



May 19, 2020

Discussion Guide

Face the Issue:

This week, Brian reminded us that there is a difference in a life of greatness or success in the Kingdom of God and what the world tells us is great.

This difference was made clear to us by Jesus. He told us that as His followers, we would have to bear weights and burdens that others would not have to bear. This was made clear to His disciples when He told them that He would suffer, be rejected, die, and finally rise again. It would be later that they'd realize the even heavier news that He was dying for them. Then Jesus shocked them by saying, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (Mark 8:34). Those are heavy weights only Christians carry.

But then Jesus showed some of His disciples something else. Three of Jesus' disciples saw something no mortal eyes had ever seen: Jesus in His full glory. We are not meant to carry the weight of being a Christian without also seeing Christ's glory.

What is one of the most astonishing things you've ever seen or been part of?

What is a weight you carry as a Christian?

When you think about the glory of Christ, what pictures come to mind?

Into the Word

Read Mark 9:1–13

To bear the suffering that we experience, Christians must see the glory of Christ.

It's hard to wrap our heads around what those disciples saw. Matthew wrote, "His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light". Luke said, "His clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning". Jesus didn't change into something. Instead, the disciples saw the undisguised glory of God which was always in Him.

This light of God didn't descend upon Jesus. It shone out from within Him. He is the glory of God! He is alive with light. The book of Revelation says that in heaven there will be no need of sun or moon because "the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp". John wrote, "God is light; in Him there is no darkness at all".

Imagine you were one of those three disciples with Jesus that day when He was transfigured. As best as you can, describe what you think would have been going through your mind and how you would have felt.

How would you describe what happened to the other nine apostles when you next saw them?

Now imagine you are one of those disciples years later, when you are sitting in a jail cell for your faith in Jesus, with the very real possibility of dying for what you believe. How do you think Jesus' transfiguration would be an encouragement to you during those times?

What does Peter's response (v. 5–6) tell you about his mindset and emotions at that time?

When God Almighty spoke (v. 7), it's almost as if He said, "If anyone is going to build a monument for Jesus, it will be me," and He surrounded them all with His glory. God's declaration sounds familiar. At Jesus' baptism "a voice came from heaven: 'You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased'".

Think back to what Jesus had told the disciples about His impending suffering and death and the way of the cross. With that in mind, why was it important for the disciples to hear God say it again here: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to Him!"?

In what ways does this passage most encourage you?

- *I want to listen to Jesus more.*
- *I want to have a bigger picture of Jesus and his kingdom.*
- *I want to see Jesus for who He really is, just as the three disciples saw Him that day, in all his glory as the Son of God.*
- *When I face difficulties or persecution for my faith, I want to keep my focus on Jesus and His glory.*

Apply The Word

There are weights that only Christians carry, weights that can cause us to suffer and feel discouraged: the weight of Jesus' awful death, that He died for you and me; the weight of repentance practiced with regularity; the weight of carrying the gospel into a dark world; the weight of living holy lives when all the while our old nature beckons and drags us backward; the weight of living in this dying world when we long for a better home; the weight of dying to self, of serving thanklessly.

To help us overcome these feelings, we need to see the glory of Christ. Don't fix your eyes on the crucifix, on the dying, suffering Jesus. Instead, look to Jesus shining like the sun, to Jesus alive with light, to Jesus who reigns in glory. Look to Jesus breaking from the grave, to Jesus rising into the heavens, to Jesus seated at the right hand of God, to Jesus, the Lamb upon the throne, the Rider on the White Horse, to Jesus the Shining Victor who has promised to gather us together with Him.

When life this next week seems tangled, when nothing seems to work out, when there seems to be no answer, remember Moses and Elijah there talking with Jesus, putting all the pieces together, seeing how God worked all things together for good—even through the suffering, and death of His Son. Remember that there is nothing in this terrible world that will not bow to Jesus. There is no crime or catastrophe that will not be brought under His rule. When the weights are heavy upon you this week, remember how deep the Father's love for his Son, and how great their sacrifice for you.