

FOUR PILLARS OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH MARK 9:1-41

Spiritual growth -- that's what we all long for, isn't it? Think of the Psalm we read, a tree planted... The mighty sequoias are just a crumb of what once covered the earth before the flood, standing as tall as the high-rises in downtown Providence, mighty, enduring, strong -- that's what God wants us to be.

- Rooted in Christ.
- Growing in grace.
- Flourishing in His will.
- Enduring through all storms.
- Mighty in His power.

Sounds great? Let's listen to four constant themes in Christ's ministry. They occur over and over for three years. Mark 9:1-41

The Word	Faith	Prayer	Servanthood
v. 7	v. 23	v. 29	v. 35

In summary, our lives in Christ can be measured by the presence of these four elements.

- if they are on the rise, so is our spiritual growth.
- if they are waning, so is our spiritual growth.

Here they are again:

1. Living in Christ or the Word of Christ
2. Learning by the faith of Christ
3. Leaning on the source of Christ
4. Looking like the example of Christ

Let's see these four illustrated in the Word:

I. Our only focus -- Christ or living in the Word of Christ (v. 1-13)

A. 8:38-9:1 *His claiming to be king of kingdom*

1. A familiar essay anonymously written many years ago says this about Jesus Christ. 40 x 120 Strange claim one never o/s Israel but one time. "Nineteen long centuries have come and gone and today he is the centerpiece of the human race and the leader of the column of progress. I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever were built; all the parliaments that ever sat and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as has that one solitary life.

2. The late Wilbur Smith, respected Bible scholar of the last generation, wrote: The latest edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* gives twenty thousand words to this person, Jesus, and does not even hint that He did not exist-- more words, by the way, than are given to Aristotle, Cicero, Julius Caesar, or Napoleon Bonaparte.

3. George Buttrick, in a *Life* magazine article, adds: Jesus gave history a new beginning. In every land he is at home.... His birthday is kept across the world. His death-day has set a gallows against every city skyline.

4. Even Napoleon admitted: I know men and I tell you that Jesus Christ was no mere man:

Between Him and whoever else in the world there is no possible term of comparison.

5. So Jesus Christ claimed He is King, so focus on me.

B. V. 2-8 (Read) His Unveiling

1. For just a moment God the Son let out His divinity -- His glory as God. What was it?

2. Heb. 1:3 -- He is God. V. 6, without faith not please. Must believe the Word of God and creation.

3. Rom. 4:17 life/creator

4. Phil. 2:6-7 -- He veiled that glory, so Christ unveiled is God, so the focus is on Him....

C. Third, v. 9-13 tell us to focus on Christ because His reminding them God's plan is on course!

1. He had to suffer and die, v. 9

2. He had to fulfill the Word of God

a) Elijah (guarded law) + Moses (gave law)

3. He has to return

a) second coming, OT 1,527 times/NT 369 times

b) Moses (Deut. 34) = saint who died, glorified, returns

c) Elijah (2 Kings 2) = saint raptured, glorified, returns

d) Acts 2:23 = God's plan is on course

4. What's the confusion? Mal. 3:1; 4:5-6 said Elijah would precede Christ.

a) *Disciples - did we miss Him?

b) Christ's answer was No.

(1) John the Baptist (Jn. 1:21) in spirit and power of Elijah to those who believed.

(2) Elijah coming, Mt. 17:11.

c) When? Rev. 11:2-12 in the darkest hours of earth just before the final curtain, call....

II. 2. Second Pillar of Spiritual Growth is Faith - v. 14-24

A. Lesson Two: Our Only Power Is Faith

1. Simply trusting

a) Acts 26:18 faith gift

b) Heb. 11:1 faith title deed