

A Mountain-Top Experience

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Bible Text: Luke 9:28-36
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Our passage this evening is Luke 9:28-36. I think, however, we'll start reading at verse 18 because that gives the context and backdrop of the passage that is our precise text this evening. So let's go back to Luke 9:18.

Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, "Who do the crowds say I am?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, still others that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life." "But what about you," he asked, "who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "The Messiah of God." Jesus strictly warned them not to tell this to anyone and he said, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life." Then he said to them all, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me, for whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world and yet lose or forfeit his very self? If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God."

Then our text for tonight, verse 28,

Now about eight days after these matters, he took along Peter and John and James and went up into the mountain to pray and while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed and his clothing became dazzling light and two men were speaking with him who were Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke about his exodus which he was about to fulfill in Jerusalem. But Peter and those with him, were weighed down with sleep but having become fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him, and as they were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good we are here and let us make three shelters, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah," not knowing what he was saying. Now while he was saying these things, a cloud came

and began to overshadow them and they were afraid as they entered into the cloud and a voice came out of the cloud saying, "This is my Son, the chosen one. Listen to him." And after the voice had come, Jesus was found alone and they kept quiet and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen.

Now about four years ago in March of 2014, our oldest son sent me an email and this is what he wrote, "I wonder if your local news will mention that Tuesday, March 11, is the 61st anniversary of when an American B47 bomber during a routine training exercise in 1953 accidentally dropped a nuclear bomb on South Carolina, however, the six safety catches held and the bomb didn't detonate but rather dropped harmlessly to the ground with a thud?" You know, that's rather unusual to get a nuclear bomb dropped on your state, but it doesn't mean it's not true. You can check it out. I think there's adequate testimony. That was just the condensed version. So something can be fantastic and yet it can be true.

We know this is the world of sports, the latest NCAA basketball tournament had a number 16 seed, UMBC, the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, that was going up against the number 1 seed, Virginia, and they won. The number 16 seed whipped the number 1 seed and they didn't just edge by them, they beat them by something like 20 points. It was so unexpected. It was inconceivable, but it really happened. Something may seem fantastic and yet it can be true.

That's why you have to bear in mind, watch it, when you read passages like the transfiguration passage here in our text because it's clearly talking about something supernatural and, of course, there are some biblical scholars, not all of them but there are always some, who when they see something like this, well, they have the assumption if it portrays something supernatural, it can't be true. They will scrunch up their brow and they will stick out their lower lip and they will say, "It is clearly legendary." But it was just something like that that Peter was trying to cut off at the pass in his second epistle, 2 Peter 1, when he said, "For we did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty, for he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the majestic glory saying, 'This is my Son whom I love. With him I am well-pleased.' We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain." It may be fantastic but it's true. There's testimony to this.

So I get this event was very selective, wasn't it? There were just three witnesses, Peter, John and James, and it was temporary, it was a passing thing, not permanent, but it's not useless. This mountain-top experience really gives us assistance for living the ordinary Christian life because it highlights and shows us what we must see and what we must avoid and what we must hear.

Now what is Luke underscoring here? We can't cover everything and mine all the connections and, "Why didn't you deal with this?" It's too much but we can touch on some of the essentials. First, I think he wants us to see the secret of Jesus' glory. The

secret of Jesus' glory, verses 28 to 31, and we pick up there at verse 29 where you have the transformation in Jesus' appearance itself, that while he was praying, and Luke often mentions Jesus' praying, the appearance of his face changed and his clothing became dazzling white. Now is a transformation in Jesus' appearance and I think it's important that we understand that this was not a change into something he wasn't but rather this was a revealing of what he really was in this transformation. They saw his glory.

Them, of course, there are the visitors in verse 30, Moses and Elijah, the premier, you might say, leaders of the people of God in the previous age before Jesus and so on speaking to him. Then you notice the topic of conversation in verse 31, they spoke about his exodus, that's the literal word, which he was about to fulfill in Jerusalem. Now some translations have his departure. That's okay but it's literally his exodus and it may have been primarily I think referring to his death in Jerusalem, but it could have more in mind than just his death, it may be referring to his death and his resurrection and his ascension, his exodus as a whole package of events, but especially his death. They were talking about it.

