Listen to him

Luke 9:28-36

Key Verse 9:35

**A voice came from the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.”**

Do you know that I had been a vegan for two years? How did I end up becoming a vegan? It is because of one video Maria brought and showed it to me. In that video I saw ‘yellowish fat’ coming from man’s blood vessel in surgery. I was so shocked to see that such a huge amount of yellowish cholesterol can be accumulated in man’s blood vessel due to ‘animal-based diet’, and I changed my diet. I became a vegan for two years. To know something in our head knowledge does not mean we can change our life style. There must be something else that clicks to our mind, and then it can change our life style.

In today’s passage Jesus showed his glory to his three disciples. Why did Jesus show his glory? What does Jesus want from them by showing his glory? What kind of life style does Jesus want them to change by showing his glory? That is what we want to think about today.

Part I. After Jesus said this (v.28-31)

Part II. They saw his glory (v.32-36)

**Part I. After Jesus said this (v.28-31)**

Look at verses 28-31.

**28About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. 29As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. 30Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. 31They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem.**

It was about 8 days after Jesus said this. “This” refers to his previous teaching. Do you remember what we learned from the last Sunday message? In the last Sunday message, after Peter confessed Jesus is God’s Messiah, Jesus taught his disciples that he would suffer and be killed and on the third day be raised to life. He said to them **‘Whoever wants to be my disciples must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it.”** Then in the last two verses this is what he said, **“[26] “Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and his holy angels. [27] Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God.”** So in the previous message there is contrast between ‘whoever wants to be my disciples’ vs ‘whoever is ashamed of me and my words’. Most of all Jesus talked about his coming in his glory and in the glory of the Father. He also said that some will see the kingdom of God before they die. Now in today’s passage he is showing his glory and the kingdom of God to his three disciples. Jesus not only taught his disciples about his suffering and death but also his coming in great glory and power. He also told his disciples that their self-denial and loss of their lives for Jesus will bring salvation of their lives.

Jesus revealed that his suffering and death is the prelude of his glorious resurrection and second coming. It is true that there is no glory of resurrection without suffering and death.

That is why apostle Paul said in **Philippians 3:10-11 “I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.**

When apostle Paul wanted to know the power of Jesus’ resurrection he wanted to ‘becoming like Jesus in his death’. He knows that is the way to attaining to the resurrection from the dead. That is why “becoming like him in his death” became Apostle Paul’s goal.

Now do Jesus’ disciples accept Jesus’ teaching? Did they understand that his death is the way of his resurrection and coming in great glory and power? Did they believe the same power and glory will be given to them when they follow Jesus’ footsteps? Not really.

So what did Jesus do? Jesus wanted to help his disciples to accept his teaching.

First Jesus chose the three top disciples to help them. Humanly speaking it seems discrimination, but we know Jesus does not discriminate anyone. So why did he decide to choose only three? It is because the three trusted Jesus the most, and there is great possibility for them to accept his teaching. It is also probably true that the others will accept his teaching through their influence.

So he chose the three, and went up onto a mountain to pray. “As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightening.” In the bible this is the only time when Jesus was changed. The only time he showed his glory to his disciples. He did not do this even for all other twelve disciples, and he did it only once.

Why did Jesus do so? He did it to teach them that his suffering and death will lead him to resurrection and his coming in great glory and power. He did so to help his disciples to believe that following Jesus’ life style will lead them eternal life and glory of Jesus.

I believe all Christians would confess “Jesus is the God’s Messiah.” But not many accept the truth that the way of the suffering and death is the way to glory.

“As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightening.” Jesus was changed while he was praying.

This shows the power of prayer. We may not be able to see the physical change of us while we are praying. But our inner person can be changed when we pray. Physically I even saw glorious light from the face of msn Isaac Kim from time to time. I did not know what was happening to him in those times, but I could see the glimpse of God’s glorious image from his face.

Prayer is the time to have fellowship with God. As we have fellowship with God we are being changed because of the influence of our Lord.

**2 Corinthians 3:18 “And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”**

While Jesus was praying, then suddenly,two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus.  Why only Moses and Elijah? It is probably because Moses represents the law, and Elijah the prophets. So they represent the law and the prophets which means the whole old testament. They appeared in glorious splendor. Moses died although people could not find his tomb. Elijah did not die because he was taken up to heaven by chariots of fire. But both Moses who was dead, and Elijah who did not die appeared in glorious splendor. Their glorious splendor shows the glory of the kingdom of God. Both of them followed Jesus’ life style. They suffered much for God, but now they appeared in glorious splendor. Indeed their suffering was the way for their glory.

