

Gospel of Mark Chapter 9B

Last month Sharon and I attended Pottsgrove High School's musical, the Sound of Music. Elliott and Grace Love the Sound of Music and we knew some of the students involved in the production.

- As usual Pottsgrove did a great job in set design and the production was wonderful.
- Kudos to Alec Dorris for his role in the production.
- I bring this up not only to commend Alec but as a background and opening for what I have to share with you this morning.

Over the last two weeks we spent some time affirming our stand on the perfections of God's Word, and I realize that the subject matter was somewhat deep but very necessary for the times in which we live. If IT stretched you, that's not a bad thing, both physical and mental stretching are beneficial to keep you limber and growing.

- This morning we return to our study in the Gospel of Mark.

As I prayerfully considered the text that Tim read for us this morning I was reminded of a previous study that I titled the "Drama of Redemption."

- The BIBLE is God's written record, the testimony of His redeeming grace.

Like every other drama the drama of redemption required a platform, a stage on which the story could be displayed. Well, in the first two chapters of Genesis God designs the stage.

- His material creation is the platform on which the drama of redemption would play out.

Genesis 1:1 **In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.**

- For SIX days God labored to build His material creation, the stage on which the glory of his redeeming grace would be beautifully displayed.

As the material creation is being established we are introduced to the main players in the drama of redemption:

- Chapter 1 Verse 1 we are introduced to the lead, the main character: **In the beginning "GOD" created the heavens and the earth.**
- Later in chapter 1 we are introduced to the first man and his beautiful wife through whom the glory of God and his redeeming grace will be displayed.

Genesis 1: 26 **Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."** 27 **So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.**

- There in the Garden we see the pristine beauty of God's creative genius. We also see the majesty and dominion of man's original estate.
- He was wonderfully created in the image of God with the distinct privilege of walking with God in the splendor of his perfect creation.
- BUT the intimacy, that man enjoyed, his loving relationship with God and the beauty of the entire set is distorted, corrupted as we are introduced to the VILLAN. (Serpent)

IN Genesis Chapter 3 as the drama progresses that old Serpent deceives the woman and initiates the act that cast the whole of God's material creation into utter CHAOS.

- The whole stage goes dark as the corruption of sin infiltrates the entirety of God's glorious creation and the sentence of death is decreed upon all men.
- A third of the angels fall like stars from the heavens and mankind becomes the object of God's just and holy wrath.
- At the point of greatest darkness when God begins to describe the fallout of man's treasonous act, a glimmer of hope appears, the first spark of redemptive genius is revealed by the mouth of God himself.

Genesis 3:15 (Speaking to the Serpent God says) **"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."** (*This is the drama of redemption*)

- As the drama plays out before an audience of men and angels God's electing grace is displayed in his sovereign choice of the man Abraham.
- The plot becomes more and more clear as the grand design of God's redemption is brought to the surface through the life of Abraham.

Genesis 15:6 **And he (Abraham) believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.**

- This verse is invaluable in understanding the rest of the drama.
- This theme of Salvation by grace through faith in God's promised seed runs through the entire Bible and finds its fulfillment in the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Throughout the Old Testament more and more players come to stand upon the platform and they ALL seem to be pointing to the one who is yet to come, the main player in the drama of redemption, the Redeemer, the Savior, the coming King.

- According to Moses he will be a Prophet like him.
- According to David he will be a King According to Isaiah He would bear the iniquity of his people and be cut off from the land of the living.
- According to Malachi God will send a forerunner a messenger to announce his coming, Elijah the prophet will come before the great and terrible day of the Lord.

That brings us back to the Gospel of Mark. Remember when we last left the Lord Jesus his eternal glory was revealed to three of his closest disciples.

- Peter, James and John witnessed his glory and heard the voice of the Father as he spoke from the cloud. **"This is my beloved Son listen to him."**
- Remember as the glory of Jesus was revealed, Moses and Elijah appeared with him in glory on the mountain.

Mark 9: 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, 3 and his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them. 4 And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.**

Keeping the Drama of Redemption in mind, which is portrayed throughout the Bible, I would like us to consider the following three points from Mark Chapter 9:

1. Clarification of the players (the role of Elijah in the drama)

2. Affirmation of the Plot (Jesus words and actions affirm the grand plot of the drama of redemption)
3. Confirmation of the Plan (everything in this drama points to the cross)

1 Clarification of the players

The Disciples had been taught the Old Testament. They had a basic understanding from the teachings of the rabbis and the writings of the Prophets.

They knew some of the players in God's plan of redemption. They understood from the prophet Malachi that Elijah should be on the platform prior to the coming of the Messiah.

- Keep in mind, they had just seen Elijah and Moses on the Mount of Transfiguration but Elijah didn't fulfill the prophecies of Malachi in that brief appearance (*they asked*)

Mark 9:11 **“Why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?”**

- Their question is a very good one. The Prophet Malachi had written 400 years earlier:

Malachi 4:5 **“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. 6 And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.”**

- The words of Malachi confirm the disciples understanding.
- In the drama of redemption Elijah the prophet IS scheduled to appear before the **“great and awesome day of the Lord.”** Jesus confirms their observance:

Mark 9: 12 -13 **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.”**

- These words from the Lord Jesus can be a bit confusing: He affirms: **“Elijah DOES come first.”** And then he says, **“I tell you that Elijah HAS come.”** Which is it???
- Does it ADD to your confusion if I say that BOTH are accurate?

Jesus is of course referring to John the Baptist when he states that **“Elijah HAS come, and they did to him whatever they pleased.”**

- Luke tells us that John would go before the Lord in the Spirit and Power of Elijah.

