Sunday School Lesson
Mark 9:Transfiguration (June 21, 2026)

Set the Stage

We are at a time shortly following the beheading of John the Baptist. One Bible commentator observed that John was so much favored, and King Herod so despised, that people were naming their sons "John," and their dogs "Herod."

When Jesus fed the five thousand on the north side of the Sea of Galilee, His disciples were asking <u>why</u> feed them? When He later fed the four thousand on the south end of the Sea of Galilee, the disciples were asking <u>how</u> to feed them. This was showing some increase in faith maturity, but they have not yet arrived at full faith; they still do not fully understand. So, more training is called for.

Transfiguration – What Happened?

This probably took place on Mt. Hermon, but no one Gospel gives all the details.
Mark 9:2-8 (Mark was earliest author and wrote from Peter's testimony)

"Fuller" is a cloth finisher – cleanse and "fluff" cloth in preparation for use
Clothes were dazzling white.

Who went? _____
Legal testimony required 2 or 3 witnesses, and that is what Jesus arranged.

Who appeared? _____

Why them? _____

Luke 9:28-36 (Luke was a historian and collector of eyewitness accounts)
Luke adds "my Chosen" and that Jesus' countenance was changed.

Matthew 17:1-8 (Matthew interpreted Luke's accounts and expanded for Jewish audience)
Matthew focused more on Jesus' face and added a reassurance from Jesus at the conclusion.

When else did God speak to people and tell them how pleased He was with Jesus?
_____

> *9 And as they were coming down the mountain, he charged them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of man should have risen from the dead. 10 So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what the rising from the dead meant.* – Mark 9:9-10

Transfiguration – Witnesses

As directed, they didn't tell anyone about this encounter until much later, but they realized it had a deep significance and then they proclaimed it.

Read **2 Peter 1:16-18**

Read **John 1:14**

Transfiguration – Significance

The three disciples have just witnessed the dazzling sinless glory of Jesus, but now He is alone and must proceed to His undeserved punishment solo. Only Mark listed Elijah before Moses. The disciples now debate among themselves questions about some prophecies.

> *9 And as they were coming down the mountain, he charged them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of man should have risen from the dead. 10 So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what the rising from the dead meant. 11 And they asked him, "Why do the scribes say that first Eli'jah must come?" 12 And he said to them, "Eli'jah does come first to restore all things; and how is it written of the Son of man, that he should suffer many things and be treated with contempt? 13 But I tell you that Eli'jah has come, and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written of him."* – Mark 9:9-13

Still Teaching His Disciples

Overcoming their faults: Prayerlessness

Jesus is just now coming down off the mountain where He was conversing with Elijah and Moses in the Transfiguration. He has just had a most glorious encounter, and what greets Him? His nine remaining disciples arguing with some scribes! What is THIS all about? Read **Mark 9:14-29**.

[14] When they came to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and the teachers of the law arguing with them. [15] As soon as all the people saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with wonder and ran to greet him.

[16] "What are you arguing with them about?" he asked.

[17] A man in the crowd answered, "Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. [18] Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not."

[19] "You unbelieving generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me."

[20] So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth.

[21] Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has he been like this?"

"From childhood," he answered. [22] "It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us."

[23] "'If you can'?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for one who believes."

[24] Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"

[25] When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the impure spirit. "You deaf and mute spirit," he said, "I command you, come out of him and never enter him again."

[26] The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, "He's dead." [27] But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up.

[28] After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, "Why couldn't we drive it out?"

[29] He replied, "This kind can come out only by prayer and fasting."

- Mark 9:14-29

Scholars generally agree that "and fasting" was later added to the end of verse 29.
Did Jesus criticize His disciples for failing to cure the boy? _____
What do you think Jesus was teaching when He said, "only by prayer?"
_____

Fear

Have you ever had an occasion when you think you kind of understand something, but don't want to ask because you are afraid of what the answer might be? The answer may require you to make a hard choice, or change a habit; so, you'd rather just avoid the final, full details. Jesus' disciples were no different.

> *30 They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were, 31 because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise." 32 But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it.* – Mark 9:30-32

Jesus had told them before about His coming death (Peter had rebuked Jesus, but Jesus said that was Satan speaking through Peter). Jesus is repeating His prediction. Treachery is in the air! If the disciples pursue this line of discussion, they may find Judas in their own hearts. They want to know answers, but, if they know all the answers, then they are afraid of the decisions that the truth may force them to make. If you know something fully, then do you not have an obligation to act? Is this not exactly what a lot of today's investigations in Washington are all about? Who knew what, and when? And, if you knew, why did you not act??

Pride

Mark recounts two examples of this fault.

> *33 They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the road?" 34 But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest.* – Mark 9:33-34

They were silent because they were embarrassed. After witnessing the Transfiguration and the miraculous healing of the boy, the disciples fell back into a petty discussion about their own greatness. Steve will cover this in greater detail next week with Chapter 10.

Service & Understanding

> *35 And he sat down and called the twelve; and he said to them, "If any one would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all." 36 And he took a child, and put him in the midst of them; and taking him in his arms, he said to*

them, [37] "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me." - Mark 9:35-37

Jesus used the Aramaic word, "talya," which means both child and servant. This is one of the many times that Jesus emphasized the need for service to others, especially service to others who could not repay you.

Prejudice

The disciples were just now getting the hang of curing people and casting out demons. But, was anyone outside this close group of 12 supposed to be able to do that, too?

[38] "Teacher," said John, "we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us." – Mark 9:38

Jesus uses this opportunity to point out that His ministry is larger than just the 12, and that others will be needed to help spread His teachings.

[39] "Do not stop him," Jesus said. "For no one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, [40] for whoever is not against us is for us. [41] Truly I tell you, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to the Messiah will certainly not lose their reward. – Mark 9:39-41

Summary:

- Don't agonize over your faults and shortcomings; even Jesus' closest associates were subject to the same human vulnerabilities as the rest of the world: pride, prejudice, fear, and prayerlessness.
- You must serve others who cannot do anything for you in return. Seek service, not honor.
- This life is about service; your rest may not come till the next life!

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