

Coming Into Focus: Not What I Signed Up For

Small Group Discussion Guide—3/10/2019

“Even the best laid plans of mice and men often go awry” – Robert Burns. Have you ever been in a situation where you had everything planned out and thought you knew what you were in for, only to find unexpected surprises, outcomes, etc? What happened?

Read Mark 9:1-13

- In verse 1 Jesus claims that some people will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power. What did He mean by that?
- After hearing Jesus predict his death, the story doesn't pick up for six days – almost a week! What do you imagine the disciples were thinking during this time? What might some of their conversations have been like?
 - Have you ever received some shocking news, and then felt like God was silent for a time? How can this passage encourage you in those situations?
- Why do you think Jesus only took Peter, James, and John with Him up the mountain?
- After nearly a week of gloom – since hearing about Jesus's impending death – three disciples get to see the true, unveiled, beautiful, glorious nature of Jesus.
 - What's the most beautiful thing you've ever seen in your life? How does it shape your view of Heaven?
 - How do you think the disciples were changed by seeing the transfiguration?
 - What are they thinking now? Do you think they still have any doubts about following Jesus?
 - If you answered yes, you've felt God's distance before, did He stay away forever? Or did you eventually encounter Him? If so, how did this impact your doubts or questions?
- What allusions to Old Testament stories do you see in this event? How would they have shaped the first disciples' perception of what happened?
- God says “This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!” What did this message mean to the disciples back then? What does it mean for us today?
- Have you ever had to keep a big secret? It couldn't have been easy for the disciples to keep quiet about their experience!
- What about the other 9 disciples who didn't get to see the Transfiguration – do you think they were swayed into continuing to follow Jesus just by seeing the 3's renewed faith in Jesus, even though they may not have heard about the transfiguration until later?
- Pastor Josh claimed that God sometimes gives us “mountaintop experiences” as a taste of what he's preparing for us in eternity. Have you ever had one of these? How did the experience help you after it was over?

Application

- What do we learn in this passage about God's reception of our questions and doubts? Does he shy away from them, lean in to them, etc.?
- Are there any areas of your life where you are struggling to continue following Jesus? Are there any situations where you feel God has been silent?
- How does this passage impact your hopes for your heavenly future?

Pray as a group and for one another. May the hope of God's eternal glory sustain you through any hard or difficult times you are facing.