Luke 1: 16 **And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, 17 and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.”**

- IN the first advent of the Lord, John the Baptist filled the role of Elijah perfectly, turning the hearts of the people back to the Lord through the preaching of repentance.

For those of us who await the SECOND ADVENT of the Lord Jesus. It is possible that Elijah may literally make another appearance.

Revelation 11:3 **And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.”**

- Many people believe that Elijah will be one of the two witnesses in Rev 11.

- YOU can read more of chapter 11 on your own for today we see that John played the ROLE of ELIJAH in this scene of the drama of Redemption.

God graciously communicated in his Word the plan of redemption. Like the disciples WE should know the players, the plot and the plan. Like the disciples we can freely go to the Lord of the Word and the Word of the Lord when we struggle with confusion.

- I believe it is important that we remember that all of the players in this drama (including you and I) have one thing in common; We all point to Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

2 Affirmation of the Plot

Remember I said earlier that the PLOT in this drama of redemption was first revealed in Gen. 3:15, as God spoke to the Serpent, **“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”**

- God would redeem mankind through the seed of a woman who would crush the head of the serpent.
- John affirms that Jesus came to do just that when he writes:

1 John 3:8b, **The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.**

- We have seen this played out for us in the Gospel of Mark as Jesus and his disciples have plundered the kingdom of darkness. (Casting out demons)
- In Ch. 9, As Jesus along with Peter, James and John come down from the Mount of transfiguration they are immediately faced with a spiritual battle. This is a battle that the other disciples have been unable to win.

A man with a demon possessed son came seeking the Lord Jesus. He found the disciples but Jesus had not yet returned from the mountain.

- Obviously the disciples tried to deliver the poor boy with no success. (*this is strange*)
- Back in Chapter 6 Jesus sent them out and gave them authority to cast out demons. They seemed to have good success earlier but here they were unable to help the boy.
- Jesus returns just in time, the tension in the crowd is high, there is an argument going on.
- The disciples failed, the man was upset, the scribes added insult to injury and Jesus said, **“Bring him to me.”**

Mark 9: 20 **And they brought the boy to him. And when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. 21 And Jesus asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?” And he said, “From childhood.**

- Jesus takes a sincere interest in the man and listens to his story.
- He is NOT simply a power to be accessed he IS a person to be approached. He is moved with compassion at the brokenness and spiritual oppression of man. The Father replies:

22 And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.” 23 And Jesus said to him, “If you can! All things are possible for one who believes.” 24 Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, “I believe; help my unbelief!”

- The conversation between the Lord Jesus and this Desperate Dad comes to a climax as it touches on the subject of faith. As a matter of fact FAITH is the KEY subject to this entire narrative.
- Addressing the Disciples and expressing His obvious frustration, Jesus said: “O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you?”
- As this encounter proceeds we will see that the frail mustard seed faith of the boy’s father becomes an example to the failing disciples.
- With great emotion and obvious desperation, as the boy convulses in front of him the Dad cries to the Lord, “if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.”
- Jesus draws out the man’s faith saying: “If you can! All things are possible for one who believes.” And the Father replies: “I believe; help my unbelief!”

ALL of us wrestle between faith and unbelief at times but it is the humble surrender, the honest admission of our absolute dependence on Christ that reveals our faith.

From Father Abraham all the way through to the Apostle Paul, from Habakkuk to the Book of Hebrews there is a consistent theme throughout the Drama of Redemption and that is:

“The Righteous Shall Live By Faith.”

- Remember earlier I read from Genesis 15 that Abraham believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness
- Saving faith, faith that delivers man from the wrath of God and the oppression of the evil one is a divine conviction regarding the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 1: 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”

- God graciously imparts the gift of his righteousness and eternal life to all those who believe the great proclamation of the Gospel.
- Do you believe? Believe that there is a HOLY GOD to whom you will one day give an account for your life?
- Have you heard the call of God through the proclamation of the Gospel to repent of your sin and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ?
- Have you Tasted the goodness, the grace and the mercy of God as the Word of God is taught? I pray that God reveals himself to all of you.

That brings us to the 3rd and final point:

3 Confirmation of the Plan (everything in the drama of redemption points to the cross)

From: Abraham walking his beloved son up the mountain to offer him in solemn sacrifice, in (Genesis 22.)

To: the Passover Lamb whose sacrificial blood caused the angel of death to pass over God’s chosen people in Egypt. (Exodus 12)

From: The suffering Servant who bore our griefs, and carried our sorrows; was wounded for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities; (Isaiah 53)

To: John’s recollection of Jesus nailed to the cross of Calvary and raised to life on the third day.

- The drama of redemption is not an improvisational skit where God casually responds to man.

- God is all knowing, God is all-powerful; HE chose to reveal the beauty and the glory of his redeeming grace on the platform of this material creation.

As a matter of fact, God's plan of redemption was ordained before the Platform of creation was ever established.

Rev. 13:8 (Jesus was) **the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.**

- Even though they don't understand it Jesus continually points his disciples to the Cross.

Mark 9:30 **They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And he did not want anyone to know, 31 for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise."**

- The Cross is the focal point of ALL human history. Everything in the Drama of Redemption points to it.

At the end of a play when the cast of players is being introduced to the watching audience the last player to be introduced is the star of the show and when he is brought forth ALL of the players in unison lift their arms and point to the star the one around whom the entire drama has focused.

- In the Drama of redemption, every player, every line and all glory belong to the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Jesus Christ.

At the end of the drama, all of the lights in God's good creation will be extinguished and the only visible light will be Jesus coming to establish his eternal kingdom.