

Now that I'm a Grandpa, I am re-discovering little children, and what it is, that amuses little children... And the somewhat disturbing discovery I've made, is "Grandpa's not always the main attraction"... Sometimes, I might be doing my very best to entertain young Sammy, but then he looks across the room, and "Ooww!, Something shiny.", and he's off...

And it doesn't matter how inanimate the shiny thing might be, the shiny thing, always seems to win (hands down) over Grandpa ...

Today's bible reading is what's known as "the Transfiguration"... And because a lot of us don't really know our Old Testament that well, the significance of the Transfiguration tends to get bit lost... And it can just become "Ooww!, Something shiny"...

And **yeah**, it would've been a truly amazing sight to see: Jesus being all shiny... It would've been really **special**, for Peter, James and John to see the Glory of God shining out through Jesus... **But** the transfiguration, was more than just 'a shiny thing'...

You know, when I began preparing for the message this week, I thought "*Well, this is going to be a short one – there's not much to say about the transfiguration...*" I was wrong...

Well, actually I was right, because I've decided to divide the message up into 2 (short one this week; normal one next week – both on the transfiguration)... , because, when Jesus was transfigured, it wasn't just a matter of : "Ooww! something shiny". He was showing us much more than that.

In our Bible reading **last** week, Jesus said some really tough stuff...:

- that the Son of Man would be rejected;
- that He would suffer; and
- that He would die...

And not only that, but if anyone would come after Him,,,,, well, we might have to do the same... Being a disciple of Jesus, means for us to take up **our** cross, and be prepared to be persecuted and to even die (for Jesus) ...

He said some really tough stuff... He told us how, **if we try to hold on to this life**, we ultimately lose it... But if we lose our life **for** Jesus (and for the sake of His Gospel), we save it...

Now, for anyone who **doesn't** have faith in Jesus, that's just a ridiculous nonsense – it makes no sense to them at all...

From a worldly perspective, **life and legacy** is all they have...

- Living life to its fullest;
- enjoying life;
- enjoying the time that they have;
- extending their life for as long as possible;
- and maybe making a name for themselves that might live on –

that's the greatest the world has to offer... (it's a bit pathetic really, isn't it?)

But when we **do** have faith in Jesus, isn't it a marvellous thing, that if we lose our life for Jesus (and the sake of the Gospel), we save it???

You see, Jesus doesn't leave us without hope: He **always** points us forward, and He always wants to take us beyond where we are now.

Isn't that a wonderful encouragement? Jesus doesn't want any of us to be spiritually stagnant. He always points us forward, to the coming Kingdom of God... And if you find, that you've become stagnant in your faith,,, how about looking forwards (for a change). Look forward, to the coming Kingdom of God.

Jesus said: **9** **"Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power."**

Alright: Why are the disciples of Jesus being encouraged **not** to grasp on to **this** life???

It's because the Kingdom of God is coming in power...

Eternal life,,,, in **Glory**, with Jesus Christ...

- **This** life (that we're living now) – it's short;
- **This** life, can be very shallow;
- **This** life is sometimes filled with pain; and
- persecution; and
- torment;

.....

- Our current bodies are weak;
- our earthly bodies are **not** eternal...

- some get sick and die
- the rest grow old and die...
- this life comes to an end...

But Jesus points us forwards to when the Kingdom of God **comes with power**...

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But when **is** that??? What's Jesus talking about here?

In the Gospel of Mark, the Kingdom of God, is a favourite theme. The Kingdom of God turns worldly values upside-down...

- In the world, financial wealth is something that opens doors... But Jesus said **"How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the Kingdom of God...(10:24)** (It's like trying to get a camel through the eye of a needle)
- In the world, education and the experience of years, sets a person up to succeed... But Jesus said that the Kingdom of God belongs to children – He said **"whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a child, shall not enter it"...(10:14)**
- The Kingdom of God is mysterious. And in the eyes of the world, it's totally **insignificant**, but it quietly grows, and it becomes this amazing work of God...(4:30)

And by many, its significance **will not** be recognised, but they'll know all about it on the day of judgment...(4:26)

- The world teaches us to grasp hold of whatever we can... But the Kingdom of God is something that we would give up everything to attain:
 - repentance of sin – we change the way we live (9:47);
 - and we give up worldly possessions (those things that were once our priority) (4:23)...
- This world, focuses on self... But The Kingdom of God, isn't **just** a matter of belief, and it's **certainly** not **self**-focused – it outworks in our love for God, and in our love for others (12:34)

The overall picture of the Kingdom of God (in the Gospel of Mark), is something that is growing; and something that we enter...

But here, is the only spot where it talks in terms of the Kingdom of God **coming in power**.

Jesus told His Disciples, that some of them would not taste death until they saw the Kingdom of God come in power.

Let me tell you, there's been a lot of ink spilt over that statement ...

We understand, that "the Kingdom of God comes in power", when Jesus returns ...

That's what we believe:

We know, that when Jesus returns, all those who have died, will be raised back to life...

- those who reject Jesus, will be raised to be judged
- those who have died in the Lord, will be raised to glorious eternal life...