Now, what was the purpose and the function of this event? And I think we can get wrapped up into, "What does it mean to me?" You have to be careful there, I think. You have to ask, "What was the purpose for Jesus," perhaps. I think Donald McCloud is right, we need to think, first of all, about what did this mean for Jesus himself and I think it was partly an encouragement to Jesus. We know that our Lord is fully divine and fully human and so on, but sometimes I think we subtly let the fully divine overshadow the fully human so much that we tend to assume Jesus really didn't have any needs and so on and so I think we need to beware here. When this, he was seen in this transfigured, in this glory and splendor, this would surely be an encouragement to him of his identity, a reassurance of his divine splendor, especially with the coming abuse and humiliation of the cross in the future.

So it was an encouragement to Jesus. It was an encouragement to Jesus probably because of the conversation they were having in verse 31. Now Luke in the previous passage that we read, his context doesn't talk about the disciples' reaction right there when Jesus talked about how he would be suffering and so on, as Matthew and Mark do in their Gospels. But he does mention it in verse 45 of chapter 9, or verses 44 and 45. Jesus at that point, so that's just after the transfiguration episode really, and Jesus in verse 45 said, "Listen carefully to what I'm about to tell you. The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men," verse 45, "but they did not understand what this meant." It was hidden from them so that they did not grasp it and they were afraid to ask him about it. It was like talking to a brick wall. You can see that again in chapter 18, verse 34 and 35 or in there, and so on. They just didn't get it. It must have been an encouragement to Jesus to be able to talk about among other things his exodus, of especially his death, and to talk about it with Moses and Elijah because he wasn't getting any satisfaction from his disciples when he spoke about it with them. So they were able to speak of the fulfillment of God's saving plan as Jesus would bring it to completion. It must have been an encouragement to him. Then the voice of the Father in verse 35, "This is my Son, the chosen one," and that must have been an encouragement to Jesus. He may be despised

and rejected by men but he is chosen by God and precious to him, and it must have meant so much to Jesus to hear those words once more.

So the transfiguration is such an encouragement to Jesus himself, but then also it was meant to be something, I think, of an encouragement to the disciples had they had, you might say, their antennae up to understand it because the transfiguration was a sneak preview of Jesus' real glory which they would sorely need when the events, remember the context of verse 22. Jesus said, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law. He must be killed and on the third day be raised to life." So given that that's the prospect, if they see the real glory of Jesus, then that ought to have some impact in carrying them through, in stabilizing them in the midst of that conflict and humiliation and shame and discouragement and so on. That's something that they would sorely need to be assured of Jesus' essential glory and real splendor because the disciples are going to Jerusalem and Jesus would be despised and humiliated and executed and they needed an assurance on record that that suffering did not negate Jesus' splendor, that that rejection did not negate his reign, that his misery did not cancel his majesty no matter what it looks like when Jesus undergoes his exodus.

The glory is nevertheless real but it's not apparent. That's why they had this glimpse, temporary glimpse of his glory to impress them with that. Maybe an analogy helps of what's going on. It would be like someone, let's say there's a man who doesn't live in ragged circumstances but just very common ones. He mows his own yard, not on one of these zero turn riding mowers. No, it's just a 22 inch cut rotary mower that he pushes and he mows his own yard. And he drives an auto that's, automobile that's 8-10 years old and, well, he dresses up if the occasion requires it but normally he just kind of goes around in Levi's and a t-shirt. Ah, but you are his accountant and you know that he is fabulously rich because you keep his books and you do his taxes, and you keep an eye on his investments and you've seen his resources. You know the secret that there buried in all that apparent commonness, there's really, you might say, glory. And that's the way this was meant to be here, that when it says they saw his glory and this, then, should have so impressed them that it provided a stabilizing, a settling, encouraging, had they seen it aright, effect as they faced later the time of Jesus' suffering and their own distress.

It was meant to be that way and yet it was only a passing glimpse, wasn't it? It's like, well, let's say it's about this time of year, it is May, 2018, maybe we need to go back to April or something like that. But sometimes the next years, and I don't know, you just have to turn your imagination lights on here, alright? Sometimes the next year model car comes out a bit early in the year before, strictly before it so that it's possible, imagine, that you receive an invitation, a special invitation from a car dealership, maybe it's one that you've dealt with and so on, and you're in an elite group, there are only 75 of you, but you've received an invitation and they'll have light refreshments, you come to the dealership at 9 PM in the evening, it's after-hours, and you will get to see, they'll have two or three models of the 2019s that are there. Oh, they'll be covered with light tarps and so on, it might be in the showroom or it might be in another well-lighted area of the car dealership, but you will go in with this special group of 75 people and at a certain moment they will take those tarps off and you'll have the opportunity to look over those

new models. Now they're not available yet. They've been manufactured but they're not on the market, they're not for sale. They will be later in the year but you get to see a sneak preview. You know what they're like, they're real, they exist. You are meant to be able to admire them, to maybe fantasize over having one, to be impressed with them, and hopefully salivate and order one probably. But it's just a passing thing. That's a sneak preview. Forty-five minutes later, it's over and you're on your way home. Well, that's sort of the way this is here. This is a sneak preview, you might say, for the disciples to see Jesus in his glory and splendor and be impressed with that, and had it been used rightly, it would be a sustaining secret to settle and strengthen and give them endurance when they went through the heavy weather of seeing Jesus put to shame and suffering and so on. It was a secret of Jesus' glory.

Now, what has this got to do with us? Because, you know, there's a huge difference here. You may not see much of Jesus' glory, you're not going to have a mount of transfiguration, sorry to say, I don't think you will, and you probably won't have some sort of supernatural vision of Jesus' glory. Where do we see the glory of Jesus since we're not in the disciples' sandals? Well, you see the glory of Jesus in what his word declares about him. Now, for the disciples, this experience was visual, right? They saw his glory in a visual way, temporary as it was. For us who have the word of God, we see the glory of Jesus in a verbal way. Not so much visually but verbally in what the word of God says and what the word, well, it's not just a passing glance, is it, but the glory of Jesus and the splendor of Christ is everywhere in the Scriptures.

Pastor Bolt was taking us through this in a couple of Wednesdays ago from Colossians 1. Where do you see the glory of Jesus? He's the image of the invisible God. He is before all things. He's not a part of all things, he's before all things and in him all things hold together. You see the glory of Jesus, then, when you put your foot out of the bed in the morning and you assume that the floor will be there and it is, and you don't drop into a black hole and disappear. That's because of the glory of Jesus because in him all things hold together. There's a coherence in the universe and Jesus provides the glue that holds it together. That's the glory of Jesus and you see it, don't you, in Hebrews 1, he is the radiance of the glory of God, the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.

You see it, don't you? It's everywhere. You see it in Jesus' own personal assurance to you, the believer, of your future with him. John 6:40, "He who sees the Son," s-o-n, "and believes in him has," present tense, "has eternal life and," big conjunction, "I will raise him up at the last day." Jesus gives you that assurance that your personal resurrection from bodily death will be reversed by his power.

That's the glory of Jesus and sometimes the glory of Jesus appears in the most incidental ways. Donald McCloud mentions one, for instance, take the text in Matthew 7:22 when Jesus says, "Many will say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name? Did we not cast out demons in your name?'" etc. etc. Did you notice what he said? "Many will say to me in that day." And he just assumes it, but do you see what he's saying? He's assuming that he is the judge of all men and women at the last day; that at

the day of judgment he is the one in control. And it just happens almost as a kind of not a throw-away line but it's just assumed, "Many will say to me in that day."

You see the glory of Jesus again and again and what we must do because we have it not just visually but verbally and not just temporarily but pounded away at us, we must lay hold and be convinced and impressed as in the new car showroom with the glory and splendor of Jesus because if we are, that will be a sustaining element in making us able to endure and press on in the face of distresses and disappointments, trouble and turmoil, losses and crosses that we may have to bear for his sake but if his glory impresses us, it will provide that endurance, the secret of Jesus' glory.

