

Seeing the kingdom come in power

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Preacher: Mark Fossey

[0 : 00] Our first reading this morning is from Mark chapter 9 verse 2 to verse 13.

That's on page 1018 in the Bibles. Mark chapter 8, chapter 9, verse 2. And after six days, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John and led them up a high mountain by themselves.

And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.

And Peter said to Jesus, Rabbi, it's good that we're here. Let us make three tents, one for you, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah. For he did not know what to say, for they were terrified.

And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, This is my beloved Son, listen to him. And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them, but Jesus only.

[1 : 11] And as they were coming down the mountain, he charged them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead might mean.

And they asked him, Why did the scribes say that first Elijah must come? And he said to them, Elijah 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?

But I tell you that Elijah has come, and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written of him. Well, my name's Mark Fossey, I'm the assistant pastor here, it's good to see you all.

And we are very much in a series, which we've been started at last week, which I've entitled, Come Follow Me. Because as Jesus walks to Jerusalem, and his disciples follow him, he's teaching them what it means to be a follower.

Not literally in the physical sense, but in the spiritual sense. And it's teaching us what it means to be a follower of Jesus. And last week, we had a very strong talk. I know a number of people were on half term.

[2 : 25] Let me just remind you of briefly what we looked at last week. Have a look down at chapter 8, verse 32. Jesus began to teach them.

So they've not done this before. That the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and the scribes, and be killed.

And after three days, rise again. So like the blind man that Jesus just healed in two parts, the disciples are only beginning to see, they're only beginning to comprehend, who Jesus is, or why he's come.

It's his mission that they're not really understanding. Jesus must suffer, be rejected, and die, before being risen again. And he's teaching them that to follow him, means that they may have to suffer, be rejected, and possibly even die, as they all did actually.

For that is what it means to be a true follower of Jesus. The way he puts it is in verse 34. If anyone would come after me, i.e. be one of my followers, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.

[3 : 35] So following Jesus, and this is what we saw last week, is a very strong and strong words, is that suffering, and rejection, and possibly death, are what you're taking up, if you're following Jesus.

The costs and the benefits we looked at. But this week, I think what we're going to see this week, is we want to really see the benefits, we want to see the reason, why it's worth it. Why is it worth following Jesus, if it might involve suffering, rejection, and death, as it did for him.

Now, I don't know how your friends, view you as a Christian. A lot of my friends, think I'm an idiot, for doing what I do. I mean, why don't you work in the city, and make lots of money for us?

What are you doing? Why would you bother, turning up to a small church, in a primary school, following Jesus? Why would you do that? Why do you do it?

Why do you give up, so much of your time and money, to follow Jesus? Why aren't you, and your kids, playing sport on a Sunday morning, playing golf, having a line, doing all sorts of other fun stuff.

[4 : 37] Why do you associate yourself, with Christianity, when, well, what's the image of Christians, that we're sad, or dull, or morally, what are we, what are you doing morally?

You're gay haters, you're women haters. It's not a popular thing, to follow Jesus, is it? Why do you bother doing it? Why do you follow, the fundamentalists? Or perhaps, you feel the pressure, as a Christian, with outsiders, to conform morally, and moral things.

I mean, why aren't you getting drunk, with the others? Why aren't you doing that? Why aren't you joining in, with the gossip, or the slander, or the backstabbing? I mean, why don't you do, listen, why aren't you involved, in the corporate lie here?

Why do you stand yourself, apart from everyone else, and do that? Why don't you just have, that wrong relationship, and enjoy yourself, and have the pleasures, of life? Why do you, why do you make yourself, different from others?

Do you not feel the pressure? Do you sometimes feel, as a Christian, do you ask yourself, the question, why am I, why am I doing this? Is it worth it?

[5 : 40] Do you find yourself, asking that? Well, I want to encourage you today, and this is the big thing, if you get nothing else, this is the thing today, I want to encourage you. Is it worth it?

Yes, capital Y, capital E, capital S, absolutely, and the reason is this, and it's Simon, Simon's been helping us, so helpfully this morning, is because Jesus, is the king of glory, and if you're following him, you're absolutely, backing the right horse, so when you get, into the midst, of struggles, and difficulties, and you're finding yourself, asking a question, why do I bother with this?

