A Glimpse of the Kingdom, part 2

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Preacher: Dr. Michael Staton

[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us. Give it time.

We're so glad you're here. We had a great, great week. VBS, for those of you who are able to be here to serve and to help to teach and do any numbers of things, we had people that were here with security and teaching and helping and snacks and all kinds of ways that people served. So, so thankful for those who are able to volunteer time to be here.
For those who couldn't be here, many of you I know were praying for our students and children during that week, and we are so thankful that you did. For Kathy Brotherton and Bandy David and their coordinators and team of leaders, so thankful.
We do such a great job every year loving our children and helping to make a week that is fun, but very Christ-centered. And for our children who come, we are so thankful. If you were here at VBS this week, thank you so much for coming and being here.
We are so thrilled that you're able to be here. Tomorrow, we've got middle school students leaving for youth camp, and then the week after that will be high school camp and shortly coming up, kids camp.
[1:23] Just a very, very full summer as always. We're excited about that. Remember that next Sunday, we begin our modified summer schedule. Jeff's going to come up at the end of the service and help you with a few details with that.

But just so you're aware, this week we begin the remodel work on our adult wing, so that adult wing will be completely shut down for the next six weeks.
When we reemerge up in there, it's going to be wonderful. Those rooms are going to be ready to host and fit adults better than they ever have been, and we're thrilled about that. But it does create some challenges for a few weeks while that's going on.
And so starting next week at 9 o'clock, preschool, children, youth, and Crossroads will all meet as normal at 9. And at 9 o'clock, our adults will all choose from various seminars.
You've got a brochure in your bulletin. You'll pick one of those seminars each week, and then everybody comes in here at 1030. We're going to have about 100 extra chairs that we set out, and we'll be excited to be able to be all together as a church family.
[2:32] We typically have done this for the entire summer, but in the Lord's kindness, He's just brought so many people to our church. We could not do that for the whole summer.

July is usually our lowest month of attendance just because of vacations and travel. And so we're hoping that we can accommodate everybody together. The month of June, the Lord just continues to bring people to us.
And we've had really strong attendance the last month, even since school's been out. So it's going to be full starting next week. It's going to be full in here, but we'll have extra chairs everywhere.
And be patient, be courteous, be kind, don't throw things, all those kind of things. So remember, there may be somebody sitting in your chair because at the next service, they think it's their chair.
I know it's your chair. The 1030 people just think it's their chair. Okay, so just be aware of that. Be gracious, and we'll look forward to a few weeks where we can all be together in worship.
[3:35] Jeff will give you some information at the end of the service and hopefully help clarify anything that's not clear. Turn with me again to Mark chapter 9. Mark chapter 9. We continue in our study through the Gospel of Mark, looking specifically last week and this week at this very important event in the life of Jesus that we know is the transfiguration.

Look at it with me in Mark 9, starting in verse 2. After six days, Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John and led them up a high mountain by themselves.

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And He was transfigured before them. And His clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them.
And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. And Peter said to Jesus, Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.
For he did not know what to say, for they were terrified. And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, This is my beloved Son, listen to Him.
[4:51] And suddenly looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only. And as they were coming down the mountain, He charged them to tell no one what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead might mean. And they asked Him, why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?
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. So we walked through this in the first part last week.
Let me just remind you of some things that we studied last week. For those who may be new with us today to catch you up just a bit. The first thing we looked at last week was the change they experienced.
[5:58] In verses 2 and 3, the change they experienced. And what we saw in verse 2 is it says, Christ was transfigured before them.

Metamorpho, to change form. His clothes are changed. His face is changed. His nature is not changed.
His appearance, though, is changed. And not only did they experience that, but they enjoyed the company of these men from the Old Testament as Moses and Elijah appeared.
Moses representing the law. Elijah representing the prophets. This is a picture from the Old Testament that the law and the prophets are all pointing to and fulfilled in Christ.
We also looked in verse 4 at the conversation that they enjoyed. We know what they were talking about because Luke 9, when it records this same event, tells us in verse 30 that they were discussing Jesus' departure.
[7:05] They were talking about His coming death, burial, and resurrection. So on the mountainside, you've got Jesus and Moses and Elijah and Peter, James, and John.