Now secondly, notice the folly of Jesus' servants, verses 32 and 33. "But Peter and those with him were weighed down with sleep, but having become fully awake," not all translations take it that way but I think A. T. Robertson is right, it wasn't that they were still groggy or they just kind of woke up, but they became fully awake, "they saw his glory and the two men standing with him, and as they were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus, 'Master, it's good we are here.'" Well, that's true. Give Peter points on that, "and let us make three shelters, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah, not knowing what he was saying." And that last clause, "not knowing what he was saying," seems to indicate that Peter was in some kind of error, it may have been partly because he seemed to demote Jesus in a way, three shelters, one for you, one for Moses and Elijah, kind of leveling Jesus off there. That may have been a problem, yes, but there's also, I think, another one.

Now I don't have time to deal with the shelters and so on and some think he was suggesting maybe they celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles there where they made shelters and so on. I don't have time to go to that. It seems to me that the main problem here with Peter's suggestion is he was trying to prolong the experience. Let's not stop the party right yet. Let's continue this mountain-top experience. Let's go on with this. Let's not close this off. And it was not meant to be that. So it seems to me that Peter was taking what was meant as a secret momentary item of encouragement and he was trying to turn it into an ongoing experience but it was meant to be temporary.

Some things are meant to be temporary, you know, like the fact that David Rice Atchison became the 12th President of the United States. You may have forgotten about that but about March 4, 1849 or in 1849, James K. Polk decided not to seek a second term. He seemed to be satisfied with what he had accomplished, himself and his ambitious wife, and so he decided not to seek a second term and the Whigs nominated General Zachary Taylor and he easily won over his challenger and he was elected President but there were two problems. First of all, March 4, 1849 was a Sunday and the second problem was that Zachary Taylor, old Rough and Ready, was a fairly staunch Episcopalian and he also had firm sabbatarian leanings and he didn't think that it was right to engage in taking the oath of office on a Sunday. He wasn't gonna do it, do it on Monday. That was not a work of necessity and mercy, apparently, and he didn't need to do it, but Polk was not going to be President then and what to do? Well, there's this little provision, you know, that there's no President or Vice-President, then the Speaker of the House becomes President, and so

David Rice Atchison became President for 24 hours until that Monday when General Taylor took the oath of office.

But it was meant to be temporary and there are some things in the Christian life that are meant to be temporary. Let's think in terms of application of this and maybe, you don't have to agree, but let's launch out into it anyway. I think there are contemporary Christian disciples who can sometimes make the same error as Peter did in principle, in principle. For example, you may have a passion or a longing to recover the special joy and freshness and excitement of your early Christian experience. You may have been blessed with a sudden, dramatic conversion and everything was new and fresh and wonderful, and the sky was a bluer blue and the grass was a greener green and the radishes were a redder red. It was astounding but as your Christian experience has gone on, something of that seemed to have leveled out and you don't seem to enjoy the old pizzazz of that early experience and you long, "What's wrong with me? I need to recover that." No, maybe you don't. Has it ever occurred to you that perhaps that wonderful freshness and excitement and joy and enthusiasm that the Lord gave you in that early time after your coming to Christ was perhaps a temporary provision specially given in order to carry you through the temptations and the difficulties and the roadblocks and the discouragements that often come to a young Christian, and that now there's not all that need for it?

That could be one application and then maybe another. You may be a Christian of some years, 15-20 years, whatever, and there was a particular period of spiritual growth and maturing in your Christian life. The Scriptures seemed alive, they seemed alive with instruction and interest, and prayer was an act of worship with great delight, and there was a sense of the closeness of God and maybe this happened, as you look back on it, maybe this time was a time, this occurred in a certain church fellowship where there seemed to be an intense intimacy among the people in that congregation and you long to recover the atmosphere of those days. I mean, you can understand we don't particularly enjoy the drive times, we don't particularly enjoy necessarily just the ordinary times, we don't necessarily like Christian plodding and so on, and so in a way in the back of your mind you constantly think back to that particular time of great spiritual growth and maturing, "Oh, if I could just get back!" And then you start to get into this, "If only" mode and you've gotta watch it when you start thinking that way because what might happen? Well, maybe God didn't intend for that period to be an ongoing arrangement.

