

The power of attention – part 3

Text: Mark 9:1-9

Introduction: Peter, James and John were summoned to a high mountain, possibly Mount Hermon. I have always felt connected with passages like this. Mountains have always been significant in my Christian life. My dad one day took his family up on a mountain, build an altar and cried out to God, “*Who are you God? I want to know you. Reveal yourself to us*”. A number of events followed that led to our conversion. The stones of that altar have since crumbled but they remain there in that mountain as silent witness of that sincere prayer that day. Our faith also remains. For several years I kept coming back to that same spot up on that mountain and had many conversations with the Lord. When we moved to another town, I found another mountain. Mountains have always been to me, places of encounter and transformation in my life, places of separation from all other voices to seek God’s voice.

When we step aside from the distractions and busyness of life, and focus on Jesus, we experience ‘*the kingdom of God present with power*’ with all its reality and fullness.

3 men on a mountain

V.1 - *And He said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you that there are **some** standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power.”*

The announcement was for all disciples but only 3 of them were summoned to the mountain. The earliest descriptions of Peter, James and John in the Gospels show them eager to follow Jesus, people who, at the invitation of Jesus, dropped their nets and everything else and followed Him. Maybe they were chosen because they were more eager than the others, maybe they loved Jesus more – John certainly was known for His love of the Master.

Psalms 25:14 TPT - *There’s a private place reserved for the lovers of God, where they sit near him and receive the revelation-secrets of his promises.*

3 crucial words

V.2 - *Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up on a high mountain **apart by themselves**; and He was transfigured before them. His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them.*

Apart by themselves – Those are 3 very important words. They describe the kind of relationship God wants to have with us. He wants to find us apart from this world by ourselves, in His presence.

I know that we still live in this world and that we have to operate in this world, but we can't live distracted all the time and still expect to accurately hear from Him, to be strong in His power, to be growing spiritually. No, we need 'mountain time' as well.

3 powerful things that 'mountain time' will do in your life

- A fresh revelation of Jesus
- An encounter that will mark you forever.

2 Corinthians 3:18

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

2 Peter 1:16-18 - ... *but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. ¹⁷For He received from God the Father honour and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." ¹⁸And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.*

- The kingdom of God present with power in your life

Let us continue reading...

Verses 4-6: *⁴And Elijah appeared to them with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. ⁵Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah"— ⁶because he did not know what to say, for they were greatly afraid.*

Apart from Peter, James and John, another 3 men stand on that mountain: Moses, Elijah and Jesus. They had all met in mountains before: Moses met Him in Exodus 19 in Mount Sinai, Elijah met Him in Mount Horeb in 1 Kings 19.

Moses represents the Law, Elijah the prophets - the two pillars of the Old Covenant. Jesus is the fulfillment of all that was written in the Law and the prophets.

What a powerful encounter! Jesus taught His disciples many times through the Word but here, He brought them into an experience. Everything in the kingdom of God can be experienced. "*O taste and see that the Lord is good*" – Psalms 34:8.

3 ways you can miss an encounter

Here are 3 things Peter did and that we should never do:

- He spoke when no one was talking with him: ... "*and they were talking with Jesus. Then Peter answered*" ...
- He wanted to get busy, when he was supposed to be still: "*let us make three tabernacles*"

There are times that we need to be still and know that He is God. We need to resist the compulsion to always be saying something or be doing something (like Martha). Peter got distracted from the moment. Don't try to multitask in your time with God. Eliminate activity and distractions... and don't do all the talking. Take time to listen.

One more thing happened at the top of that mountain that left me surprised as I read it: at one point, Peter almost went to sleep!

- Peter zoned out

Luke 9:32 - ³² *But Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep; and when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him.*

Maybe overcome by the exhaustion of the hike (that mountain stands at 2814m above sea level) or simply because it was late, Peter literally zone out. He almost missed the greatest visitation ever!

Both activity and passivity can become distractions that rob us from a miraculous moment. There are times when we haven't climbed a mountain, we aren't tired, and we could be alert, but we zone out. We allow our mind to drift and lose focus - or we give in to complacency, indifference, to being lethargic towards the things of God, being inattentive etc – all those can cause us to miss all God has for us.

... *“when they were fully awake, they saw His glory...!”*

You need to be fully present, fully awake and fully alert if you want to see His glory.

Hear Him!

V. 7-8 - ⁷ *And a cloud came and overshadowed them; and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!”* ⁸ *Suddenly, when they had looked around, they saw no one anymore, but only Jesus with themselves.*

There was a declaration at the heart of the Law and the covenant of Moses: *“Hear O Israel: The Lord our God is One”* (Deuteronomy 6:4). Every morning and evening Jewish prayer starts with this declaration. However, here, the Father says, hear Him, Hear Jesus!

The Father interrupted talkative, anxious, fearful and hyperactive Peter and ceased all the distraction by declaring: *He is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased: hear Him!*

All the attention of that moment was on Jesus. The reason to come apart and have some 'mountain time' is to hear Him. His voice is the voice that matters. We need to stay focused on Jesus, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, we need to be 'mountain people' like Moses, Elijah, Peter, James and John and find His voice, capture His frequency and be transformed in the process.

Hear Him! Fellowship with Him, come away to be with Him, live focused on Him.