

The title for today's message is: **Life is full of Peaks and Valleys**

Mark said: ***And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them,***

Grace and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Today I take this time to remind you of something you know very well. Life! And how Life is full of peaks and valleys.

Now a peak, is something great that happens in your life, you know something to celebrate, and to never forget.

Like the birth of your child, which is a highpoint in your life. Or maybe the day you got married, certainly that's a peak.

And I'm sure you would agree, that during these moments in life, it's easy to ignore God. "Life is good" you think to yourself.

And at those times there's no doubt in your mind, that you have done well for yourself. But life isn't one peak after another.

No, sadly there are the valleys too. The troubles of life. You know those difficult moments like when a loved one dies, now, that's a valley.

Or when you have lost your job, that too is a valley. All of which can cause us to loose our focus on God.

Now, when you're in a valley, it's hard to say, "God is good," and your faith is shaken, shaken hard.

And when in a valley, there's real doubt that God is blessing you, and those

Peaks and valleys, where are you right now? Are you on top of a peak? Or are you at the bottom of a valley? Or, somewhere in between.

Maybe there's a peak, or a valley for you right around the corner, and you don't even know it.

Now, the disciples of Jesus Christ had no idea that they were about to enter a valley.

In fact, they were about to go through a very low-point with Jesus. Yet, things with Jesus seemed to be going so well.

He had performed miracles, such as walking on water, and feeding the 5000 and healing the sick and demon possessed. He was surrounded by crowds of people, listening to His wonderful word.

As for the disciples, there was no doubt that Jesus was the Son of God, the Savior of the world.

The disciples were indeed experiencing one high-point after another, while following Jesus.

But just as it is today, right around the corner loomed the valley of the shadow of death. The crowds would soon turn against Jesus.

He'd be betrayed, arrested, tortured, publicly condemned, and executed in the most shameful way known to man at that time.

The disciples would soon be filled with fear, and doubt. Doubting that Jesus was really the Son of God.

Soon, it would be very difficult to be a disciple of Christ, because a deep, dark valley, was just right around the corner.

And so that's why Jesus takes them to the top of a mountain, and allows them to experience with their own eyes, something truly amazing.

Their allowed to catch a glimpse of His glory, in order to strengthen them for the difficult road ahead.

My friends, today, it's good for us to go on this journey with Peter, James and John, to experience with them, this peak, for two reasons.

First, it prepares us for the coming Lent season. beginning with Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent this coming Wednesday night.

Secondly, it prepares us for the ugly rejection of Jesus, His trial, His beating, His suffering and His death on the cross for all our sins.

Now the next six weeks you and I will walk with Jesus not to the peak of a mountain but into a valley, experiencing the valley of death.

But first, today were going to experience a peak, the greatness of Jesus being transformed (revealing His glory) right before our eyes.

God bless us this day, as we stand on the mountain top with Peter, James and John, witnessing our Lord's glory.

And may our faith be strengthened, for the days ahead, as we prepare for all the different peaks, and valleys in our life. Now, the word "transfigure" means that Jesus' appearance completely changed.

Mark said: ***his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them.***

Now it was at that moment, Jesus revealed His deity. Showing His disciples, that He is without a doubt the true Son of God.

This was done because soon the disciples would see Jesus beaten, bloody dirty, and dying, as a lowly man, not God.

Now Mark continues, saying: ***And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.***

These were two of the greatest prophets in the Old Testament. Once again, this was good for the disciples to see and good for us to see as well.

They probably were talking about Jesus' imminent departure, what an amazing sight to behold.

What a great peak this was for the disciples and for you and I today, in fact it was so great that were told Peter wanted it to last forever.

But Peter wasn't really sure what to say, or what to do, so he said: ***“Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.”***

Now according to Mark, Peter said all this because: ***they were terrified.*** Meaning Peter, James and John, Peter thought he had to say something.

But of course, Peters request wasn't possible. Instead, ***a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, “This is my beloved Son; listen to him.”***

Here, the creator of all things was telling Peter, James and John directly, that Jesus is indeed His Son.

That because of this truth, the disciples, you and I, and all the people of the world need to listen to Jesus.

Even the so called religious leaders would say that no one should listen to this man from Nazareth, Jesus. Because He was a false prophet.

Now, just as quickly as this peak experience began, it ended. Mark said: ***And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only.***

This was a high point or peak for the disciples, as they saw Christ in all His glory, talking to the prophets, and acclaimed by God the Father Himself.

As we enter the Lenten season we too will watch Jesus battle with Satan, and we will see Jesus eventually suffer and die.

Yet, even though Jesus will suffer and die as a criminal, He still is God, our Savior, doing these things, in order to win for us our salvation.

Now, I don't know if you are experiencing a Peak or a valley currently, but I do know right now it is good for us to be here. Because here were reminded of our savior's glory and love.

Every time you and I come here to church, and we hear the Word of God, we then have climbed the mountain just as the disciples did.

And here, you and I see Christ, who has taken our sins away on the cross, and who has risen from the dead.

Its here we catch a glimpse of His glory, even if it's just for a moment. So, right now our morning worship, and the Word of God, is our peak.

And again, it's good for us to be here, because this is where you and I are strengthened for all the peaks, and valleys, that are around the corner.

I read a short story the other day, about a Christian woman who was always bright and cheerful and optimistic, even though she was confined to her room because of an illness.

She lived in an attic apartment on the fifth floor of an old, rundown building. A friend decided to visit her one day and brought along another woman, a person of great wealth.

Since there was no elevator, the two ladies began the long climb upward. When they reached the second floor, the well-to-do woman commented.

"What a dark and filthy place!" Her friend replied, "It's better higher up." When they arrived at the third-floor landing, the remark was made:

"Things look even worse here." Again, the reply: "It's better higher up." Finally they reached the attic level, where they found the bedridden saint of God.

A smile on her face radiated the joy that filled her heart. Although the room was clean and flowers were on the windowsill.

The wealthy visitor could not contain herself about the stark surroundings and blurted out: "It must be very difficult for you to be here like this!"

Without a moment's hesitation the shut-in responded: "It will be better higher up." Right now, she was in a valley, but she was not looking at temporal things.

With her eyes of faith fixed on the eternal, she had found the secret of true satisfaction and contentment.

Where did she get this strength? This perspective? She had been with Jesus in His Word, and she had seen His glory on the mountain top.

May that same glory we have seen here today, transform you and I into a stronger disciple for Jesus. Praise be to God! And all God's people say: Amen, Amen.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship

