

Putting the Pieces Together
Mark 9:9-13

We're going to be back in Mark's gospel today, this morning, and if you recall, we've been at somewhat of a peak or a climax of the gospel right here in the middle where there's been some very heavy statements that have come out, some very strong statements and very clear statements about who Christ is, what He's come to do, and what it means to actually follow after Him. In fact, really, we kind of are at the mountain peak in a very kind of literary and literal sense as you just remember in the beginning of Mark 9, the transfiguration where Jesus took with Him (not all the disciples but only a few, the inner three) Peter, James, and John up onto the mountain to see His glory, to get this glimpse, this preview of the kingdom in the glorified Son, Jesus Christ.

If you think about it, it's been basically a roller coaster. I mean, if you just kind of scan back and look at things and how it's gone, just as, you know, as far back to Mark 8:29 in there where Jesus is asking the disciples, "But who do you say that I am?", and Peter says a wonderful and correct answer. That is a very clarifying moment in Mark's gospel. Who is Jesus? He's the Messiah. Just like Mark said at the very beginning in verse 1, we have it now (in the middle of the gospel) clearly stated. He is the Messiah. No questions - no wondering (Alright?) - no guessing - but factual propositional truth that He is the Messiah. And then that followed immediately by, if you just scan down a little further in Mark 8, where Jesus was telling them about how His work was to suffer and to die, after this wonderful and clarifying statement of Him being the Messiah, the One that God has chosen to come to this earth and to be His representative, and now He's going to die and suffer, so much so that Peter has to try and convince Jesus, no, no, don't do this. And then that, so you kind of have this high point going to a low point that gets even lower so to speak when Jesus says and if you want to continue to follow Me, if you really want to be My disciple, you too must suffer. You too must take up your cross, deny yourself and even be willing to die for me.

And then, what we covered last time when we were in Mark, the glorious preview of the kingdom when Jesus takes these three men up on the mountain to see all of His brilliance shining before them, Moses and Elijah bearing witness to this moment, and even God the Father booming His voice

saying, “This is My beloved Son...” Alright? The roller coaster goes back up, and it’s another high point. Right? This is kind of up and down up and down for the disciples as they’re witnessing all this and trying to, really, trying to process it (Right?), trying to kind of take it all in and get their arms around it somehow. And that’s what we find this morning, more of that, more of trying to take these different pieces that are being given to them and put them together. How do you even do that? And that’s what we find as we are coming down off of the mountain, and we’re still in this closed conversation with not all the disciples, but still only Jesus and Peter, James, and John.

So, let’s look at our text this morning, Mark 9:9-13, as they continue to try to put the pieces together here; “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.’ ” This conversation, this closed conversation that you just kind of have to try and put yourself there. Right? Yet it’s really hard to fully grasp what an event like the transfiguration was really like, but we try to do our best from what little detail Mark gave us and even the other gospels; but that had to have been an impactful moment, to be on the mountain, to get blinded by the light, to see some of your childhood heroes (thinking of Moses and Elijah), to hear the booming and deafening voice of God, that’s an amazing moment for someone to experience that. So, Peter, James, and John all trying to still work through what they just witnessed as they’re walking down the mountain after the event, pinching themselves. Did that actually happen? Was that real right now? Right, just trying to make sure. Hey, slap me in the face. Wake me up. Is this a dream? What’s going on here? Right? They’re still trying to process that glorious event they just saw, and witnessed.

And in the midst of that, this being on a high, of thinking of everything they just witnessed and experienced, we start off our text in verse 9 with kind of another roller coaster dip so to speak with this prohibition that Jesus gives - this prohibition that comes in verse 9; “And as they were coming down the

mountain, he charged them to tell no one what they had seen...” So, to break this down, at first it’s a charge. Part of this prohibition is a strong warning almost, a strict way, a strictly, strong way and almost more forceful way of talking; “And as they were coming down the mountain, he charged them to tell no one what they had seen...” And you think, wow, that’s a bummer. Peter, James, and John, just, I mean, incredibly privileged to be here to see what happened on the mountain, and now as they’re going down, oh, by the way keep your lips sealed. You can’t tell a soul. Ahh, man! Really? We can’t tell anyone about all the details of what we just witnessed? It really seems like it’d be helpful to be able to go to some people and say, guess what? If you’re on the fence about this guy, don’t worry. He’s the real deal. I can tell you about what I saw up on the mountain. Right? You can trust Him. He is the Messiah. And let me just tell you the story, and Jesus says no. Don’t tell anyone that story. Don’t speak of this. Don’t speak of this moment.

