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TEACHING THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD

Mark - Lesson 9A

Chapter 9:1-8

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- Up to this point, the disciples have been inundated with much information regarding Christ's Person and His mission regarding the Kingdom Program.
 - We witnessed in the past two teachings a few things in the region of Caesarea Philippi:
 - It was at the Grotto of Pan where Peter, by the power of the Spirit makes the great confession that Jesus was the Son of the Living God.
 - This spoke directly to the identity of Jesus.
 - And from that confession, Jesus was able to give full disclosure as to what His purpose was as Messiah – and that was that He came to suffer and die.
 - Unfortunately, Peter having been deemed the chief Apostle, in a way, pulled Jesus aside and tells Him, “Far be it from me Jesus”.
 - In other words, that’s not happening on my watch if I have anything to do about it.
 - It would be at this point that Jesus would give a firm and Divine Rebuke in effort to get Peter’s mind set upon the heavenly things and not the earthly things.
 - To put it plainly, for Peter and the disciples to carry out this mission of the Church after Jesus was gone, it first required Jesus to die.
 - So, it was because of Peter’s misunderstanding and unwillingness to see Messiah suffer that Jesus provides further clarifying statements.
 - This is where we found ourselves last week.
 - In Mark 8E, Jesus’ point that He conveyed to His disciples was that the disciple's interest and priority must be set upon God’s interest and not their own.
 - In other words, God’s interests are eternal and authoritative whereas man’s interest are finite and temporal.
 - And the way in which Jesus conveyed this eternal truth regarding God’s plans and priorities would be through an enigmatic statement.
 - It would be in Mark 8:35 that Jesus parabolically tells the crowd this:

Mark 8:35 For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it.

- Jesus’ point here was that humanity will ultimately be dealt the hand in which they give regarding their acceptance or rejection to the Gospel.
 - You will either prioritize the life that is to come by letting go of this one or risk the loss of reward because of your tight grip to this life.
 - The reality is, as believers, this life in which we live right now is simply a trial run for the next.
 - So how you live now, how you serve now, how you give of your time now, determines the rewards awaiting you in the Kingdom.
 - But what becomes of great significance in this dialogue is that death is not the end of the plan regarding the Kingdom program – it’s only the beginning.
 - And this becomes the point in which Jesus is articulating to His disciples

regarding both His mission as well as theirs in His physical absence.

- For it will only be through the Messiah’s death and suffering that men and women can even enter the Kingdom and receive salvation.
- And although a suffering Messiah was not on the forefront of these men’s plans, they would have to get with the plan of the King.
 - But as a good King and faithful God, Jesus would not leave these men without “a preview of coming attractions”.
- If I were to outline our time tonight, we will see the following:
 - 1. A Promised Pronouncement (v.1)
 - 2. A Promise Fulfilled (v.2-3)
 - 3. A Peculiar Encounter (v.4)
 - 4. Premature Postulation (v.5-6)
 - 5. A Prominent Voice (v.7-8)
- If I were to put a tag on the text tonight it would be: “A Peak behind the Veil”
 - With that being said, I invite you to open your bibles and meet me in Mark 9:1-8.

Mark 9:1 And Jesus was saying to them, “Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power.”

Mark 9:2 Six days later, Jesus *took with Him Peter and James and John, and *brought them up on a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them;

Mark 9:3 and His garments became radiant and exceedingly white, as no launderer on earth can whiten them.

Mark 9:4 Elijah appeared to them along with Moses; and they were talking with Jesus.

Mark 9:5 Peter *said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”

Mark 9:6 For he did not know what to answer; for they became terrified.

Mark 9:7 Then a cloud formed, overshadowing them, and a voice came out of the cloud, “This is My beloved Son, listen to Him!”

Mark 9:8 All at once they looked around and saw no one with them anymore, except Jesus alone.

- Let's Pray.
- If you’re a fan of the Marvel movies, as my family and I are, you know that the Marvel trailers are a must.
 - You know that you have hit “Marvel Fan Status” when you remain in the theater after the credits for their “after credit trailer”.
 - These final 1 to 2 minute showings are beautiful displays of a “preview of coming attractions”.

- They give you insight to the sequel of the show and if you miss these short blurbs of goodness, you miss critical insight into the next movie.
- What we will witness tonight in Mark 9:1-8, is this glorious preview of coming attractions.xs
 - God is going to provide a preview of Glory to 3 of Jesus’ disciples as a means to properly direct them and correct them on matters they have misunderstood.
 - And as they witness this, it should serve as a means to further the Kingdom Program and provide unwavering confidence down the line.
 - With that said, pick me up at verse 1 of Mark Chapter 9.