So what can happen? Well, you can say, "If I could just recapture that time. If I could just get that ambiance again." But what might you be doing? You might be making an idol out of your experience and you're thinking that that's what you need above everything else and so you're seeking to recover some past experience or feeling or excitement that's often idealized and it almost ends up that you prefer to recapture that experience than to have Jesus and you've placed your experience above Jesus and you've made an idol out of it. Well, beware, there is such a thing as the folly of Jesus' servants.

Now thirdly, let's notice the sufficiency of Jesus' word, verses 34 to 36. The sufficiency of Jesus' word. You notice verse 36 there, "And after the voice had come, Jesus was found alone." That suggests that the Christian really needs nothing but Jesus. It's as if the

Father is saying there, "You don't need to prolong an experience, you just need my Son." But now you notice the words that the Father speaks there in verse 35, "This is my Son, the chosen one. Listen to him," with the emphasis on "him." This is talking about to whom we must listen and who is that? Well, he's God's Son. He's the Son who will rule the nations, Psalm 2:7 if you want to stress that idea of God's Son. He is the chosen one, Isaiah 42:1, who is also, as you read through that section of Isaiah, the servant who will suffer for the sins of God's people. So he is the servant who will suffer, that chosen one, and he is also the prophet to whom you must give heed, listen to him. That's a quote almost from Deuteronomy 18:15. And again, Pastor Bolt dealt with this more extensively several Wednesdays ago. But listen to him comes from Deuteronomy 18:15 and in that context it's one in which the Lord is telling Israel that he'll provide them with prophets, generic prophets. In other words in the context, they won't have to go through a bunch of this pagan hanky-panky. They won't have to do all these things like consulting the dead to try to get knowledge of the future etc. "None of that pagan stuff, I'll give you prophets who will declare my word to you and tell you what you need to know." But not only prophets generally but also a particular prophet because in that context, Moses said, "Yahweh will raise up for you a prophet like me." What's that mean? Well, a unique kind of prophet, a prophet that's a covenant mediator like Moses was for Old Testament Israel. There will be another prophet and then a covenant mediator who's a prophet. "You must listen to him," and that's what the Father here stresses, "Listen to him."

Now what's the listening we must do here? By context you notice the stress here is on Jesus' word, "Listen to him," the Father says. What was Jesus telling the disciples? Well, you go back to verse 22 in the context, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life." That's his word in context. That's what Jesus is telling them and they need to listen to him. But verse 45, after our text, tells that the disciples didn't get it. They just didn't take it in. They just bounced off seemingly. But that word was the word about the cross, verse 22, and about the cost. "If I'm going to be rejected, etc. and suffer and die, etc. then you also must deny yourself if you're going to come after me and take up your cross daily. You must daily make the decision that you're willing to be executed, if need be, for my sake." Now that was the word of Jesus and the problem was the disciples weren't listening to it. That's why the Father says, "Listen to him." You've got to take in Jesus' word.

Now what was going on there? Well, I can't be for sure but this is probably a reasonable guess that the disciples probably had the same attitude that many in Judaism did at the time, that is, that they couldn't exactly conceive of a suffering Messiah. Now I don't know, I have a hard time with that because there are certain Old Testament passages in the Psalms and Isaiah and Zechariah that I think are very clear about a messianic figure who is going to suffer but the stress apparently in Judaism, the package that was put together in their tradition in the first century seemed to associate the Messiah with victory and conquest and so on, and so that was the package. So if you say suffering Messiah, it was an oxymoron to them. It was like saying delicious vomit or clean dirt, they were contradictory. They couldn't conceive of an element of suffering with the Messiah and this is what Jesus had to correct. It's not that Peter and his fellows didn't have a genuine

faith. You know, Jesus asked them about it in verse 20, Peter said, "You are the Messiah of God." So they had a genuine personal faith but they didn't realize the kind of Messiah Jesus intended to be. So you can have genuine faith and that faith needs to be informed and shaped etc. and that was part of the problem.