They had this brilliant preview, glimpse, of the kingdom, and they can’t say anything about it. He charges them to tell no one about what they had seen. So, we have to ask this question, why? I mean, why would Jesus do this? Why would He once again throw out this kind of command that we’ve seen before in a similar fashion when He’s healed other people and He’s afterwards told them don’t tell anyone? He heals them whatever their disease is or cast a demon out of them, and He says don’t tell anyone. And now we have something very similar here. They get this wonderful privilege of witnessing Him in the transfiguration, and He says don’t tell anyone. Why? Why is Jesus doing this? Because we know that if He really wanted to just completely seal their lips so they couldn’t talk at all, He could. That’s not hard for God. He could do that. I mean, He did that with the demons. Right? Whenever the demons starting talking and Jesus would cast them out and He would tell them to shut up, they would shut up. But other times, when the paralytic or other people were healed and He told them not to talk, they would still talk, and He wouldn’t shut them up. He would let them talk, but still, He would give this as we’ve seen multiple times, and now once again, don’t talk about this. Don’t tell people about this in a general sense. Why? Maybe the next phrase helps us in verse 9.

Look at the next phrase that we get at the end of verse 9, the concession, the concession that comes; “...he charged them to tell no one what they had seen, until [until] the Son of Man had risen from the dead.” There’s a key

word there, “until.” Right? There’s a time now given to this. It’s not just this is your secret little exposure and event, and you don’t get to tell anyone about this. It’s your secret that you can’t tell anyone. No. It eventually will have a time where it can be made known, and that’s the time when He says, “...the Son of Man...” referring to Himself, another term for the Messiah that comes from Daniel 7; “...until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.” That’s when you can actually talk about this. There will be a time when you can speak about this. So, we still try to hunt down and understand why. Okay? So, now why that? So they can talk about it, just not for this temporal period, not for this time until the Son of Man dies and then rises again. And, you know, different people try to conjecture, and they give their thoughts as to what’s going on here. As we’ve kind of already talked about, some people think that, oh, God’s just trying to really keep things under control and make sure that things don’t go out of hand down there on earth, and so we’ve got to make sure people don’t talk too much about all this before it actually happens. and that’s not the case because if God really wanted to control things, then He would just tell someone they can’t talk, and they would never be able to speak about it, just like He did with the demons.

So, it’s not much God just trying to keep things under control in a general sense and hoping that people cooperate with His plan - it’s not that. It’s actually greater. And more than likely, what’s going on here is Jesus doesn’t want them preaching without the full message and understanding. Peter, James, and John at this point, they could think I don’t need to see anything else. I don’t need to hear anything else. I’m ready to go to any town. I want to go straight down to Jerusalem, I’m going to go to the temple. I’m going to go and tell everyone you would not believe what I’ve seen. You would not believe who I’ve seen. He is the One. There’s no question anymore. Let me tell you this story. And Jesus doesn’t want that. He’s saying you could go and do that, but you don’t have the full message. You don’t have the full understanding. While that is great and other people could’ve done this at different points in Jesus’ ministry; they could go out and they could talk about what a great miracle worker He was, and just, man, tell people! I’m going to go spread this good news, and it is good news, no doubt. In the same way, so would this be to tell people we’ve found the King. We’ve found the One who actually has the glory and the power to bring in the kingdom. That is great news, but it’s incomplete. It’s not the full story. It’s not the full picture, and so Jesus says you need to wait. You need to wait until you’ve seen My finished work on the cross, until I have actually done

what I've come to do on this earth - go to the cross, pay that price of the sin of mankind with My blood being shed and then rising again. Then you can start telling people because then you'll have the whole picture.

Have you ever, like, been in the situation or experience when someone tries to talk about something when they really don't know that much about it? Alright. It's kind of pathetic. Right? When they actually try to... well, let me give you this story, and they start to go off, and then you realize you don't know what you're talking about. You know, maybe, half the details if that. Right? Or, just even some of the teachers I had, I felt bad for them at some point. And in high school, I'd think, okay, you are our AP chemistry teacher. What do you know about chemistry? And it would just take a week until a kid was up there basically teaching. Okay, the teacher sat down. And the teacher doesn't know what they're trying to do. They don't even know. They weren't ready. They weren't ready to be put in that position to actually teach. They don't have the full knowledge, the full story, to be able to actually explain in the way that is proper and fitting. Same too with the disciples, they're not there yet.

Yes, they've seen some incredible things. There's a lot that they could talk about. There's a lot that they could preach and proclaim, but Jesus says wait. Hold on. You haven't seen the greatest yet. You really need to stick around, and you really need to see the work of the cross that He's going to complete; then you can go out, and then you can start telling people about this. And more than likely, this is also a reason why He's telling other people to be quiet when He heals them. He's saying sure, you could go out and keep telling people in Galilee that I did yet another miracle, but there's more. So, why don't you wait and see what that more is? He wants the true and full, good news message, the full message of the gospel to go forth, and isn't that exactly what He does at the end of basically every gospel? When you look at Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, you basically see that at the end, He goes now you can go. Right? Now that I am back from the dead, you saw the work of the cross, and here you now see Me, the resurrected King. Now, go and tell people what you've seen. Now, be my witnesses because if you would've gone earlier, you wouldn't have had the full story of what has just taken place. So, in a real sense, the disciples are ill-equipped to preach in a very real sense. Yeah, they could preach like they went out earlier and just talked about repentance, for the kingdom of heaven is near. They could preach that message. The message of repentance was fine, but there was,

regarding Christ, so much more to be seen, and for them to at least experience, see, witness-to, and then be further equipped and ready to show that. They're ill-equipped. So, Jesus tells them to not talk about this.

