



Looking Inwards (15 mins) *Caring For Each Other*

*Reflecting on your life at the moment, is there anything you would like to share with other members of your home group which you feel is appropriate (this is an **opportunity to share**, not something you have to do, however, 'it's the sharing that enables the caring!') for:*

Thanksgiving?

Prayer?

Encouragement?

Support in any way?



Looking Outwards (15 mins) *Concern For Others*

*Is there anything concerning someone in your: family; circle of friends; neighbours; or church, which you would like to share (please be careful not to pass on anything that is **confidential** or which you think the person/people concerned would not wish to be shared) for:*

Thanksgiving?

Prayer?

Encouragement?

Support in any way?



HG32: Living With Jesus (3/5) *New Understanding*

Mark 9 vs 2 - 13

Home Group Study Notes

13th June 2010 - Pauline Woolnough



PLEASE COMPLETE AS MUCH AS YOU CAN
ON THIS WORKSHEET IN PREPARATION
BEFORE THE MEETING!

*Don't forget to take your Bible to Home Group
with you, along with any previous notes and
other resources that might be helpful.*



Welcome/Ice Breaker (10 mins)

I probably shouldn't admit it, but I like watching TV programmes such as 'Ten Years Younger' and 'Trinny and Susannah.' I love seeing the transformation that takes place in peoples lives. Would you ever volunteer for a makeover? If you got the chance, what is the one thing that you would change about yourself?



Looking Upwards (10 mins) *Worship*

In your time of worship, you may want to sing Songs of Praise, or listen to a Worship CD, as well as using Meditations; Bible Readings; Prayers; etc.





Looking Upwards (40 mins)

Bible Study

Read through the text for this study, Mark 9:2-13 and any references given below, alongside those in the sermon notes, then answer the following questions - you may find it helpful to read through the sermon notes as you do so. Discuss your answers with your Home Group.

1: The disciples witnessed a supernatural experience on the mountain top with Jesus. Why is it, do you think, that we witness few, if any, such supernatural experiences?

2: The intellectual aspect of the mind can be so exalted that a lifestyle of faith may be considered second class. Academic assessment often distrusts or replaces firsthand supernatural experience. How important do you think supernatural experiences are? Do they frighten you? Do you prefer to find logical explanations for what others claim to be supernatural? How do you react to Christian books that tell of people being miraculously healed and the dead raised to life?

3: It's not always easy to see or admit to changes in our own lives, but we can often see them in others. As an encouragement, share with one another what ways you have noticed God change other members of your home group.

He is Saviour, He is our comforter, healer and friend of sinners, but he's not our mate, he's not a pal that we call on in times of need, the disciples knew Jesus personally, they were close to him but they were terrified of the change that they saw in him. Before their eyes they saw the glory of the Christ as he shone radiantly alongside two Old Testament greats who had been summoned to stand before him. If we don't see His glory then we are blind and any transformation in us will be small. We need to fix our eyes on Jesus who is the author and finisher of our faith. Any other focus will not lead to transformed lives.

Why do we need a New Perspective?

Today's reading is a bit like a picture of what our spiritual life is like at times, the journey which can seem a bit of a slog going up, then a mountain top experience, and the coming down to earth afterwards. We love the mountain top experience when we receive a revelation and our faith increases but the hardest part about mountain climbing is the coming down, we've reached the top and there's nowhere else to go apart from down and by that time you're tired, coming down is harder on the knees and the exhilaration that you felt at the top soon drains away. Mountain top experiences leave us aching for more. Many of us want to live life on the mountain top, we seek the high that we get from the experience of meeting with God through our worship or personal quiet time, and especially at conferences. We hate coming down, we strive for the next experience. But although Jesus needed that time of affirmation from God up on the mountain he also knew that life was not lived on the mountain top, life was lived in the valleys among all the situations that life throws at us. The mountain top equipped Jesus for the mission ahead of him just as the times when we are renewed and encouraged through our mountain experiences should equip us.

Everything Jesus did involved effort and sacrifice. He gave up everything to follow God's will. Climbing the mountain and fulfilling his mission called for endurance and faith but He was willing to make the effort in order to meet with the presence of God. As Jesus shone with incredible brilliance the reality of heaven radiated through him, he was transformed. Paul says in Romans 12. 2 *"Do conform any longer to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will."* In his book, *The Supernatural Power of the Transformed Mind*, Bill Johnson says, - *"The renewed mind then reflects the reality of another world in the same way that Jesus shone with heaven's brilliance. It's not that our thoughts are different but that our way of thinking is transformed because we think from a different reality - from heaven towards earth! That is the transformed perspective."*

The glory and transformation we see in Jesus is what we are all destined for through the glory of the resurrection, it's the glory which we will some day possess but which we are to taste even now as we are transformed through knowing Him.