Mark 9:1 And Jesus was saying to them, “Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power.”

- Well, it’s after Jesus has encouraged the disciples and the crowd that He mentions the true priority in this life is to prioritize the next and to be ready for the judgment to come.
 - Jesus paints this picture for them to realize that death is not the end of this life for some, but rather it is the beginning to eternal life.
 - So the objective for those who will follow Jesus as His disciples, would be the need to let their grip of this life and its possessions go.
 - And in exchange, build upon things that are eternal now so that once He returns they may receive their reward in full.
 - So to further expound upon this point, Jesus provides them with this promised pronouncement, if you will.
 - And it is with this promise, that there would be some that would see it fulfilled in their day.
 - You might be asking: “What is this promise in which Jesus made?” Well, we find that promise here in verse 1.
 - He begins by telling them “Truly I say to you” which could be translated “I tell you the truth” or “This is what the Lord has spoken”
 - In other words, you can take what I am telling you now and cash that check in the bank because it will not return void.
 - And the promise that He gives is that there will be some who are standing before them who will not taste death before they see “the Kingdom of God after it has come with power.”
 - Now, this statement has been the debate of many interpreters and commentators, but with proper context it literally interprets itself.
 - To best understand what Jesus was saying here we need to understand the Greek language and two words.
 - The first word here is “Kingdom” and this word in Greek can be translated as “reign or royal power”.

- We can easily eliminate the thought that there would be some who would see the physical literal Kingdom in their lifetime because it has yet to come.
 - Therefore, a more accurate translation of the word Kingdom here is “royal power”.
- The second word is “taste death”.
 - Mark’s use of this phrase here is in direct connection to Mark 8:38 and Mark 9:1 as Jesus was just speaking about death.
 - This further solidifies the reality that death in this fallen world has become the means by which one translates one to either an eternity with God or not.
- So regarding the Kingdom Program, because of Israel’s national rejection of the Messiah, the Kingdom’s full consummation in that day was postponed.
 - However, the training in which the disciples were experiencing for the upcoming Church age was to get the people ready who received Messiah now.
 - The question for them at that point becomes: “If there isn’t a Kingdom coming now, when will it arrive and how will we know?”
- Friends this is the work that Jesus is moving towards in preparing both a people for the Kingdom as well as providing a glimpse of coming attractions.
 - The reality is these men would need some foretaste or picture of what they were working towards – especially with no timeline provided.
 - So Jesus is going to allow a select few (3 disciples) to experience this “preview of coming attractions” to provide a sense of hope of things to come.
 - And what a blessing for them, that they would see this promise sooner rather than later. Check out verse 2 and 3.

Mark 9:2 Six days later, Jesus *took with Him Peter and James and John, and *brought them up on a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them;

Mark 9:3 and His garments became radiant and exceedingly white, as no launderer on earth can whiten them

- Mark tells us here that this previous promise pronounced will now be a promise fulfilled.
 - The text mentions that it was only six days later from the time in which Jesus made this pronouncement that “some would not taste death until they witnessed the Kingdom come with power”.
 - It is here that Jesus took with Him Peter, James, and John to a high mountain where they would share a powerful moment with their Lord.
 - Now, the text does not tell us what mountain exactly the transfiguration took place on.
 - But what we can gather is that they were in Caesarea Philippi just a week prior.
 - And as we discussed, the highest mountain in the Promised Land is that of Mt. Hermon.

- So although the text does not grant us specifics, it provides us context and the context reveals that the geographical location could be that mountain.
 - However, the mountain is not the focal point – The Transfiguration is.
 - And Mark tells us that once they had reached the top of the mountain that Jesus transfigured before them.
- In verse 3, this description of the transfiguration of Jesus is quite consistent with the Hebrew scripture details regarding the very Shekinah Glory of God.
 - The word transfiguration in Greek is *metamorphoo* which is where we get our English word metamorphosis which means “to be changed”.
 - In other words, the Jesus in which these men had been walking with for all this time looked completely different descriptively in all respects.
- This event is so dynamic that the synoptic gospel writers document very similar details both conclusively and specifically.
 - Matthew’s gospel says that His face shone like the sun and His garments were as white as light.
 - Mark’s gospel records that this scene of the transfiguration was one of exceeding radiance.
 - And Luke says they saw “Jesus’ glory”.
- Jesus’ garments became radiant and exceedingly white as like no amount of cleaning (bleaching) could make it.
 - It was as if from His very human-being, His Divine being and nature burst forth in this unhindered and glorious light.
- Friends, what Peter, James and John witnessed on this mountain was indeed a demonstration of His “royal power” just as Jesus promised in verse 1.
 - What becomes quite comical is that Luke’s gospel details that while this powerful moment is occurring, that the selected disciples were previously overcome with sleep.
 - And I believe it speaks to the humanness of the disciples in the sense that we can oftentimes overlook the miraculous things because we get too comfortable in routine with God.
- Notice while Peter, James, and John are awakened from this deep slumber, they witness something else quite spectacular in this glory moment. Check out verse 4.