These six men. And their conversation is about the work Christ is about to do on the cross and the work of the resurrection. Truly an amazing thing to consider.
That the Old Testament heroes of the faith, when this unique experience happens, these are men who have been dead for hundreds and hundreds of years, yet very much alive.
And they appear with Jesus. And if you ever wonder, what would Moses and Elijah talk about if they had a conversation with Jesus?
The text tells us. They were talking about the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. There's a conclusion that Peter came to in verses 5 and 6, and his conclusion is, let's just build three tents and stay here.
[8:18] As we looked at last week, that may not be quite as random as it seems. I think this is likely a reference to the Feast of Booths that they would celebrate.

We're about six months before the crucifixion and resurrection at this point in Mark 9, which would put us around the time of year for the Feast of Booths, where people for a week would build these temporary shelters.
And it was a celebration of remembrance of what the Lord had done. It was a way that God's people would look back at His deliverance in the past, and they would be encouraged to remind themselves that the God who delivered in the past is the God who will be faithful to deliver them in the days to come.
And I think that's what Peter is referring to here. Let's just have this celebration right here on the mountaintop. But, as is true in our life, was true in their life, you don't stay on the mountaintop.
You come down from the mountaintop experiences, and you have to live life. This past week for our church was a wonderful thrill with VBS to have hundreds and hundreds of people here every single day.

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[9:33] To have children coming every day singing songs of praise. To have children every day learning about the Bible. To have children every day surrounded by the things of God for three and a half hours every morning.

It's a wonderful, wonderful week. But next week's a bit more normal. For our middle schoolers, they leave in the morning, they go to youth camp, and for five days, they're going to be surrounded by the teaching of God's Word.
They're going to be taught in the cabin. They're going to be taught in the tabernacle. They're going to have special times of Bible study. Our pastors will each take turns driving down there to teach God's Word with our students.
They'll have time together for ministry and fellowship around the Word of God. It will be a wonderful week. But at the end of the week, they come down off the mountain, and life gets a bit more normal. This is the way life is. We have a few seasons in our life of these really high encounters that really strengthen us and motivate us, but it strengthens us to serve and to live lives that are faithful right in the midst of the mundane.
[10:43] And that brings us to verses 7-10, the charge that was given to them. The Father speaks out of the cloud and says, This is my beloved Son.

Listen to Him. Luke 9, verse 35 adds that the Father says, This is my chosen one. This is my Son, the chosen one.
This is the Father authenticating exactly who the Son is. And yet, right before the Father speaks, the group that was there talking to Jesus, they were talking about the suffering that Jesus must endure.
And down in verse 12 that I read a few moments ago, He speaks how the Son of Man must suffer many things. So don't miss this, friends.
That the Father is stating clearly that Jesus is the Messiah. He is the chosen one.
[11:52] Yet, suffering is a part of the plan. So, when suffering invades your life, don't wrongly conclude that God has forsaken you.

The Lord uses suffering for our good. The Lord uses suffering to manifest His power.
The Lord uses suffering to help draw other people to Himself. When Christ is suffering, it's not because He's done something wrong.
It was part of the plan. And in your life, you'll experience suffering. You'll experience pain and hardship.
Don't wrongly conclude in those seasons that God has abandoned you. Trust that God has a purpose.
[13:03] Trust that God is working. Sometimes we wrongly feel like in seasons of pain that it's the exception to God working in our lives.

And for most of us, I think we could rightly say that it is those times of suffering and those seasons of pain, those seasons of being pulled and stretched where we draw closer to the Lord than ever before.
So if today you find yourself in a day of suffering or a season of suffering, just know that the Lord is near.
And the suffering you're facing today is not somehow an exception to the truth that God is good to His people. Trust in Him. His Son was the chosen one and yet His Son had to suffer.
And the word that the Father speaks to those on the mountainside there is this, listen to Him. So we left off last week asking the question, are we listening to Him?
[14:12] If you've ever wondered what would God the Father say to His followers if He spoke to them, here it is.