"Listen to him." It's important, you know, that you not try to foist on Jesus what kind of Messiah he ought to be, which seems to be what the disciples were sort of doing. You don't like people to define you for you. Now there was a fellow by the name of John Paveskovich. He was, his parents were from Croatia but he changed his name, instead of Paveskovich, he changed it to Pesky, p-e-s-k-y. Johnny Pesky. He was a scrappy ball player maybe in the 1940s-1950s for the Boston Red Sox baseball team but his real name was Paveskovich. Well, you can understand why he might call himself Johnny Pesky in an American context, so he changed his name and there was a time when Johnny Pesky and the Red Sox went down to play what used to be the Philadelphia Athletics and the Philadelphia Athletics had a ball player, an outfielder by the name of Al Simmons. No, not really, his name was Aloysius Szymanski. We're ethnic here tonight. He was Polish. But you can understand that that could be a problem, you know, for an announcer, Aloysius Szymanski is coming to bat now. A little bit cumbersome, so he changed his name to Al Simmons but he was Polish. But when the Red Sox and Johnny Pesky came down to Philadelphia to play the Athletics, Al Simmons started writing Johnny Pesky and he kept calling him a dumb Polack, made Pesky just go off the edge. He was so made and he said to him, "I'm not a Polack and I'm not a dumb Polack, I'm a Crunk and I'm a smart Crunk."

Now, you understand that you don't want other people defining what you are, you want to define that yourself and that's the way it is here. We shouldn't be defining what kind of Messiah Jesus is, we should be listening to what he tells us about the kind of Messiah he is. That was the disciples' problem there and we still have a problem just on that very issue, don't we, sometimes? The disciples had a problem with the suffering Messiah like a lot of Jewish people but we don't like to hear that either, you know, we have the Philippians 3:10 passage, beautiful, Paul's desire, "That I may know him and the power of his resurrection." What does that mean? Well, that means that if you know Jesus, you're also going to enjoy Jesus' resurrected power and you're going to enjoy some victory over sin and you're going to enjoy some endurance through trials because you have in Jesus his resurrected power operating but there's a big word in that verse and it's the word a-n-d, "and I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings." You have both in knowing Jesus.

You know both his power and you also share in suffering and sometimes in our name it, claim it, victory in Jesus, whoop-de-do theology that goes around sometimes, they leave out the fellowship of the sufferings so we have to watch that we don't try to define Jesus in a way that distorts him. But generally, generally besides that particular, what are the disciples in danger of doing here? Well, of casting Jesus, to cast Jesus into their own image of what they want him to be. I think we suggest we've got to let the word of God correct us there as well because we can have a tendency to do the same kind of thing. Many of us, like Peter, have a genuine Christian confession, verse 20, but we have much

progress to make in knowing what kind of Messiah we believe in, and we must let Jesus help us define that.

One of the most helpful things you can do, then, is to read the Gospels again for the first time. What do you mean by that? Well, a few years back, not many years but a few, there was a Kellogg's Cornflakes commercial. Now Kellogg's Cornflakes are just pretty basic stuff. That's when you think of breakfast, well, for some of you the most basic stuff is grits but Kellogg's Cornflakes is pretty basic too, it's pretty plain, pretty ordinary, and just, well, it's just not fancy. It's not Sugar Pops, it's not Frosted Flakes, it's Kellogg's Cornflakes. There's just nothing fancy about that particularly so how are you going to market that? I still remember Kellogg's Cornflakes going to my great uncle and great aunt's place as a five year old boy and going out in their, well, dirty and smelly kitchen and seeing a box of Kellogg's Cornflakes there on the table and it's packaged essentially the same way it is today. You can't miss it. But so how did the Battle Creek people market them when they were doing that commercial maybe 10 or more years ago? Kellogg's Cornflakes, taste them again for the first time. That is, see how good those things really are, get a new experience of them. That's what I would suggest that you do with the Gospels. You say, "I know the Gospels." No, you don't, not the way you ought to. Read through them carefully. Read through them slowly and ask yourself at every point, "What is Christ showing me here about the kind of Christ he is?" Listen to him with sufficiency of Jesus' word.

So if there are mountain-top experiences in the Christian life, they are usually occasional and temporary, but there's no need to fear because after the glory subsides, Jesus is still there and he is all you need.

Let us pray.

Our Father and our God, we pray that you would grant that we would get a grip ourselves on the splendid glory of Jesus. Grant that we will be fascinated with him. Grant that we will be satisfied with him. We ask in his name. Amen.