When the kingdom of God comes in power we will also appear in glorious splendor whether we die or not as long as we follow Jesus life style.

What did Moses and Elijah do? They talked with Jesus, and they spoke about Jesus’ departure. “Jesus’ departure” refers to his death. Jesus’ death would be the fulfillment of the law and the prophets written in the old testament. His death would bring the unconditional forgiveness of all men’s sin and eternal salvation of all who believe in him. That is what God had promised in the old testament, and it was about to be fulfilled.

**Part II. They saw his glory (v.32-36)**

Look at verses 32.

**32Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him.**

Why were Peter and his companions very sleepy? Maybe they were tired after coming up onto a mountain. Maybe it was because they did not pray when Jesus prayed. When we do not pray we can be even physically tired too.

Since they were very sleepy what did they do? Probably they dosed. But after dosing for a while they could be widely awake. What did they see when they were fully awake? They saw Jesus’ glory and the two men standing with him.

The glory of Jesus probably refers to the glory of Jesus when he comes again with his kingdom. Jesus who was going to suffer and be killed was not a miserable person. He is the glorious Lord, the Lord of lords, and the king of kings, who will come again in power and glory. Peter, John and James could not see the glory of Jesus in their day to day life. Many times they saw Jesus as an ordinary man being tired and hungry. Indeed Jesus came as a man, and he lived as one of men. He did not perform miracles all the time. He lived as a man among men. But he was not just only a man, he was also God.

**Romans 5:15** reads, **“But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God’s grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!”**

The first one man is Adam, and the second one man is Jesus Christ. Why is the grace and gift of one man, Jesus, greater than the trespass of one man, Adam? The answer is ‘because Jesus is God’. Jesus is not only a man but also God. So what he did brings more influence than that of one man Adam. So the salvation brought through Jesus is more sure thing for us than the inheritance of sin from Adam.

Now Jesus’ glory is the glory of the Creator God. **John 17:5 “And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.”** In his prayer at the last supper table Jesus was praying to the Father to glorify him with the glory he had with the Father before the world began. And today’s glory is just a glimpse of his glory.

Now why did Jesus show his glory to his disciples? It is because he wanted them to know that the glory and reward that follows the life of suffering and death is far greater than the sacrifice. It is true to him, and it is true to all of his disciples.

Let’s suppose you are hired by someone. And if he says, “I will pay you $10,000 a day if you pray one hour a day and read the bible one hour a day” what would you say? You will surely say, “That’s easy, especially with such huge amount of money. To spend two hours is nothing.” It is true that to spend two hours through prayer and bible reading is nothing compared to $10,000 because the reward is far greater than the difficulty of the job. In the same way, it is true that our suffering in the course of serving mission from God is nothing when we compare it with our reward from God.

**2 Corinthians 4:7-18.**

**“7But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. 8We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; 9persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.10We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. 11For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body. 12So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.**

**13It is written: “I believed; therefore I have spoken.” Since we have that same spirit of faith, we also believe and therefore speak, 14because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you to himself. 15All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.**

**16Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. 17For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 18So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.**

Why did Paul experience death of Jesus all the time? It was because he wanted to give life of Jesus to more people.

Mother Barry ended up not marrying in the course of following Jesus. It happened when she denied herself and took up her cross of mission daily. When she accepted sacrifice in order to teach the Bible to Korean college students she bore much fruit. But her personal life of marriage was sacrificed. But no one thinks she is miserable because she could not marry. Rather we all know she is glorious, and her sacrifice for Jesus and Korean college students brought her such glory. In a way we are all debtors of her sacrifice, and the fruit of Jesus’ life is working powerfully among us because she denied herself and took up her cross of mission daily and died everyday.

Her life key verse could be **John 12:24 “Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.**

To teach the bible to our students in campuses and our children at home and make them Jesus’ disciples is our cross. It is not easy, but it comes with glory that far outweighs our troubles and suffering.

We all know how many people we need to talk to to find one person to have a bible study in our campuses. We all know we need to go through many rejections and sometimes humiliation to find one bible student. Who wants to be rejected? Who wants to be humiliated? Who wants to be unwelcomed by others? But to find one bible student is not the end but beginning. To help him or her to grow as Jesus’ disciple is more challenging.