Mark 9, verse 7. This is My beloved Son. Listen to Him. This is a word for you to understand today. To listen to the Lord. We need to take time to read the Word. To be in the Word. That when the church gathers together, there's nothing more important we can do than study the Word of God. This is why it's so important that when we gather here for congregational worship, this is why it's so important that we do everything possible to limit any distraction.
Not because I'm worthy of your undivided attention, but because His Word is that great. Because His Word is that powerful.
[15:18] Because His Word is that important in our life. And the Father speaks and He says, listen to the words of Christ. When we're reading the Word, there's just nothing better that we can do.

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And so just ask yourself this morning, am I listening to the Lord? Do I read His Word? Do I speak of His Word?
Do I help others to understand His Word? Do I obey His Word? This is the charge. Life is all about listening to God and obeying what He says.
There's just nothing more important I could say to you today than to say to you exactly what the Father said of His own Son, and that is that we must listen to Him.
We must listen to Him. And then, verse 8, suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only.
[16:37] Peter, James, and John are with Jesus. Moses has been there. Elijah has been there in this unspeakably unique situation.

And all of a sudden, they look up and Moses and Elijah are gone. Their work was done. They had come by the decree of God to be present in this most unusual situation.
Their presence there giving testimony that Christ is the fulfillment of the law and the prophets. And now that that work has been concluded, they are gone.
They are gone. And as they were coming down the mountain, He charged them to tell no one what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.
Let's just be honest. This is a really, really hard charge that Jesus gives to them. Can you imagine experiencing this and at the end of it, Jesus says, by the way, don't tell anybody what you've experienced.
[17:57] The transfiguration, the appearance of Moses and Elijah, the conversation. Don't tell anybody. I mean, this is among the hardest things that Jesus ever asked anyone to do.

If you ever say to somebody, don't tell anybody this, but, just rest assured, it's about to be told. Right? That's just how we are. Usually, because what you're about to say is something you just told someone else, I won't tell anybody.
So we say, don't tell anybody. I probably shouldn't tell you this, but, then you tell somebody who then five minutes later tells someone, don't tell anyone else, I probably shouldn't tell you this, but, that's just how humans are. We just can't keep our mouths quiet.
Except. Except for the gospel. It does seem so many times we keep our mouths quiet when we shouldn't.
And in this case, this impossible to describe event, Jesus tells Peter, James and John, to keep this quiet.
[19:15] Don't tell anyone. Now, it's got a time limit on it. Don't tell anyone about this until the Son of Man has risen from the dead.

And maybe surprisingly, verse 10, they kept the matter to themselves. That would be really hard to do.
But it says, they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead might mean. Here's Peter, James, and John.
They've had this incredible experience. They come down the mountaintop the next day with Jesus. Moses is gone. Elijah is gone. He tells them, don't tell anyone what's happened. Don't tell anyone what you've seen until I have risen from the dead.
Then you can tell them all about this. And Peter, James, and John don't tell anybody, but amongst themselves, they are asking, what does he mean, rise from the dead?
[20:24] Why does Jesus keep insinuating he's going to rise from the dead? Remember, he's already told the disciples he's going to be rejected and suffer and be killed and have to be risen from the dead.

And remember, Peter pulls him aside and says, Lord, this will never be. They just can't grasp the concept of a Messiah, of a Savior, who's going to lay down his life.
Now, by this point in Jesus' life, Peter has already rightly concluded, you are the Messiah. You are the Christ. The Son of the living God.
The apostles understand that. They agree with that. It's not the person of Jesus they're struggling with.
It's the mission of Jesus that they're struggling with. They understand who He is. They believe He's the Messiah. They believe He's the Son of God.
[21:30] What they cannot grasp is why is the Son of God going to die? They've heard Him say this. They've heard Him talk about it.

