

Small Group Guide

A Mountaintop Experience | Mark 9:2-8

Before You Meet

Encourage group members to read Mark 9:2-8 and reflect on a moment in their own life when they felt they gained unusual clarity about God, faith, or direction.

Opening Question

Think of a moment in your life, spiritual or otherwise, when everything suddenly became clearer. What were the circumstances, and what made that moment stand out?

Background and Context

In this sermon, Pastor Mike walks through the Transfiguration of Jesus as described in Mark 9:2-8. Peter, James, and John follow Jesus up a mountain without any expectation of what is about to happen. What they witness, Jesus transfigured in dazzling white, Moses and Elijah appearing, and the voice of God speaking from a cloud, becomes one of the most extraordinary moments recorded in the Gospels. The sermon uses this passage as a lens for understanding what many have come to refer to as a “mountaintop experience,” those moments when God makes truth unusually clear and personally meaningful. The central challenge of the sermon is not simply to celebrate those moments, but to examine what we do with them when we come back down from “the mountain.”

Key Takeaways

- A *mountaintop moment* is defined as a gracious interruption when God makes truth unusually clear or personally meaningful.
- The purpose of the Transfiguration was not to let the disciples escape what was coming. It was to show them who was walking into it with them.
- God is not closer to us when we feel like he is closer to us. He is as present in seasons of distance as he is in seasons of clarity.

- Mountaintop moments are signs, not destinations. They point us toward Jesus, not toward a feeling.
 - Our experiences are tested by Scripture. Scripture is not tested by our experiences.
 - The truth God reveals on the mountain does not stop being true when the feeling fades.
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Discussion Questions

Exploring the Passage

1. Read Mark 9:2-8 together as a group. What details stand out to you? What questions does the passage raise for you?
2. When Peter suggests building three shelters, Mark notes that he did not know what to say because he was terrified. What do you think Peter was really asking for in that moment? Can you relate to that impulse?
3. The voice from the cloud says, "This is my beloved son. Listen to him!" Why do you think the instruction was to listen rather than simply to look or to believe? What is the difference?
4. Moses and Elijah were towering figures in Jewish history and faith. What do you think it meant for Peter, James, and John to see them standing with Jesus, and then to see only Jesus remain?

Connecting to Our Lives

5. The sermon offered this definition: a *mountaintop moment* is a gracious interruption when God makes truth unusually clear or personally meaningful. Have you experienced something like that? What happened, and what was it like?
6. The pastor was honest about environments where spiritual experiences felt forced or manufactured. Have you ever been in a setting like that? How did it affect your view of genuine *mountaintop moments*?
7. The sermon describes three ways we can waste a mountaintop moment. Which of the three resonates most with you personally, and why?
 - Chasing the feeling instead of Jesus
 - Confusing inspiration with obedience
 - Leaving the truth on the mountain
8. The pastor said, "God is not closer to you when you feel like he is closer to you." How does that statement sit with you? Does it challenge you, comfort you, or both?
9. Peter later wrote in 2 Peter 1 that the experience on the mountain gave him a lamp to carry into dark places. What truth from your own mountaintop moments have you carried with you? What truth might you have left behind?

Going Deeper

10. The sermon drew a contrast between inspiration and obedience. Is there something God has made clear to you, perhaps in a moment of unusual clarity, that you have not yet acted on? What is holding you back?
 11. The sermon closed with the promise from Revelation 21 that one day there will be no more grief, crying, pain, or death. How does that future hope shape the way you face the valleys you are currently in?
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Practical Applications

Choose one or more of the following to practice individually or as a group before your next meeting.

Remember what God has shown you. Take time this week to write down one or two moments in your faith journey when God made something unusually clear. What did he reveal? How did you respond? What happened to that truth over time?

Measure the experience by the Word. If you have had a strong spiritual experience, bring it into conversation with Scripture this week. Ask whether what you felt or sensed aligns with what Jesus has already revealed. Consider sharing that reflection with a trusted friend or your group.

Identify one act of obedience. Think of something Jesus has made clear to you, whether recently or in the past, that you have not yet done. Name it specifically. Share it with one person in your group who can check in with you about it.

Carry the truth into the valley. If you are currently in a difficult season, write down one truth about who Jesus is that you want to hold onto this week. Put it somewhere you will see it, and return to it when the feeling of closeness fades.

Pray for someone in the valley. Identify one person in your life who is walking through a hard season. Reach out to them this week, not necessarily with answers, but with presence and prayer.

Closing Prayer

Close your time together by praying specifically for anyone in the group who is currently in a valley. Ask God to remind each person that his presence does not depend on how close he feels, and that the truth he has revealed does not fade when the feeling does. Thank him for the gift of mountaintop moments, and ask for the courage to carry what he has shown you back down into everyday life.