

Tuesday: Mountaintops



Objective: In our faith journeys we all experience moments where we feel close to God or experience him in a powerful new way. These mountaintop experiences are meant to encourage, equip, and empower God's people to press on in the rest of their life. They become an "Ebenezer" a spiritual marker in our faith story.

Big Question(s): Have you experienced a "mountaintop experience?" In those experiences, how did God equip, encourage, and empower you to press on? Are you holding on to your mountaintop experiences instead of holding on to Jesus?

Theme Verse: Psalm 16:11 "You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand."

Main Story/Text: Mark 9:2-9 Transfiguration

Main Points:

1. God is calling us up the mountain every day.

We must take the step and climb the mountain and experience intimate fellowship with God. God will show you your sin, encourage, help, express His love, guide, etc. You must spend time with Him, in His presence (Mark 2:9, Psalm 16:11, Psalm 63:2-3). Most of us have had a similar experience, maybe not as intense, but a "mountain top" experience nonetheless. Every day, God sends a lot of joyous moments, days, times into our life (James 1:17). The day that we meet Jesus is, without a doubt, the most joy filled day of our life, but it isn't a stopping place -- it is a starting point for a journey that leads to eternal life in heaven with Him.

2. Gods glory and power is revealed to us on the mountaintops

Sometimes our mountaintop experiences aren't "Huge" like going on a mountain but it is the everyday "mountaintop experiences" of spending time with God, seeing his majesty and goodness around us and being in awe of Him that His majesty and power is revealed (Mark 9:3, Psalms 104:1-2, Daniel 7:9, Psalm 84:1-2). Many times, on the mountains, God opens our eyes and gives us a new perspective. God shifts our attention to Jesus (Mark 9:7-8).

3. God changes lives on the mountaintops.

God gives the "mountain-top experiences" in order to sustain His people as they go down into the valley! For Moses that journey prepared him to lead God's people to the Promised Land (Exodus 24:12-18) For Elijah it was to confront wickedness in the land and appoint the next prophet (1 Kings 19:11-18). For Jesus it was the journey to the cross (Mark 9:9) and for us it is a journey from the cross to the New Jerusalem. God changes lives on "physical" mountaintops in scripture but we see the lives changed of those that encountered Jesus daily. Those that were healed lepers (Luke 17:11-19), bleeding woman (Mark 5:25-29) those that witnessed His miracles (the disciples, the crowds of people, etc) were changed with new eyes to see, new inspiration and purpose.

4. God sends us back down the mountain.

We aren't meant to stay on the mountains or in those "mountain top experiences", we are meant to come down the mountain, to share and learn from what happened. Many people try to find those experiences again and again instead of living their life for Jesus. Peter wanted to do just this (Mark 9:5), he wanted to make a memorial to what happened on the mountain so they could come to it and relive the event. But Jesus didn't allow him to, and he brought them all back down the mountain. Faith can never be contained in a box or a tent. It is only when we accept its presence as part of who we are, so we can move forward, press on, and live the lives that God calls us to.

Apply It: (could be part of the Bible study, or evening devotional activity)

- Use this in Bible Study:
 - Have you experienced a mountaintop experience? Describe it. What did it feel like? Do you want to return to that moment?
 - *Are you holding on to your mountaintop experience instead of holding on to Jesus?*
- What are some things that prevent you from going up the mountain, getting closer with God? Pray that God would help you work through those things so that you can get closer to Him on your journey of faith.
- Think about all the things you know about God, the discoveries yet to made, and the never ending learning that happens in our journey of faith. Think of ways you can share your story about those mountain top experiences with others. Think about how those mountaintop experiences have encouraged, equipped, and inspired you to press on. How might you share those experiences with others as you go back down the mountains of life?