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They just can't comprehend it. So when Jesus says that the Son of Man is going to have to be risen from the dead, they are questioning, they're talking about it with themselves.
What does this mean? Now, understand, at this point in the life of the disciples, they know there's a coming resurrection.
They know that from the Old Testament. They know there's going to be a coming resurrection. They also know that Jesus has the power to raise the dead.
They understand. They understand those two things. What is blowing their mind is not the talk that there will be a resurrection at the last days.
[22:40] That they know. What is blowing their mind is not that Jesus can take someone who has died, bring them back to life. That they know.

What they cannot comprehend is that Jesus is going to die and have to be brought back to life.
And so, they can't go tell other people what they've experienced Jesus told them not to. All they can do is talk and question among themselves, what does this mean?
Why does He keep talking about dying? this is what they could not grasp. And so, they're questioning and that leads us to verse 11, the correction that encouraged.
The correction that encouraged. Verse 11, And they asked Him, Why do the scribes say that first, Elijah must come?
[23:52] Now, if the Old Testament is a bit foreign to you, let me help you with this a bit because otherwise this makes no sense.

Now, we've just had Elijah appear with Moses. And they understand that the Old Testament talked about Elijah in the context of the coming of Messiah.
We'll look at that in just a minute. So, these men understand Elijah's connected with Messiah. Elijah is connected with the end of the plan of God.
Elijah has just appeared on the mountainside. Jesus says, I still have to die. I still have to be raised back to life. And they say, well, why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?
This has always been an issue that in Jesus' day, people were trying to fully grasp. In fact, just stay in Mark.
[25:02] Just turn the page back for a moment to chapter 6. chapter 6.

This is the death of John the Baptist. King Herod heard of it, for Jesus' name had become known. And some said, John the Baptist has been raised from the dead.
That's why these miraculous powers are at work in him. But others said, he is Elijah. People were trying to figure out how does the Old Testament prophecy about Elijah fit into the life of Jesus?
Go to chapter 8 in Mark, verse 27. We see it again. Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi and on the way he asked his disciples, who do people say that I am?
And they told him, John the Baptist. Others say, Elijah. So Jesus says, who do people say that I am?
[26:10] And some say, you're John the Baptist. Some say, you're a prophet. Some say, you're Jeremiah. Some say, you are Elijah. In fact, at the end of the Gospel of Mark in chapter 15, at the crucifixion, verse 35, Jesus cries out to the Father and it says, some of the bystanders hearing it said, behold, he is calling on Elijah.

So all throughout the Gospel of Mark, you hear these conversations. What's going on with Elijah? Elijah? Is Jesus Elijah?
Has Elijah come? Is Elijah going to come? Is Jesus calling out for Elijah to come? See, they understood that the coming of Messiah was very closely connected with Elijah.
Now, where does that come from? Well, at the very end of the Old Testament in Malachi 3, verse 1. This is the very final prophetic word of God before 400 years of silence. Malachi 3, verse 1, behold, I send my messenger and he will prepare the way before me and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts.
[27:43] So you've got this prophecy that someone's going to come and prepare the way for Messiah. Somebody's going to come and make people ready for the Messiah to come.

John the Baptist appears and he is the one who prepares the way for Messiah. In the ancient world, before a king would ride in the town, someone would go in front of him and prepare the way.
And so they were going to be bringing a chariot down the streets. Someone would have to go and make sure the streets were prepared. The debris was cleared off. There were holes that it was filled

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up so that that king could ride smoothly to the streets.
Somebody had to come and prepare the way for the king. Malachi says that before the Messiah comes, a messenger is going to come and prepare the way.
When you get to the New Testament, John the Baptist comes and he prepares the way for Messiah and the way he prepared the way is by calling people to repentance.
[28:56] And so it is said of John the Baptist that he came in the power and the spirit of Elijah. And you say, well, Malachi 3, where do we get the specific name of Elijah?