Mark 9:4 Elijah appeared to them along with Moses; and they were talking with Jesus.

- So as Jesus is standing before them in His full Divine Glory, Mark mentions that the Prophet Elijah and Moses were standing next to Jesus talking to Him.
 - Luke mentions in Luke 9 that both Elijah and Moses were glorified as well – as if in a similar state of splendor.
 - Now in this one verse alone comes many questions regarding this peculiar encounter of familiar figures.
 - Here are some of the questions that come to mind:

- 1. How are these 3 able to perceive who these men were if they never met them?
 - 2. What were they possibly talking about?
 - 3. What is the purpose of both Elijah and Moses being in this moment with Christ in this Glorified state?
- Let's begin with the first question: "How are these 3 able to perceive who these men were that are standing and talking to Jesus, if they never met them?"
 - Well, one could assume the disciples were provided spiritual insight regarding the identities of Elijah and Moses by God Himself.
 - As we lean into this a bit more, especially considering that death is the content of this context, it forces us to consider how Elijah and Moses died.
 - And once we begin to observe this event through the proper context you can begin to see what the greater purpose in this scene is – which brings us to the second question:
- "What is the purpose of both Elijah and Moses being in this moment with Christ in this Glorified state?"
 - As we mentioned, context is key here.
 - And where we find ourselves at this point is dealing with eternal matters and embracing the life that is to come.
 - On top of that we mentioned that with Jesus having made known His path to establishing the Kingdom in a future time and that it would first require Him to die, we have to deal with death itself and what it accomplishes.
- This was the difficulty that the disciples were struggling through, especially Peter.
 - How can there be a Kingdom with no King?
 - How can there be victory found in dying?
- Well if you remember, Jesus mentioned that the reason why there is victory through death is because Jesus would defeat death by being raised victoriously!
 - So this event of the transfiguration along with these two figures standing with Jesus, who have played such significant roles in God's redemptive historical out-workings, portrays a significant picture for the disciples.
- The significance of this picture will be found in the third question we posed and that is: "What were they talking about in conversation with Jesus?"
 - Friends, this question is the key to further understanding the significance of this event.
 - And to do that, we have to go outside of Mark's gospel to know the answer.
- Luke 9:31 tells us Moses and Elijah are speaking with Jesus concerning "...His departure which He was about to accomplish in Jerusalem."
 - Now, when you look at the word "departure" in Greek, it means exodus which is in direct relation to a particular event – the Passover.
 - The term "exodus" can also refer to a path or departure from the living to death.
 - And as we see the context of this statement, Luke mentions Jesus' departure

to accomplish His purpose in Jerusalem.

- In other words, Moses and Elijah were asking Jesus about His plan in fulfilling the Passover by dying on the cross.
 - So for the disciples to hear this conversation must have been a huge clarifying conversation as to the fulfillment of what Christ came to do. (Or so we would think)
- Jesus' death wasn't a sign of defeat, but rather it was a fulfillment of the Passover that pictures Israel's victory over slavery and death in which they had faced in Egypt.
 - Well this begs the question: "How does this tie into the figures standing before them?"
- Moses was the leader that established God's Laws and physically led the people out of Egypt and slavery to the edge of the promised land.
 - However, the Hebrew scriptures recorded that Moses dies before the journey was complete.
 - As a matter of fact, Deuteronomy 34:5-6 tells us that Moses was buried in a place that no man knew. Check out the text:

Deuteronomy 34:5 So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord.

Deuteronomy 34:6 And He buried him in the valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth-peor; but no man knows his burial place to this day.

- Friends, the fact that no man knows where Moses was buried points us to an eschatological picture.
 - We must also note that Moses mentioned in Deuteronomy this "preview of coming attractions" regarding "a Prophet like him".
 - Check out what Moses recorded in Deuteronomy 18:15-19:

Deuteronomy 18:15 "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him.