Out of many people who have a bible study a few grow to be Jesus’ disciples. Many could be lost in the middle. When they leave us some of them criticize us with bitterness. So many times we groan inwardly. We may feel that the burden is more than we can bear, and we may want to throw the burden away. Many times we may feel that we are losers because we keep doing what is seemingly losing business.

Indeed Apostle Paul said in **1 Corinthians 15:19 “If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.”** But are we all losers who have to keep doing what is seemingly losing business? Not at all. If teaching the bible is losing business what is gaining business? There will be “no gaining business”. There is nothing more valuable than teaching the word of God because it brings eternal salvation through Jesus. So for this we suffer and our sacrifice is light and momentary compared to the glory that will be revealed to us.

Jesus prepared his disciples to preach the word of God and make disciples of all nations after his death on the cross. And Jesus knew it would not be easy. Jesus knew to make disciples involve their own death, spiritual and even physical death. So he taught them that they must deny themselves and take up their cross. But it was not because he wanted to torture them but because he wanted to share his glory.

**Romans 8:16-18. 16The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.17Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. 18I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.**

The same truth is revealed in  **John 17:23-24.**

**23I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. 24“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.**

Jesus wants his disciples to be with him where he is and to see his glory and share his glory. That is why he commanded them to follow him.

Later Apostle Peter said about his experience in today’s passage in 2 Peter 1:16-18.

**2 Peter 1:16-18**

**16For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17He 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.” 18We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.**

Apostle Peter wanted his people to believe Jesus’ coming again in power and glory. Believers were severely persecuted in his time, and the tradition says Apostle Peter was crucified upside down because he did not think he was worthy to be crucified like Jesus. How could apostle Peter encourage early Christians under fierce persecution to take heart and overcome trials? He did so by reminding them of the glorious coming of Jesus based on his own experience and the Scripture. Now we did not see Jesus’ glory with our physical eyes. But we can see it through the Scriptures. The Bible clearly reveals Jesus will come again with his kingdom in glory and power.

**2 Timothy 4:1-2 “In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: 2Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.**

Now look at verses 33-36.

**33As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter said to him, “Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” (He did not know what he was saying.)**

**34While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and covered them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. 35A voice came from the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.” 36When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone. The disciples kept this to themselves and did not tell anyone at that time what they had seen.**

Peter did not know what he was saying. It means his inner desire was revealed when he said, “Master, it is good for us to be here. He wanted Jesus, Moses and Elijah to stay on the mountain more. He also wanted to stay on the mountain more because it was the place of glory.

But then God spoke in the cloud. In the bible ‘cloud’ can refer to God’s presence.

[**Exodus 19:9**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+19:9&version=NIV)**a**

**The Lord said to Moses, “I am going to come to you in a dense cloud, so that the people will hear me speaking with you and will always put their trust in you.”**

[**Exodus 24:15**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+24:15&version=NIV)**-16**

**When Moses went up on the mountain, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai. For six days the cloud covered the mountain, and on the seventh day the Lord called to Moses from within the cloud.**

The Father wanted Jesus’ disciples to listen to Jesus.

Why did the Father want Jesus’ disciples to listen to him? It is because to listen to someone is hard job.

Why is listening so hard? It is because people only hear what they want to hear. They hear through their own filter. But their filter is biased, and it is full of self-defense, and all kinds of prejudice. So sometimes we are surprised to know our interpretation is so different from each other even when we hear from the same person at the same place.

When Jesus said, “suffering and death and resurrection” his disciples probably only thought about suffering and death. When Jesus said, “whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it” they only thought about ‘losing’ life not paying attention to ‘saving’ life.

Sometimes we accept this kind of focusing on negative sides to reduce pain and suffering. We may think that by remembering pain and suffering in advance we can reduce it. But to our dismay many times it increases our pain and suffering because we established the habit of seeing negative side. What then is the right way to reduce pain and suffering? It is to focus on greater reward. God’s reward is far greater than pain and suffering as we follow Jesus.

Jesus did not say we will be exempted from troubles. But he said our troubles achieve for us the glory that far outweigh them all. That was what happened to Jesus, and that is what is happening, and that is what will happen to us and all who follow Jesus.

In conclusion, why did Jesus show his glory to his disciples? It is because he wanted them to know that Jesus’ death will lead the resurrection and the glorious second coming of Jesus with his kingdom. It is because Jesus wanted them to know that he asked them to follow his life style in order to glorify them. He taught them to follow him so that they can be with him where he is and see his glory and share his glory eternally.

One word: Listening to Jesus leads to glory