Is it worth it? The answer is, Jesus is the king of glory, absolutely, it's worth it, 100%. Let's have a look down, at this, the transfiguration, which we just read, verse 2, after six days, Jesus took with him, just three of his disciples, up a mountain, Peter, James, and John, and he was transfigured, before them, and his clothes, became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth, could bleach them, and there appeared, Elijah and Moses, and they're talking to Jesus, Peter rambles, you know, Rabbi, is it, it's good that we're here, should we make tents, he doesn't know what he's talking about, verse 6, they didn't know what to say, for they were terrified, and a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice, from the cloud, this is my beloved son, listen to him, terrifying, absolutely terrifying, they saw something extraordinary, that no one else, had ever seen, this is Jesus' Superman moment, you know, in Superman films, where you've got the bumbling,

Clark Kent, with his glasses, and his silly clothes, stuttering around, but then in a moment, he goes into a telephone booth, and out comes Superman, he can do all things, and then he's Clark Kenton again, and everyone thinks he's an idiot, but actually, we know, because we're watching the film, that he's Superman, now, now, the disciples, and many of the people, at the time of Jesus, would have seen, I don't know, a five foot ten guy, with a brown beard, who was a carpenter, but just for a moment, just for a moment, they glimpsed, who Jesus really is, he isn't just a bloke, with a flowing white robe, and a nice beard, and sandals, this is the king of glory, and they saw it, just for a moment, they saw Jesus, in his Superman moment, if you like, what did they see, well they saw his clothes, just go intensely white, did you notice, in Simon's reading, actually, from Revelation 1, where, when you saw Jesus, and this is Jesus now, his face was like, the sun in radiance,

I mean, do you ever look at the sun, you can't look at the sun, Jesus is utterly glorious, terrifying, and he was, just for this moment, the disciples saw it, secondly, they see Moses, and Elijah there, I mean, Moses and Elijah, you don't get many more heavyweights, and they're just there, and they're just talking to Jesus, it's Moses and Elijah, and of course, Peter mumbles these things, and did you notice, in verse 6, he didn't know what to say, for they were terrified, do you know, the terror, it hasn't started yet, then a cloud overshadows them, this is the glory cloud, do you remember, when the Israelites, were being led through the desert, it was the glory cloud, that was leading them, when Moses went up on the mountain, and gave the law, it was the glory cloud, that surrounded them, when the tabernacle, and the temple, were first dedicated, it was the glory cloud, that filled the temple, or the tabernacle, this is God's presence, it's terrifying, and to cap it off, if that could be capped off,

[9 : 21] God speaks, honestly, has anyone here, heard the voice of God audibly, God spoke, this is my beloved son, listen to him, this is terrifying, Jesus is not just Clark Kent, he's Superman, man, or to put it, in its more helpful way, Jesus is not just, your average carpenter, Jesus is the king of glory, and just for a split second, these three men, saw it with their own eyes, extraordinary, I've put on your sheet actually, if you look at your notes there, a little quote there, from Peter, it's the second quote there, this is what Peter says, in his own letter, in another part of the Bible, about this event, have a look at it, verse 16, we did not follow, cleverly devised myths, when we made known to you, the power, and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were, eyewitnesses of his glory, we didn't make this up, we saw it, eyewitnesses of his majesty, for, when he received honour, and glory from God the Father, and the voice was born to him, by the majestic glory, this is my beloved son, with whom I'm well pleased, we ourselves, heard this very voice, born from heaven, for we were with him, on the holy mountain, do you see what he's saying here, we were there, we saw it, this really happened, this isn't made up stuff, it sounds mental, but just for a split second, me and my boys,

James and John, we saw Jesus, the king of glory, now that voice, this is my son, comes from Psalm 2, I've put it there, on the sheet there, and Psalm 2, says this is my son, this is the one I've made, the king of glory, verse 6, as for me, God says, I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill, I will tell of the decree, the Lord has said to me, you are my son, today I've begotten you, when you hear God say, you are my son, do you know what God's doing, he's quoting himself, okay, a thousand years before, in Psalm 2, he said, I'm going to set myself, a king, and he's going to be my son, you are my son, I'm going to say to him, and a thousand years later, he did it, you are my son, and Peter heard the voice, this really happened, Jesus is not your average carpenter, he's the king of glory, now that's why these things, are written down for us, that's why we're looking at this story, and thinking about this today, is so that we see Jesus, in his superman moment, we see Jesus for who he really is,