Well, that's chapter 4. It's the very last words of the Old Testament. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord.
So what's going on with Elijah? Elijah? Well, what they knew is that in some way Elijah was going to prepare the way for Messiah and Elijah was coming before the day of the Lord.
and they're trying to figure out what does Jesus' talk of dying have to do with the Old Testament prophecies of the coming of Messiah and Elijah.
And then, to make it even stranger for them, it says, it is written of the Son of Man that He should suffer many things and be treated with contempt.
[30:21] Now, by the time Jesus has been revealed in the flesh, the idea of the people of God is that the Messiah is going to come and just immediately lead them into this golden age.

The idea is Messiah is going to show up and when He does, they're going to have all the power and all the freedom and all the political clout and all the resources.
Their idea was that whenever Messiah was revealed, it's over. We're good. But the reason they thought that is because they chose to overlook what the Old Testament had clearly prophesied of Messiah.
In fact, your very first mention of a Redeemer. Your very first time a Redeemer is ever mentioned is the very beginning of your Bible.
Genesis 3 verse 15 where it says that the Lord is going to send one. He will crush the serpent's head, but in so doing, he will bruise his heel.
[31:35] The Redeemer is going to come and yes, he's going to defeat the devil, but he himself is going to be wounded in that conflict. It's a suffering Redeemer.

But it's not just Genesis 3. It's Psalm 22. It's Psalm 118. It's Isaiah 49. Isaiah 53 details in excruciating detail about the suffering of Messiah.
But that's not what anybody wanted. They didn't want a Messiah to talk about sin. They wanted the Messiah to talk about freedom. They didn't want a Messiah to talk about repentance.
They wanted the Messiah that would just crush their enemies. So, what they did is they took what had been revealed to them and they just conformed it to be a Messiah of their own making.
That's what they were looking for. That's what people do today. They take what they know about God and just move it a little bit.
[32:51] We want a God that talks about love. We just don't want a God that talks about righteousness. We want a God that talks about heaven. We just don't want a God that talks about hell. We want a God that talks about serve and sacrifice and care for each other.

We just don't want a God that talks about absolute truth, right and wrong. And so, what people do is they take a little bit of what has been revealed to them about God and they just twist it and shape it and form it until what they have is a God of their own making.
And so, when Jesus is revealed, when He takes on flesh, they understand there's a resurrection at the end.
They just don't understand why is Messiah going to suffer and die. Well, that was all over the Old Testament. It's just not something people really were interested in.
Which gets us back to this connection of Elijah and the coming of Messiah. In Luke chapter 1, the angel speaks to Zachariah and Elizabeth and tells them they're going to have a son and you're going to call him John.
[34:04] It's who we know as John the Baptist. And it says, He will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God and He will go before Him in the Spirit and the power of Elijah to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children.

Where did that come from? It's the exact language of Malachi chapter 4. So the angel says to the parents of John the Baptist, the son you're going to have is going to do the work that Elijah was prophesied to do and he's going to do it in the power and the Spirit of Elijah.

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So Jesus in Matthew 11 verse 14 says if you're willing to accept it of John the Baptist, he is the Elijah who is to come.
And then in Matthew 17 verse 13, speaking of the Mount of Transfiguration, it says this sentence, then the disciples understood He was speaking to them of John the Baptist.
In other words, what Jesus wants them to understand is that the prophecy that one would come in the power and the Spirit of Elijah, that's happened.
[35:28] That happened in the person of John the Baptist. And what was the message of John the Baptist? Sum it up in one word. Repentance. The way you prepare the road to receive Christ as Messiah is through repentance.

That's the message. And the Father speaks of the Son on the mountainside and says, listen to Him. The idea is that what we must preach is a message of repentance.
And I think as I consider this account, I think as best my mind can grasp this, I think this is why the Father says to Peter, or Jesus says to Peter, James, and John, don't tell anyone about this.
Here's why. Because what people would want to know, what does Moses look like? How long is his beard? What's his voice sound like? What's Elijah like? What's their personalities like?
And what they would not want to hear is the message that you must be born again. But that's the message of the kingdom. When Jesus is transfigured right before them, He says, I'm going to show you a glimpse of the power of the kingdom and what they see is Christ Himself.
[37:00] It is knowing Christ. It is believing His message. It's the repentance of sin. That's what matters. But people, being who we are, tend to disregard the most important and we get sidetracked in all the inconsequential details.