It would seem as if God had abandoned Jesus and everything had been just one awful and terrible mistake. But here whether they could understand what was going on or not, they had seen the transformation of Jesus with their own eyes and with their own ears they heard the voice of God say that Jesus was His Son and that they should listen to him. This was an experience that they could remember, hold onto and draw upon. It would help and strengthen them as they accompanied Jesus on his journey and ultimate death. With their own eyes the disciples had seen Jesus in all his glory surrounded by the prophets and affirmed by God. They had seen the glory and splendour of the King .

Then suddenly it was over, the disciples looked round and once more they were alone on top of a mountain, and as always, what goes up must come down. On the way down the disciples were again told to keep quiet about what they had seen. Jesus knew that if they were to tell people of Moses and Elijah's appearance and the cloud of God it would have given credence to the popular expectations of an avenging God bursting in with all his power to take vengeance on the nations. The disciple still did not themselves yet understand Jesus' messiah and it would only become clear after his death and resurrection so they were puzzled over what scripture said about Elijah coming as a herald and forerunner to the Messiah. If Jesus was God's chosen Son and Messiah, then how had they missed the second coming of Elijah? Jesus said that Elijah *had* come, and the people did what they wanted with him, and had disregarded God's will. Here Jesus meant John the Baptist who had heralded Jesus' coming telling people to prepare the way for him. He reminded them that the Son of Man must suffer and be treated with contempt, after all if they killed John, the Herald, what would they do to the Messiah.

A New Perspective for Us

The gospel of Mark has repeatedly tried to help us see the great power and majesty that Jesus possesses and today we get a small taster, a preview of what we will see when we meet him face to face, we also get a foretaste of our own future when one day standing before Him we too will be finally transformed and reflect His glory. Jesus was transformed on the mountain top just as we are meant to be transformed even while we remain on earth but it's not what we do that transforms us, it is who we see, it's who we spend time looking at in all His burning glory. Paul says, "*with unveiled faces beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, we are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit*" (2 Cor 3.18)

The question is, are we satisfied with just a little bit of tweaking or are we, on discovering who He is, so captivated by Him that we yield everything to His Spirit in order to grow, develop and become the mature people, changed into His image that he is looking for. A new perspective brings transformation and that's not just about a few slight alterations here and there, it's a radical overhaul, a complete makeover. Too often we think of Christianity as just making some small changes to our lives stopping this bad habit or another and following Christ entails a bit of daily readings, a bit of prayer, and church when we can make it. But that is not what transformation is about. The Lord wants to see a new "you and me." Anything resembling the old person is not a transformation. How can we go about this transformation and gain a new perspective?

The voice of God which was heard through the cloud said this, "*This is my beloved Son. Listen to him.*" We have to listen to the voice of Jesus, we have to read and listen to the word of God, but we have to listen and then apply it to our lives. There is no use in listening if we then go on to ignore. The word of God and the Spirit of God want to transform us. Will we give the Spirit of God permission to allow Him to change us? We are already made in the image of God but when we are obedient to Him he is able to change us into his glory. We are so used to speaking of Jesus in terms of what He is for us, what he can do for us.

4: Jesus told us to pray: "*Your Kingdom come on earth as it is in Heaven.*" This reminds us that we serve a supernatural God who desires a church where signs and wonders are the norm. How open are you to the transforming work of the Spirit?

5: Do you have any 'mountain top' experiences that you can share with one another? How did they equip you to serve? (If your group has a shortage of them, you may want to discuss why this could be.)

6: Last time we discussed who Jesus was to us: does the transfiguration help us to see another aspect of who Jesus is? What is this glorious splendid King Jesus now saying to you? How do you respond to Him?



Is there anything you most want to put into practice as a result of this study?



HG32: Living With Jesus (3/5) *New Understanding*

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Home Group Study Notes

13th June 2010 - Pauline Woolnough

Introduction

This is a very well known event in the life of Jesus, so well known in fact that we know it as The Transfiguration. Jesus went up a mountain, Jesus was transformed, Jesus came down the mountain, ready to do what God needed Him to do. Many important events in the bible have taken place up a mountain. In the OT God chose to reveal himself up mountains where his presence could be felt, personal, intimate, and dangerous. Abraham was led to Mount Moriah to offer his son Isaac as a type of forerunner to God offering his son Jesus. At Mount Sinai Moses came across the burning bush and later God spoke the Ten Commandments to the people. Jesus was tempted, betrayed and arrested on the Mount of Olives. God likes mountains, they seem to be His meeting place of choice, easy for Him to get there, harder for those he has arranged to meet. We also like mountains but isn't it the view that we like, the view from the top, and isn't what we are really longing for is heaven, and trying to touch God or catch a glimpse of God. At the very least see him from up high in all his majesty in his glorious creation and gaining a new perspective on life and who we are.