Deuteronomy 18:16 This is according to all that you asked of the Lord your God in Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, let me not see this great fire anymore, or I will die.'

Deuteronomy 18:17 The Lord said to me, 'They have spoken well.

Deuteronomy 18:18 I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.

Deuteronomy 18:19 It shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him.

- So it becomes clear even from Moses that there will be one in who will be raised up from among them who "they must listen to".

- We will see this significance a bit later, tonight.
- But before we get there, we must also examine our second figure and his significance – Elijah.
- Elijah, was a mighty prophet of the Lord and scripture tells us that when Elijah’s life ended, God ushered him into heaven, “without passing through death first”.
 - Check out the text in 2 Kings 2:11:

2 Kings 2:11 As they were going along and talking, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire which separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind to heaven.

- What becomes even more interesting in the Hebrew scriptures is that just like Elijah’s departure was mysterious, so is Elijah’s return:
 - Turn with me to Malachi 4:5-6.

Malachi 4:5 “Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord.

Malachi 4:6 He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse.”

- So, we see with both Elijah and Moses, they have very interesting departures, and yet both are here in a glorified form (not resurrected) talking with Jesus.
 - We will have an opportunity to dive more into Elijah next week, but right now let’s look at what’s happening.
 - Remember, context is key and the conversation being discussed is regarding: Messiah’s death, a coming Kingdom, and eternal things.
 - On top of that Jesus is wanting to give the disciples a foretaste of what is to come regarding eternal matters – so how does all this tie together.
 - This is what we see:
 - Elijah’s sudden departure into heaven is directly connected to His future return regarding the end of the age (a literal physical return of Elijah).
 - And just as it will be for Elijah, so it will be for Christ in His second coming to physically rule in a literal Kingdom on earth.
 - And in the same way that Moses led the people from slavery to freedom, Christ will lead those who have placed faith in Him from sin to salvation.
 - Lastly, what we witness with both Moses and Elijah is that with Moses, he was the recorder of the Law.
 - This is where we begin to see within the 1st century many of the scribes and religious leaders referring to the Law as “The Law of Moses”.
 - And in the same way we see the Prophet Elijah, who was considered a prominent prophet during His day, in a way, here he is representative of the summation of the Old Testament prophets.

- And in-between both the Law (Moses) and the Prophets (Elijah), we find Jesus Christ.
 - It is Christ who is the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets.
 - Christ pictures the true fulfillment of the Passover in that those who are in Him, that death is not the period, but rather is the means into eternal life and the coming Kingdom.
- It would be after seeing this scene on the high mountain that the one and only Peter felt the need to provide a “premature postulation”. Check out verses 5-6:

Mark 9:5 Peter *said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”

Mark 9:6 For he did not know what to answer; for they became terrified.

- So rather than Peter taking this moment in and maybe seeking to understand what was being witnessed, Peter opens his mouth and assumes.
 - Although Peter makes a correct assumption it is in fact premature because it is not the right time timing.
 - Peter sees the glory of the Lord shining from Jesus and assumes that the Kingdom was arriving on earth at the moment.
 - So, Peter makes the suggestion to make three tabernacles or “booths” one for each – being Jesus, Elijah, and Moses.
 - It’s clear that Peter had the right idea (the right motives) but the wrong timing.
 - He was applying the Hebrew scriptures idea of Sukkot to the matters concerning the Kingdom.
 - I mention this because in the Law, the Lord established an annual fall feast for Israel called the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles. (Leviticus 23:41-44)
 - The Feast commemorates the wilderness wanderings of Israel with the Lord.
 - It served as a picture of God’s people living in a temporary existence on earth as they await their entry into the promised land (the Kingdom).
 - These feasts that the Lord gave Israel served to point to something much greater.
 - There is this sense of remembering what God had done in the past while also having a prophetic element regarding future happenings. (Dual purpose)
 - For instance, the Passover celebrated the exodus from Egypt while also serving as a future picture of Messiah’s death as a means to pay for the sins of the people. (Witnessed with Yom Kippur)
 - And in that same way, the Feast of Tabernacle served in this dual way.
 - So where the feast memorialized the wilderness wanderings regarding temporary dwelling, it also pictures God’s people dwelling with the Lord in the Coming Kingdom (Jesus’ Second Coming)
 - Check out Zechariah 14:9 and Zechariah 14:16

Zechariah 14:9 And the Lord will be king over all the earth; in that day the Lord will be the only one, and His name the only one.

- ◦ Here is Zechariah 14:16:

Zechariah 14:16 Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths.

