six days after Jesus told them that He must suffer and be rejected and die and rise again—and that all who follow Him must also deny themselves.
- **Verse 2: Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves; and He was transfigured before them.**
 - To be transfigured means that there was a great change in Jesus’ appearance, a kind of metamorphosis.
 - Mark gives us a brief description of His appearance in verse 3: **His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them.**

- Peter (for whom Mark speaks) makes it clear that what he saw was something beyond this present world.
 - There was a brilliance that even His clothing took on that was a shining whiteness.
 - In his second epistle, Peter explains that he and his companions on this mount were “eyewitnesses of His majesty.”
- b. This was a presentation of what Jesus will look like when He comes in glory at the last day!
- Don’t make a mistake here and suppose that we see Him in the form of God.
 - God is a spirit and does not have a body like we do.
 - This is rather the glory that belongs to Him as Mediator; the glory that was veiled while He walked on this earth with the exception of this momentary transfiguration.
 - The glory they saw is rightly His.
 - He will not always appear in the ordinary way He did when He was here.
 - And don’t forget, that we who are in Him will also be glorified.
 - In Romans 8, Paul speaks about the revealing of believers as the sons of God on the last day.
 - In Colossians 3:4, he says: **When Christ *who is our life* appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.**
 - In 1 Cor 15:49, he says: **And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man**
 - And in 1 Cor 15:42-43, he says: **So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. ⁴³ It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.**
- c. So Jesus was transfigured to show us His majesty—that He truly is the Son of God in human flesh.
- This was done along with the verbal testimony of God that this was His beloved Son who should be heard.
 - But that is not all.
2. Next, Jesus is shown to be one of whom Elijah and Moses testified.
- a. After Jesus was changed into this glorious aspect, Mark says (verse 4): **And Elijah appeared to them with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.**
- These men had both been taken up into the presence of God—into the glory cloud—where they had spoken to God.
 - Moses came from God’s presence with his face shining so that he had to put a veil over it.

- And Elijah had Him speak to him when he was on the same mountain that Moses had been on and then later was taken up into the cloud of glory on a fiery chariot so that he never died.
- b. The Jews all knew that Moses was the one who had declared to them the way of life—setting forth to them what was required of sinners to be saved.
- He had given them ceremonies of God’s provision of washing and atonement to cleanse them from their sin and restore them to life.
 - And Elijah was known as the restorer!
 - He was the one who came to Israel in their apostasy and called them repent, to turn from their idols, and come back to God for the life that He promised in His mercy and grace.
 - Together, they represented the law and the prophets—all of them...
 - The law telling us what was required to come to God...
 - And the prophets calling us embrace that way—to look to God for our salvation or perish.
- c. And now here they were talking to Jesus who had just been transfigured and who had just told His disciples that He was going to the cross.
- Mark does not tell us that this is what they were talking about, but Luke does: Luke 9:30-31: **And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, ³¹ who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.**
 - They had testified of Jesus in their ministry and had urged God’s people to come to Him (as He was then promised) for salvation...
 - And now on the mount they speak of what Christ is going to do at Jerusalem for that salvation.
 - They know Jesus as the one who has come to fulfill what they proclaimed.
 - They told God’s people what was required and what God would do to save them, and Jesus has come to do what is required.
- So you see how the testimony that this Jesus, who is to suffer, is affirmed by the whole Old Testament, represented by Moses and Elijah speaking to this Jesus who speaks of His death.
- This all goes hand in hand with the voice that declares Him to indeed be the Son who God loves and who is to be heard.
 - And there is a third confirmation that this testimony is from God.
3. God’s testimony about Jesus is spoken from the glory cloud (the Shekinah).
- a. Peter, in an awkward way, prepares for the glory cloud.
- Seeing all that is happening, he speaks up, not knowing what to say, and declares that what has happened here is a very good thing—
 - He was right about that.

- And he suggests that perhaps he and his companions should make some temporary shelters for Moses and Elijah and Christ.
 - He wants to show what hospitality he can, and he thinks of the promise of God to tabernacle with His people in the coming days.
- b. But God answers Peter by erecting a much more glorious tabernacle than the one that Peter had in mind... the glory cloud.
 - In glory, God is the one who builds the tabernacle where He meets with His people—a temple not made with hands.
 - It is the glorious presence of God in which we dwell in glory.
 - Verse 7 declares: **And a cloud came and overshadowed them;**
 - Peter, James, and John have the privilege of entering the glory cloud that Moses and Elijah had known,
 - the cloud from which God speaks at crucial times in redemptive history and from which He speaks at this crucial time to testify about His Son.
- c. And what does God say to them from glory cloud?
 - What is the great message that all need to hear now that Jesus has come?
 - It is a message about Jesus!
 - It is the message that we have already looked at:
 - Look at the rest of verse 7: **and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!”**
 - This is God speaking.
 - This is God’s testimony concerning His Son that all need to hear and believe.