if Peter, James, and John held a conference to say, let me tell you about the Mount of Transfiguration and if He says, the Father spoke and said, listen to Jesus, let's consider the words of Jesus.
Jesus came preaching. Jesus said to listen to John the Baptist. John the Baptist said to repent.
People are going to say, we don't want to hear about that. We want to know what was Moses wearing? What did his shoes look like?
Did you get a picture? Did you sketch out what they looked like? Were they tall? Were they handsome? Were they strong? What kind of fashion do you wear in heaven?
That's where people would go. And what people would do is they would talk about all these religious things without ever considering the message.
[38:13] And the message of the kingdom is repent. Repent. Now, after Jesus dies and is raised back to life, He says, go tell them everything you've seen.

At that point, He's already vindicated His sacrifice on the cross after the resurrection. But He says, I don't want people to get sidetracked in the trivial.
I want people to focus on the message. And how do we know that's the whole point here? Because that's the very word the Father said. Listen to Him.
Hear His words. Obey His voice. Listen to Him. It's one of the reasons why somebody last week, a fellow pastor called me last week and he said, I just don't understand.
Help me understand why is it that people who, men who don't preach the word, men who don't talk about sin, men who go soft on the gospel, why is it so many of them have churches with thousands of people?
[39:33] Well, here's why. Because people are content to busy themselves doing trivial things if it just makes them feel better doing it.

And if you have to go to church on Sunday morning to do it, so be it. If you go to church and you leave and you feel, you kind of feel better, you just feel better, well, people will do that because people are miserable.
And yet, in the very midst of that, most of them miss the call to repent. And so churches in our nation will be filled today.
Millions of people will go to church. But even among them, most would rather just busy themselves talking about trivial things than to truly consider the words of Jesus.
The point of the Mount of Transfiguration is that Jesus is Messiah and we must listen to Him.
[40:59] That's the point. Now, in closing, something that I think is interesting, the word that's used here, chapter 9, verse 2, He was transfigured before them.

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We speak of the Mount of Transfiguration. The mountain's not called Transfiguration. It's just the mountain where that took place. Metamorpho is the word, transfigured.
It's used only four times in the New Testament. It's used here in Mark 9 to speak of this account. It's used in Matthew 17 to describe the exact same account.
So, two of the four times the word is used is to describe Jesus in this event. It's only found two other times in the entire New Testament.
One is Romans 12, 2. You'll recognize it. Do not be conformed to this world, but be what? Transformed.
[42:03] How? By the renewal of your mind. In other words, we are to see Christ for who He is, and by seeing Christ for who He is, it helps us not be like the world, but to be transformed to be like Jesus.

The purpose of the Mount of Transfiguration is to help you become godly in your thinking and holy in your living as you set your mind on Christ.
The words used one other time, 2 Corinthians 3.18, and we all with unveiled face beholding the glory of the Lord are being transformed transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.
In other words, seeing Jesus for who He is is something that affects every part of our life.
So when I ask you today, do you know Jesus? I don't mean by that, are you familiar with some stories? I don't mean by that, do you know some events and miracles that He did?
[43:37] I don't mean by that, could you quote some Scripture that describes His life? When I say, do you know Jesus? What I'm asking you is, have you looked at who He is?

Do you listen to His words? And is your knowledge of Jesus making you transformed to be more and more like Jesus?
That's how you know if you belong to Him. That what you know of Him is changing you. That what you believe of Him is making you more like Christ.
That's the takeaway from this entire passage. Look to Jesus, listen to Him, and let your response be that your mind and your life reflects the one you worship.
I encourage you, brothers and sisters, today, look to Jesus. Listen to His words. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind as you set your mind not on things below, but on things above.
[45:27] Lord, we do thank You today for Your Word. I pray that it has been clear. I pray that it is understood. And I pray that what we have studied today would help transform us to be more and more like Christ.

We ask that in Jesus' name. Amen. Jeff's going to come and share a few thoughts. Do not inform Mét or if you don't see you as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as

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