- So Peter has a theological understanding of this celebratory moment, yet he is misunderstanding the two-fold nature of Messiah and His Comings.
 - He recognizes Jesus' identity, but He has much to learn in these last few months before Christ is brought to the cross in order to continue the Kingdom Program.
 - So, Peter mumbles off his best effort because he has no true words for this Holy moment
 - It's like the song we hear every Christmas, "I can only imagine": If we were standing before the Lord in His Shekinah Glory, we truly would have no words.
 - And even our best attempts at putting a sentence together would miss the mark.
 - So in an effort to recorrect Peter and his thinking regarding Christ's two-fold nature, Peter and the other two disciples are met with "a prominent voice".
 - Check out verses 7-8.

Mark 9:7 Then a cloud formed, overshadowing them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is My beloved Son, listen to Him!"

Mark 9:8 All at once they looked around and saw no one with them anymore, except Jesus alone.

- It is at this point in the text where we witness a powerful act of God as Mark mentions that the very voice of God is now heard audibly for the second time.
 - We first experienced this audible voice at Jesus' baptism from John the Baptist. (Heavenly voice in Hebrew is *Bat kol*).
 - We now experience the second audible voice here in Mark 9:7.
 - And what becomes so encouraging is that the voice of God, echos a similar message that the Father spoke earlier.
 - And I believe this is so key for us to understand because it speaks to the Father's consistency in His messaging.
 - He is not an Author of confusion, but rather, He displays a consistent message throughout time regarding His Son and His Purpose.
 - And this situation is no different. He must give Peter, once again, this slap on the back of the neck to focus on the spiritual wisdom that is being given.
 - Rather than getting in His own way or ahead of the plan for that matter.

- Mark mentions that a cloud form covered them and a voice out of the clouds spoke and said:
 - “This is My beloved Son, listen to Him!”
 - Again, notice that the statement before is slightly different than the first statement the Father makes at the Baptism.
- It seems as if this statement is for Peter to hone in on and pay attention to.
 - What really becomes this beautiful picture is as Moses and Elijah are speaking to the God-Man, the One in whom they encountered powerfully on Mount Sinai, He is now in full Glory and they can see Him face to face.
 - What a privilege it was for Peter, James, and John to have had this experience that the Old Testament saints could not see but believed in by faith.
- This is why we see Peter document this eye-witness experience in 2 Peter 1:16-18, because the very message we believe (The Gospel) is rooted in a single person.
 - Check out the text quickly:

2 Peter 1:16 For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

2 Peter 1:17 For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, “This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased”—

2 Peter 1:18 and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

- I love how Mark concludes this particular moment, because it gets to the heart of the matter.
 - The text states that after this supernatural transfiguration and the voice of the Father had spoken, the Shekinah glory is concealed, and the figures have left, only Christ remained.
 - What a powerful moment this was, especially when we think through the great symbology of this moment in light of the context of this scene.
 - That the full revelation of God to the world is found solely in the Person of Jesus Christ.
 - So when we look at the significance of both Moses and Elijah on the scene it reflects the very expression of two key scriptures:
 - John 5:46-47 and Hebrews 1:1-3. Check out the text really quickly:

John 5:46 For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me.

John 5:47 But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?”

Hebrews 1:1 God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways,

Hebrews 1:2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

Hebrews 1:3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

- Friends, the mere fact that Jesus is left alone is to tell the disciples that Jesus is the very expression of the Law and the Prophets.
 - So to hear the very words of Jesus and to obey His very instructions is to obey God Himself!
 - And this is the instructions in which the disciples are to hone into.
 - Once Jesus departs, they are to hold onto the words in which He has spoken and to teach others of His truth.
 - So rather than the disciples feeling the need to interject their own understandings or interpretations of a matter, they must be willing to proclaim Jesus' words alone.
 - Secondly, what we see is a summation of what Jesus has stated before and that is the disciples' service to the King right now is a deposit into the life that is to come.
 - So as we live in this world we must recognize that we are not of it, but as the Feast of Tabernacle is understood, we are simply passing through.
 - And as we hold onto the words of Jesus (the Bible) and abide by it, and do, that we will gain much joy and have great hope for the things to come.
 - And lastly, there is this message of great hope! That death is not the end and that in Christ there is life abundant!
 - Friends, may I encourage you that Christ alone should be your joy.
 - Christ alone should be your dwelling place.
 - Christ alone should be your treasure.
 - For it is in Him that eternal life, true life, is found. For anything other than Christ is not true life at all.
 - Let's Pray.