TRANS> Jesus was in a place of lowliness in this world, and in many ways He still is.

- But God has testified that He is truly the Son of His love and that He is most glorious.

II. Jesus needed this testimony of His Father’s love and of His own future glory.

A. What joy it must have brought to our Saviour to hear this testimony from His heavenly Father once again.

1. He had heard very similar words, except that they were addressed directly to Him, at His baptism.
2. How it delighted Him to know that He was the delight of His heavenly Father.
 - He had been the delight of His Father’s eyes from all eternity in the nature of God—His eternal nature which He still filled.
 - But here He is declared to be loved by His Father as a man, in human flesh, and not only that, but as a man that had come to represent and be the mediator of a sinful people.
3. So far, in that role, He had done what pleased His Father.
 - He was the first man ever to live in a way that pleased the Father.
 - He alone is worthy of God’s acceptance... and how strong that acceptance and love is!

B. But now, two or three years after His baptism, He needed to hear this testimony again as He prepared to go to the cross.

1. At Jerusalem, the time was coming when He would not hear such words from His Father.

- The time would come when He would have to bear His people's sins and the Father's public declaration would be to curse Him on account of our sin rather than to bless Him.
- He would be the one upon whom all of His peoples' sins were laid—or rather came down in all their crushing weight.
- The Father would not speak words of love to Him then.

2. We believe that Jesus, in His human flesh, needed to be told that the Father loved Him.

- We are not Apollinarians who believe that Jesus knew all things as a man.
- Apollinarians were the heretics who said that Jesus had a human body, and even a human soul, but a divine spirit instead of a human spirit.
 - It is a heresy that denies that He had two entirely distinct natures that are not mixed together or confused—making Him not to be one person with two separate natures, but one person with a human nature that is mixed with a divine nature.
 - If that were true, then He can't truly represent us.
- But we are not Apollinarians.
 - We believe that He needed to receive revelation in his human nature the way prophets do.
 - He needed to hear the word of God and believe it just as we do.
 - And it was a great joy to Him to hear His Father declare once again that He was indeed His beloved Son.
 - It fortified Him to bear the cross.

3. As I mentioned to you before, as a man, He is not above human suffering.

- In fact, He is more subject to it and feels it deeper than any of us can.
- Our affections are weakened, they are not too strong, they are corrupted and misplaced... His are much deeper... they are true and full.
- To Him, the rejection of His Father when He bore the shame of our sins was much worse than any rejection we might experience.
 - But to believe that His Father loved Him, to be told that, was more to Him than we could ever fathom.

C. When He got to the cross, this would be the testimony that He must believe: "You are My Son and I love You."

1. He would need to assure Himself that His Father would accept His offering for sin.

- That at last, after His suffering was complete, He would hear Him and raise Him up.
 - He would accept His sufferings for His people.
2. This was the Father's testimony that would enable Him to endure—to carry on through His sufferings.
 - He would have to live by faith and not by sight.
 - And ever after, He would be able to help us as a merciful and faithful high priest who knows what it is like to trust God when there is no visible evidence of His love in our present circumstances.

TRANS> “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him.” Jesus needed to know this.

III. Peter, James, and John also needed this testimony about Jesus from the Father.

A. They were perplexed by what Jesus had told them.

1. Jesus had told them of His coming suffering and rejection by the highest court of the church that would be followed by death and resurrection.
 - How could He be the Messiah and suffer and even die a shameful death?
 - How could He be the object of the Father's love and bear the curse?
2. They would need that testimony even more when He was actually betrayed, arrested, tried, crucified, dead, and put into the grave.
 - They would need it, but they actually did not receive it very well at that time.
 - In their weakness, they lost it under the ordeal of Jesus' sufferings...
 - Yet, in a marvellous way it still remained with them enough that their faith was not destroyed.
 - A flame of hope remained—no doubt fuelled by their Master's confidence, for they knew He had power to avoid the cross or to come down from it.
 - But because they faltered, they shamefully denied Him in that hour.
 - Yet, it was only Judas, the son of perdition, who did not recover because he had hypocrisy, not faith at the root of his belief.

TRANS> But this testimony that Jesus is God's Son, and that He loves Him and is to be heard, was not just to prepare them for the cross.

B. God's testimony about His Son was fully embraced by them after the cross.

1. God's word is often like that for us too.
 - There are things that we know and things that we believe, but they don't really come to fruit in our lives until we have failed.
 - Then we look back and we see how true God's word is and we embrace it all the more fully.
2. After Jesus rose from the dead, this testimony about Jesus from the Father became the great joy of their hearts.