I don't know what you think of Jesus, many of us are vision of Jesus, comes from medieval paintings, he's the kind of guy, like I said, white flowy flouncy robe, and girly hair, and he's quite, you know, little lambs or something, and he's a very soft guy, isn't he, or he's dying on a cross, or he's a little baby, little baby Jesus, and Jesus is a wimp, and that's what most of our culture think, and just for a moment, he's showed them, and he's showing us, this is not a guy you mess with, really helpful reading, we heard earlier, from Revelation 1, Jesus is radiant, there's a sun, his tongue, his voice, is a double-edged sword, you don't mess with Jesus, he's the king of glory, even now, he's enthroned in the heavens, if only you could, just for a moment, if you could see him right now, like John in Revelation, like Peter, and James, and John here, we wouldn't be going, oh, gentle Jesus, me, command, we would be terrified, he's the king of glory, he is God's son, the one that God has put, on the throne, is it worth following him, more than anyone else, yes,

Y-E-S, yes, Jesus is the king of glory, my second point though, just to emphasise this, is that God said, he'd be the king of glory, so where they are on the mountain, Elijah and Moses are there, why Elijah and Moses, just because they're two big guys, let me give you two reasons, why I think Elijah and Moses are there, firstly, they're up a mountain, and if you know your Old Testament, Elijah and Moses, figure big with mountains, when Moses went up the mountain, God spoke to him, and gave him the law, when Elijah went up a mountain, actually God didn't speak, he deliberately said nothing, he spoke in a still voice, or in a deafening silence, he said nothing, because he didn't need to say anything, he'd already given his law to Moses, there was nothing new to add, when Jesus goes up a mountain, and Elijah and Moses are speaking to him, confirming what they've said,

God speaks again, what does he say this time, this is my son, listen to him, the law now comes through Jesus, listen to what he says, and what's he been saying, do you remember, chapter 9, sorry, chapter 8 verse 31, the son of man must suffer many things, be rejected, and be killed, listen to him, this is the new law if you like, what Jesus says matters, don't ignore it, but secondly, I think with Moses and Elijah, Moses and Elijah represent the law, and the prophets, the Old Testament, they thought of the Old Testament, in two parts, the law and the prophets, the law written by Moses, and the prophets, well Elijah was one of the greatest prophets, he summarises the prophets, if you like, and when they're chatting to Jesus, about him suffering and dying, and being rejected, it's as if, what we're seeing here, is all the stuff written in the Bible, all the stuff that God has been saying, for the last 2,000 years, is all about this, it's all about Jesus, being suffering, being rejected, and being killed, that's what the whole of the Old Testament, was really about, that's what God's always been about, that was always the plan, that's actually what happens, is they're going down the mountain, in verse 9, they're going down the mountain, and the disciples are having, an Old Testament Bible study, but what are they talking about, verse 11, why do the scribes say, that Elijah must come first, they're doing a Bible study, in Malachi 4, which says that Elijah's got to come, before the Messiah comes, and Jesus says, okay fine, verse 12,

[16:02] Elijah does come first, to restore all things, but, here's what you should be doing, an Old Testament Bible study on, how is it written, that the son of man, that he should suffer, many things, and be treated with contempt, in other words, what the Old Testament, was all about, don't forget Elijah coming back, and that fantastical stuff, the important thing, is the Old Testament, was all about, the son of man, coming and suffering, and being rejected, and dying, that's what it was always about, why is this here, why is this all happening, in the Old Testament law, in a court, to establish, the guilt of someone, you needed two witnesses, you needed two people, to come forward and say, I saw it, it happened, and that is enough, to convict someone, God, has spoken, through two witnesses, to establish, that Jesus, really is the king of glory, firstly, in his Bible, in the Old Testament, the Old Testament, is like this, huge signpost, going, this is going to happen, this is going to happen, and that when it happens, you know, it was always meant to be, that the son of man, the Messiah, would suffer, be rejected, and die, but the second witness, is him speaking, he'll say it, this is my son, listen to him, when he says,

I've got to suffer, be rejected, and die, he means it, listen to him, two witnesses, God, in two ways, speaks to confirm, this is the guy, you can follow, so do you see, how important, this is as an event, the transfiguration, confirms that Jesus, is the king of glory, and God, is absolutely saying, this is the one, it's him, back to 2 Peter, have a look at that quote again, let me read from verse 19, and we have something, more sure, more sure, than God speaking, on a mountain, the prophetic word, to which you will do well, to pay attention, that's the Bible, the Old Testament, as to a lamp, shining in a dark place, until the day dawns, and the morning star, rises in your heart, knowing this, first of all, that no prophecy of scripture, comes from someone's, own interpretation, this wasn't written by men, it was written by God, for no prophecy, was ever produced, by the will of man, but men spoke from God, as they were carried along, by the Holy Spirit, here's the point,

