

Where's The Encouragement?

Mark 9:1-8

Matthew 16:28-17:8; Luke 9:27-36

You and I are told over 3,000 times a day that we are not good enough. Recent research has supposedly found that through the media, responses from those around us, and our own mental state and imaginations based upon circumstances, we each are continually bombarded with negative perceptions about ourselves. A few years ago we learned that advertising alone communicated over 1,500 times a day that we are not pretty enough, successful enough, smart enough, talented enough, wealthy enough, nor were our teeth white enough. We are told we are too fat, too skinny, we drive the wrong car, use the wrong fuel, live in the wrong neighborhood, use the wrong sweetener, and the list seems to continue ad infinitum.

Is it any wonder why counselors are booked weeks in advance, rehab centers have waiting lists, alcohol and drug use are at an all time high, and the once held high expectations of the American dream are freefalling like a rock.

So where's the encouragement? We tend to face conflict pretty well for a time, but after a while we begin to wear out. Make-up can cover the wrinkles, blemishes, dark spots for a while, but at the end of the day it fades and reality sets in. The resumé, performance reviews, and initiative to excel seem to satisfy until one day when you're shaving, the bifocals reveal the wear and tear, and you think, "Now what? Who needs me?" Just as a seasoned athlete cut by the coaching staff may ask, "Where are the fans, the cheers, the purpose? Where is my identity?"

Or what about the parent who has just lost a child, a married person their mate, a 20 year-old his health, or a new parent his job? What—whom—does one look to for encouragement, motivation, and reason to anticipate the future?

It's impossible to deny that life is filled with challenges that can become overwhelming. Like the Apostle Peter, we may ignore this truth, but in the end we cannot deny it. We have a clear record of the constant weight, rejection, oppression, and suffering of Jesus, His disciples, and all who chose to follow Him. Some of Jesus' last words were, "In the world you have tribulation..." He did, and we do. So where's the encouragement? Where's the encouragement at the end of the day—what you might feel is the last day?

I think we can safely say there is no other passage in Scripture that provides *greater* visible *and* verbal encouragement for the present as well as for the future as Mark 9:1-8. This passage contains a truth that encouraged Jesus, His disciples, and future believers through dark and difficult times. It is a truth intended to encourage us today . . . if we let it.

Life Response

1. This week MEMORIZE and MEDITATE on 2 Peter 1:12-13, "*Therefore, I shall always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you. I consider it right, as long as I am in this earthly dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder.*"

- (a) How would you define the personal impact of the phrase "...and have been established in the truth which is present with you"?
- (b) What are some elements of "the truth" that should serve as an encouragement in dark times?

Eph. 1:3-6

Col. 21:9-10

2 Cor. 3:17-18

2 Pet. 1:2-4

Col. 1:26-29

Col. 3:1-3

1 John 3:1-3

1 Thess. 4:13-18

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| 2. Think about the revelation of God in the Transfiguration | Mark 9:1-8 |
| the revelation of God in Christ | John 1:14 |
| the revelation of God in the Word | 2 Pet. 1:19-21 |
| the revelation of God in the believer | Col. 1:26-29 |
- (a) To what extent do you believe you find your encouragement in each of these revelations of God's glory?
- (b) What is your responsibility to be an encouragement to others as a revelation of His glory?
3. Hebrews 10:19-25 describes "the truth" present with us for encouragement on both a personal and corporate level.
- How do you relate to each?
 - What is the major responsibility of your church, Mini Church, Care Group, or Cell group?
 - Is it optional?

"If God could take a bush or a tent of skins and transform them, God is able to take a sinner and transform that sinner so that He can use him as an instrument to reveal His glory through the unending ages of eternity."

- Dr. J. Dwight Pentecost

THE THEOLOGICAL PROMISE:

The Transfiguration was a miniature picture of Christ's second coming to earth to establish His eternal Kingdom.

His transfiguration is a revelation of His essence.

√ Centrality of Christ

√ Announces the birth of the Church

√ Reign of Christ

THE APPLICATIONAL PRACTICE:

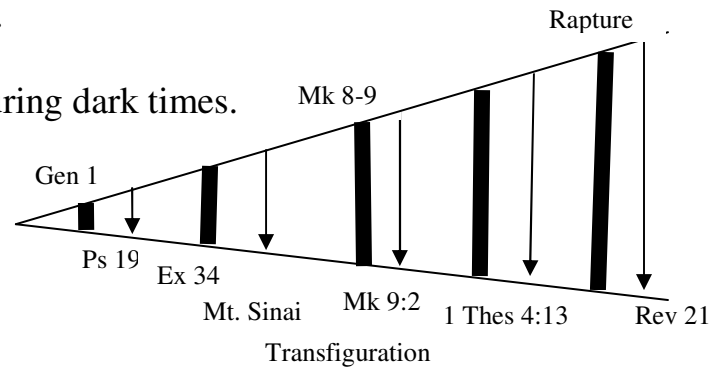
When a person becomes a believer, his/her life is transformed (transfigured) and continues to grow and live in anticipation of Christ's promised second coming.

Our transformation in Christ is a growing revelation of His glory and becomes our essence.

Transfiguration is to keep us alert.

√ Provides encouragement during dark times.

Confirm our faith
2 Pet. 1:16-19



√ Presses us to Spiritual growth

2 Pet. 1:12-14
2 Cor. 3:11-12; 17-18

Means of encouragement to one another

Heb. 10:19-24
John 17:1-5; 22-24

√ Hope of His coming

Rev. 21:22-27