This particular mountain top encounter occurred probably about a week after Jesus asked his disciples the question at Caesarea Philippi: "Who do you say I am?" the subject of our last HG study, but although the reading says the transfiguration took place on top of Mt Tabor it is more likely to have been Mt Hermon. Tabor is only approx 1900ft high, it's smaller than the Mt of Olives and to the south of Galilee, there was also a fortress on the top so it would have been a bit busy. Mt Hermon is much nearer Caesarea Philippi and is about 9200 ft high, it more likely fits the description of "a high mountain" and would have been a much more private meeting place for Father and Son

Jesus had made a decision to go to Jerusalem which would inevitably lead to him accepting the cross. He had made his decision, but what if he was wrong? It was a huge decision to make and you couldn't blame Jesus for wanting to be absolutely 100% sure that what he was about to do was right. This literally was a life and death decision. Where better to test it and think things through than away from it all and seek the space and solitude of a mountain top. Where better to seek an encounter with his Father than up the top of a mountain. It was on the mountain top that he received confirmation that what he was about to do would fulfill God's plan.

Jesus choose Peter, James, and John to take this journey with him. The favoured lucky 3. Maybe Jesus knew that these three would be vital for spreading and preaching the gospel after his ascension, he must have seen their potential, that they were growing, developing and maturing and therefore worthy of his trust and sharing in his secrets. They had grown in favour with Jesus so much that he took them to the place where he would meet with God. This doesn't mean that he loved them more than the others but they had somehow shown to him that they were worthy of his favour with all the responsibilities that that brings.

He knew that he could trust them not treat his favour for their own purposes but to further his. They would therefore be witness to something special. God loves all of us, he has no favourites but his favour may rest on some rather than others. He may favour someone with a specific calling, perhaps a leadership role or a certain ministry, or He may bless those who are trying hard to grow in faith and who are seeking His will for their lives over others who are happy to accept him, but also willing to coast and be content with a childish, (*not childlike*), faith rather than grow in maturity.

Jesus Transformed

It was at the top that this mysterious event takes place and Jesus' appearance changed. The Greek word is *metamorphous* which of course is where we get our English word "metamorphosis" meaning a complete transformation such that the original is no longer the same anymore, the obvious being like the transformation a caterpillar goes through to become a butterfly. His clothes became radiant, shining like the glistening gleam of gold or golden sunlight. Jesus quite literally shone.

Tom Wright says: "*The glory which shone from Jesus' face on the mountain is the glory of a human being, made in God's image, and now totally open to God, totally possessed by God, totally on fire with God. Seeing this human being, we are seeing God, God in a mirror, God through the looking glass, God present as in the burning bush but now in the shining face, and even clothes, of a man amongst men.*"

Moses and Elijah appeared and became two witnesses who testified that Jesus is the Messiah. Together they represented the Law and the Prophets to the Jewish people. Moses was the lawgiver and Elijah was one of the first great prophets. Their appearance and conversations with Jesus would have given authority to the fact that He was the One that was spoken of in the law and by the prophets of the old covenant. It would also have reassured Jesus that he was indeed in line with God's plan and encouraged Him not to avoid the suffering, but to go through it. As the author of Hebrews says, it was "*for the joy set before him, [he] endured the cross, despising the shame*" (Heb 12:2). This glimpse of heaven and word from God would help Jesus to endure his darkest night knowing that a glorious future would come in the morning. It was one more sign that showed Jesus was the fulfilment of all things that had been spoken of by the prophets. The whole of history had been moving towards the cross.

A New Perspective for the Disciples

The disciples were terrified and awe struck and as usual Peter spoke first, he wanted the moment to last but he wasn't really sure of what was taking place or of what to do so he suggested that they put up three shelters - one for Jesus, one for Moses, and one for Elijah. It seemed a good idea at the time, they were frightened, and it was the best idea they could come up. It's not actually that daft an idea because in Exodus this was what Moses was told to do following his encounter with God on Sinai. He was told to build a portable sanctuary to house God's "*shekinah*" glory. No sooner had Peter made his suggestion than a cloud appeared which enveloped them, and a voice came from the cloud: "*This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!*" They heard the Father say that Jesus really is his Son, that he was loved, and that they should listen to him. The disciples needed to hear this, they had already been shattered by Jesus telling them that he was on his way to Jerusalem to die, **not** what they were expecting of their Messiah. All their expectations and dreams were being pulled apart but now what they saw on the mountain would give them something to hold onto. It would give them a new perspective on things.

It wouldn't be long before people would be turning against Jesus denying that he was the Son of God. Soon the religious leaders would be telling people not to listen to Him and very soon they would see him arrested tortured and killed.