Jesus, is the king of glory, they saw it, God said it, they saw it, God said it, and that is why, he's being transfigured, that's why this happens, at this point, in Mark's gospel, because it's at this point, and if you were here last week, maybe you felt it, that you're most doubting, whether you can keep going, following Jesus, because you recognise, that following him, means living the life like him, being suffering, re-injected, and possibly even dying, we think often, don't we naturally, that we want glory now, but Jesus is saying, no, suffering now, glory then, we naturally think glory now, I want my life to work, I want my life to be comfortable, I want it to fit, when there are hardships, when there are stresses, and sicknesses, difficulties in my family, difficulties with my job, with my finances, with my relationships, we want God, to sort it all out, like some genie in the sky, make my life comfortable, but Jesus lived the life of suffering, and then glory, and he says, follow me, which might well mean, suffering now, and glory then, so the transfiguration, is Jesus' superman moment, almost opening the curtain, so you see, this is the king of glory, and this is the glory, that you will have with him, in the future, is it worth following him,

Y-E-S, capital Y-E-S, yes, keep going, don't give up, God said it would happen this way, it will, and it's true, but, I still think this is hard to believe, the truth is, these three guys saw him in glory, we haven't seen him in glory, and I find this hard to believe, sometimes, do you?

when things are hard, when things are getting us down, and stressing us, do you find this hard to believe? We're going to read one more story, which is exactly helping us, with this encouragement, to keep going, even when we find it hard to believe, so I'm going to ask Lois, who's still here, just to, just to, read the next story, so keep your Bibles open, thank you very much Lois, now this is a story, about, a man, and, Jesus' disciples, struggling to believe, what the three have just seen, on the top of the mountain, struggling to believe, that Jesus is the king of glory, and if you're someone, who naturally struggles, to believe this sort of thing, this is a brilliant story for you, Jesus is coming down the mountain, with those guys, and there's a great crowd, a great commotion, a big debate going on, for this man, has brought his son, who's demon possessed, who has epileptic type, symptoms, he's being thrown on the ground, he's foaming at the mouth, and, he can't speak either, this is a, he's a mute young lad, and, he's brought this, this young lad, to the disciples, and asked them to cast this demon, out of him, now, the disciples have, been on a mission recently, to Samaria, and Jesus had given them, authority to cast out demons, so this is something, they were used to doing, but for some reason, they can't do it this time, and they're greatly perplexed, and there's a great debate, what's going on here, look at how Jesus, finds this scenario, in verse 19, and what he says of it, verse 19, oh, faithless generation, how long, am I to be with you, how long, am I to bear with you, this is a people, like us, lacking faith, struggling to believe, what's funny for us, as believers here, sorry, as readers here, is that, the man then, they've had this debate, about how long, this has been going on, and it's been going on, since childhood, and the man asks him, in verse 22, he says to Jesus, if you can do anything, if you can do anything, have compassion on us, and help us, and the funny thing is, we've just seen the previous scene, and Jesus has just stood there, and gone,

[22 : 39] I am the king of glory, and they've seen him, and were terrified, and then this funny little man goes, if you can do anything, could you like maybe, if you can do anything, Jesus says, you don't know who I am, and as readers, we absolutely know who he is, if you can do anything, Jesus says, anything is possible, for the one who believes, now that's a massively abused verse, that doesn't mean you can, sprout wings and fly, if you believe, it doesn't, and it doesn't mean, it's not a carte blanche verse, to sort of ask God, for anything you want, if I have enough faith, I can have anything I want, not like God's some sort of, genie slot machine God, who gets me what I want, that's not what that verse is saying, what is going on here, look at the paradigm, a boy, is possessed by a demon, Satan has got him in his grip, and Satan, this demon, are trying to kill him, the whole time, in fact, even when, the last throws of the demon, as Jesus casts him out, did you see what happened, the boy falls down on the floor, like a corpse, and they think he's dead, but Jesus, and the word used there, he raises him up, it's a paradigm here, this boy is gripped by Satan, he's dead, but Jesus raises him up,