- They saw that the Father's love for Him was so great that even though all the sin of world was laid on Him, it could not keep Him in the grave!
 - That love was so strong that He was able to bear all our sin and still be raised up.
- They saw that He was indeed the one that fulfilled the law and the prophets not only by His perfect righteousness and His promised deliverance from our enemies,
 - but by His offering for our sins as that sin bearer that God sent to redeem us and who so faithfully obeyed to the point of death on the cross.
 - The cross became the centre of their preaching.
 - Here was not the failure, but the manifestation of God's love.

C. Now they were ready to suffer for Him!

- Now they were ready to go out and proclaim the gospel of the cross without compromise and without shame.
 - They saw that Jesus was the Son of God, they saw that He was loved, they saw that He is to be heard and that only those who hear Him can be saved.
- Who else could secure God's love for those who rejected God as their God, for sinners like us?
 - Only the Son of the Father's love.
 - He was the one who had the word of eternal life.
- Peter, James, and John told the others of His glory that they had seen, and they along with the other apostles went forth to tell the world that we have eternal life through faith in the One that the Father loves.

TRANS> "This is My beloved Son, hear Him"... Jesus needed to know this.

- "This is My beloved Son, hear Him"... the twelve needed to know this.

IV. "This is My beloved Son, hear Him"—*you need to receive this testimony from the Father about His Son.*

- It may not be such a honourable thing to serve Him in this world—He may not have much glory here and it may not look as if the Father loves Him...
 - But He is the object of the Father's love and He is full of glory.

A. You need to know this first of all so that you might believe in Him as the mediator that God has chosen.

1. The Father declared His love for Him when He came here as mediator for sinners.
 - No sinner can be saved apart from this mediator who is God's only Son.
 - Only He could fulfill God's righteous requirement.
 - Only in Him can we have the Father's love.
2. Hear and believe when the Father says He loves Him.
 - He was glorified at the transfiguration to show us His majesty as His Son incarnate.

- He was raised from the dead after He suffered for our sins, proving that that Father's love could not be quenched.
 - Where else will you find acceptance if not in the Son of His love?
3. Hear and believe when the Father tells you to hear His Son.
- He has told us to hear His Son and to believe Him.
 - Moses and Elijah give way to Him—they are inferior to Him—He is the fulfilment, the one who actually brings us salvation—He has the words of eternal life.
 - And He has given us the gospel through the writings of His apostles and prophets and through the preaching of their word.
 - Their testimony is, “Believe on the Lord Jesus and you will be saved.”
- B. And after you have believed, you need to continue to see His glory as you are called to endure trials and crosses in this world.
1. When you are called to suffer long and hard, it tests you.
- It tempts you to question the love of God.
 - It tempts you to wonder if He really does love you.
 - It tempts you to listen to Job's wife who says, “curse God and die.”
 - It tempts you to listen to the devil who says, “What value is there in serving God... look at how you suffer when you do... look at how you are looked down on with you do... what is the use of it?”
2. But then you remember the glory that is to come—the glory into which Jesus was transfigured before three of His disciples.
- You remember that this glory is the glory that is greater than all your sufferings.
 - You remember that God uses your sufferings to prepare you for this glory.
 - You remember the love that the Father has for His sin that could not be quenched by your sins and you are able to bear the cross that He has given you.
 - You hear the testimony of God... This is my beloved Son, hear Him.
- C. And finally, you need to receive God's testimony that you might return to Christ when sin or temptation has taken hold of you.
1. You may have been caught up in web of selfishness for days, for weeks, or for years.
- Perhaps you are bitter because you did not get what you wanted in life.
 - Well let me tell you your problem—your problem is that you are looking for the wrong thing.
 - You can spend the rest of your life bitter and angry because you did not get your way, or you can look to Christ, the Son that God loves, and you can hear His call to come to Him for forgiveness and life.
 - Let me tell you, the problem is not in what others have done to you or in what God has kept from you.

- The problem is with you and that God and His glory is not what you want—God’s glory and God’s grace that you might serve Him and live.
2. You are full of angst against God because you do not see His gracious love.
 - You feel that He has wronged you when it is you that have wronged Him.
 - You are full of excuses like Cain about why it is right for you to feel the way you do.
 - You lust after what God has not given you because you do not see the love of God for His Son and for all who are in His Son, all for whom the Son died.
 - The Son’s acceptance is our acceptance if we believe.
 3. That anger you have toward God is so inappropriate.
 - It is ruining you. Don’t pretend that it’s not there if it is there—and it is there if you are not walking with God.
 - There is nothing keeping you from God’s love.
 - We know where it is found—it comes you through Jesus Christ.
 - Our sin brought down the curse on Him, but it could not keep it on Him because He is God’s Son and the Father loves Him.
 - Let go of the bitterness, let go of the sin, by bringing it to Jesus the Saviour.
 - It is in the Son of God’s love that you will connect with the Father.
 - It is here that you can live.
 - It is here that you can embrace the hope of glory.

Conclusion: Hear then what God says:

- **“This is My beloved Son, Hear Him.”** See the glory of His Son.