We **know** this!

And **that's** when Jesus will establish His new Kingdom...

Are you looking forward to this???

I certainly am... *We won't have to put up with politicians who lie and cheat and make empty promises – promises that they never intend to keep (Promises they make, simply so we the gullible public might happen to vote for them again)...*

We won't have to put up with politicians like that; Nor will we be under the oppression of a dictatorial despot...

We look forward, to when **Jesus** reigns as King:

- when Jesus will rule;
- when evil has gone
- no sickness;
- no disease.....

- when death is swallowed up in victory
- and when all that remains:
 - is life;
 - joy;
 - peace, and
 - the amazing glory of God

That's what it's going to be like when Jesus' kingdom **comes** in power...

But,,,,, Jesus is telling His disciples, **that some of them,** would **see** it – and that they wouldn't die, **before** they saw it... What's that about? Was He mistaken????

When I was a little kid (and yes, that was last century) (in fact, it was well-&-truly in the last century), every few years, our family would go on holidays to the beach... Now, for a kid who lived in the bush, this was a very exciting event...

*And as we drove closer and closer to the coast, mum & dad would talk it up, and we'd be **so** excited... And it was like a competition – who'd be the first to see the sea...*

And sometimes, on a windy mountain road, you might catch your first glimpse (just for a brief second), as the timber opened up, and you could catch a glimpse of it between a couple of hills (and through a gap in the trees)... And then it'd be gone... And somebody would yell out at the top of their voice "I see the sea!!!"

Am I describing anybody else's childhood memories???

Of course, unless you grew up as a native of "the inland", you're probably not going to understand the excitement, because you have no idea just how exciting it is for a kid to see the sea.

But every now and then, we'd catch a little glimpse of it...

*Mum & Dad had told us that we're going to the beach, (and of course we believed them), but didn't those little glimpses remind us, and assure us "It's coming; It's coming; It's getting closer; We're going to be there soon!!!" **It's not just an empty promise...***

And then finally, we'd go over the last hill, and there in the East, is the Pacific ocean, in plain sight... And we're there...

Well, that's a bit like what's happening here:

The Kingdom of God, arrives in all of its fullness (and all of its power), when Jesus returns... But Jesus **did** give His disciples a couple of little glimpses of **what** His kingdom would be like, **when** it comes in power...

When Jesus was raised from the dead, **that** was one of the glimpses... Some who heard Jesus' words that day, **did** get to see the Kingdom of God coming in power (they caught a little glimpse of it), when Jesus was raised from the dead...

And the resurrection of Jesus, is proof, that **we'll** be raised from the dead... The Apostle Paul describes Jesus, as "the firstfruits of the resurrection"... There's more to come... Jesus was raised first... – That was a glimpse of when the Kingdom of God comes in power, and when **all** of God's children, will be raised from the dead.

That was one glimpse...

And the transfiguration – well that was **another** glimpse of the Kingdom of God, coming in power...

1 Thessalonians 4, reveals how those who are in Christ, who have died, and those who are in Christ, who are still alive, all get to see the return of Jesus... None of God's children miss out:

1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 (ESV)

¹³ But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. ¹⁴ For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁵ For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words.

And my, what an encouragement those words truly are... We will always be with the Lord... In life, and in death, we are with the Lord...

The dead in Christ, rise first, and those who are still living, are caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air

Now, has it ever dawned on you, that the transfiguration, is a little glimpse of this event... Moses and Elijah...

Moses never made it into the promised land... Moses died, and was buried in the land of Moab, but his exact burial place is unknown...

Moses died, and was buried... But not so, for Elijah...

As Elijah and Elisha, walked and talked, chariots of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. (2 Kings 2:11)

Elijah never died. He was taken up, to meet the Lord in the air...

And so here, at the transfiguration, we have the image of one person who has died, and one who was snatched up to be with the Lord, together with Jesus...

And here, we don't just see Jesus as an ordinary man, Jesus is transfigured, and we catch a glimpse, of the glory that Jesus will have, on the day that He returns...

His clothes were brighter than any detergent could every whiten them... And it seemed like the light was shining out, from Him... A glimpse of the glory of God...

A glimpse, of when the Kingdom of God comes in power...

- Those who have died;
- together with those who have not yet died,
- together, with the glorified Jesus Christ...

That's what the disciples saw at the transfiguration, and it was a glimpse of what's going to happen when Jesus comes in power.

Isn't it wonderful.....

Those who grasp onto life, lose it. Those who lose their life for Jesus Christ, and for the sake of the Gospel, save it...

You know, the world thinks that's all a fairy-tale... And the world would say that you and I are naïve and childish, (or simple), for falling for it...

But it's not a fairy-tale, and you know it's not...

In faith, we look forward, with a certain hope – It's not a wishful hope – It's a certain hope – it's a sure thing, that death is **not** the end, and **never** will we be parted from Jesus...

And so we look forward with confidence, and with an eager anticipation, to the return of Jesus, when the Kingdom of God comes in power...

Let's leave it there for today, and we'll talk more about the transfiguration next week.