Jesus has the power to do that, so when, when you, the man says, can you do this, can you take him from Satan's grip, can you raise him from the dead, figuratively speaking, Jesus says, just believe in me, anyone who believes this can happen, now I find this, a massive encouragement, for a number of reasons, let me give three, possible encouragements for this, all of which I think are helpful, firstly for those of us, who are Christians, who have got, unbelieving friends, I've got people I know, who now are in the, 20 year club, people I've been praying for, for 20 years, who are still unbelievers, they're still gripped by Satan, they're still dead in their sins, and I find it really hard to believe, that Jesus can do anything, if I'm honest, I find this really hard, and it's as if Jesus is saying here, look, I'm the king of glory, do you struggle with your faith, for other people, that aren't Christians, that you're still praying for, he's saying, anything is possible, can I do this, of course I can do this, do you not know who I am, so this really encourages me this week, keep going in prayer, in faith, secondly, for those of us here, who wouldn't yet, call ourselves Christians, who are still thinking about it, and are really finding this, really hard to believe, can I believe, this Jesus guy, could I, can I go for this, listen to the words of the man, he says verse 24,

I believe, help my unbelief, it's as if, I want to believe, but I'm finding this really hard, and Jesus, Jesus blesses this man's son, he says elsewhere, you only need, faith like a mustard seed, to enter the kingdom, so if you're struggling, to believe that Jesus, is the Messiah, the Lord, the Lord of, King of glory, let me encourage you, he is, but this man, is a real encouragement to us, even though he struggles, to believe, you don't need, to have faith, the size of a mountain, you just have to have, mustard seed faith, and thirdly, for those of us, who are struggling, as Christians, and I take it, that's all of us, at different points, in our lives, maybe it's you right now, who are finding it tough, going as a Christian, and you're struggling, to believe in Jesus, you're struggling, to keep in your mind, that one day, I will be in glory, and I can keep going through, these just few decades, now of suffering, Jesus says to us, anything, of course I can do this, of course I'll raise you, from the dead, of course I'll raise you, in glory, of course you'll be, in heaven forever, and you'll be glorious, like me,

I'm the king of glory, this is possible, for those of you, just believe, just keep going, in your faith, don't give up, if you're here today, please let the transfiguration, be the thing, that you take home, with you, if you're struggling, to believe, if you're feeling, the burden of life, if your hardships, are the panorama, of all you see, in your life, at the moment, just as I finish, let me ask you, take that trouble, that stress, that difficult, whatever it is, just put it down there, for a moment, and just look up, and see Jesus, in his glory, just for a moment, look at him, Jesus, is the Lord, of glory, he will take us, to heaven, to be glorious, just as he is, one day, we will be, shining white, and glorious, as he is right now, and if you're feeling, the burden, and thinking, can I keep going, the answer is, he's the king of glory, keep going,

I remember hearing, Paula Radcliffe once, in an interview, on the radio, and they asked her, you know you're in the marathon, and you know you're, at that really hard point, how do you keep going, and I remember her saying, what I do, is I visualise in my mind, the moment I hit the tape, and that's what keeps me going, in the hard patch, just imagine the day, when you hit the tape, when you, not Peter, James and John, but when you, with your eyes, see Jesus, on that day, all those troubles, all those hardships, all those stresses, all those difficulties, where will they be, will they have been worth it, the answer is, yes, Jesus, is the king of glory, so don't give up, let's pray, Lord Jesus, we want to, bow at your throne, and lay down our crowns, and look up at you, and see you, the king of glory, we worship you, we delight in you, we are terrified, by you, with great joy, and hope, for you are our brother, and you have saved us,

[28 : 54] Lord Jesus, I really pray, for those of us here, who are not Christians, who are still thinking, these things through, and struggling, and wondering, please we pray, would you give them, this faith, would you help them, to see, you are absolutely, worth, following, for those of us, who are struggling, with difficulties, with burdens, with anxieties, with stresses, whatever they are, oh Lord Jesus, please would you burn, brightly in our minds, would we, would we see you, see that day, and keep going, and never give up, the devil will throw, all sorts of things, at us Lord Jesus, and even right now, some of us, feel the sharpness, of his arrows, and we ask, that you would give us, help us, to put on the armour, of the shield of faith, to see and believe, that you're the king of glory, and nothing, and no one, can thwart you, and your ways, and we pray this, with joy, and burdens, in our heart, knowing that one day, we'll be with you forever, and evermore, and see you with our own eyes,

Amen. Amen.