And here we are two thousand years later, and we kind of use this as almost an excuse for us. I'm ill-equipped, can't really talk about the good news. I'm just not ready to answer every single question that might come up if I were to actually start talking about the Bible and things like that. We kind of want to substitute ourselves here in the story, like, look! Yeah, Jesus said I can't preach yet. That's not the case because the reality is we're in a much different situation than Peter, James, and John were. The reality is, as we all know, we have the completed Word of God in front of us. We do have the whole story right in front of us. We actually have God's own presence, the Holy Spirit, guiding us, helping us to understand this and giving us strength and power and ability to speak and to go forward and be His messengers. We actually have commands from the rest of the Word of God telling us to do this. So, for us to try and make excuses is actually to go against the Word of God, what He's commanded us. Some of us, unfortunately, would make good disciples in this manner. We want to justify our passive approach as time needed to learn more, and then we'll be ready at that some nebulous date in the future, and it's just an excuse, and it's wrong. The fact is we're not in this situation that they're in. We're actually in a blessed situation where we have the whole picture. And what a wonderful situation that is because we can get in the game. We don't have to hesitate and wait, and what else is God doing here? What's going to happen next? We've got it all. It's right here, we're good. I mean, after we're done looking at our time even while I'm talking right now, you could read the rest of Mark, and, oh, yeah, I know the story now. Right? You know it. You're good to go. Get in the game. Engage. Don't be passive. Don't sit on the sideline. Don't hesitate. Now's the time to engage. We are in such a privileged position that we can do that. So, let us take that responsibility and that privilege seriously and engage. Get in it because we can.

The disciples were in a time of great change and transition. They've heard a lot from the scribes, the Pharisees that were teaching them, but they're, just every day, seeing new things from Jesus and hearing new things. There's a lot changing for them, a lot of dynamic kind of events taking place, so they have to process it all. And that's what our next two verses show, them processing all this. In verses 10-11, we have the pondering - the pondering

of verses 10-11, them trying to work through everything that they've been exposed to and have recently heard. Verse 10-11 and a little bit into verse 12; "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.'" There's a couple questions that come up here. The first comes up in verse 10 here, and it's the question of resurrection - the question of resurrection that we see. As you see initially in verse 10; "...they kept the matter to themselves..." They actually obey. They listen, unlike other people in the gospels that have said, ah, you know, whatever You think Jesus, that's fine, I'm going to go tell people though anyway, even though You're telling me not to. These three, Peter, James, and John, are keeping "...the matter to themselves..." and actually only discussing it with themselves.

But as the verse goes on, they're "...questioning what this rising from the dead might mean." This is what's getting them hung up. This is what they're trying to understand. Right? I mean, and rightfully so because they just had one of the most glorious experiences a human could probably have in the flesh on this earth after seeing Jesus in the transfiguration, and then they're getting told to not only be quiet and not talk about it, but to wait until the time when Jesus has to die. And those things are just very different, glory, brilliance, God the Father affirming the Son and the kingdom and the power - and then Jesus dying and coming back to life. It's so different in their minds, and so they're trying to understand this. Why has Jesus told us this, and what is He even talking about?

I mean, you're trying to think about how they're discussing this, and you can almost imagine the conversation a little bit between the three of them. Right? Peter grumbles, "There He goes again talking about death and resurrection." James adds, "Yeah, I'm confused. He's raised other people from the dead. Why would He need to raise Himself? That doesn't make any sense." John chimes in, "Unless of course, He means that we need only wait until the resurrection of the saints, generally speaking, from the dead in the end when He inevitably starts the kingdom. That could be any moment." James reminds his brother, "But He didn't say the general resurrection of the saints in the end, He said until the Son of Man, the Messiah, had risen from the dead." Peter confirms, "Your brother's right, John. He was clearly talking about His own death and resurrection, which still doesn't make any sense. Someone needs to talk to Him." John answers, "Sure Peter. Let's confront

Jesus after it turned out so wonderfully for you. I personally don't feel like getting called Satan today." James agrees, "Me neither. I just don't understand why He would show us such glory and then talk about suffering and death." This is hard for them. I mean, it's easy for us to look back on this and read a text like this, but it's hard for them. This is, you know, just moments away from seeing glory, and now they're getting reminded again of Jesus' death. This isn't easy to process, and so, how do they put it all together? What is Jesus talking about, and where does it fit in the timeline of what they've known and what they've been taught? This is difficult. I mean, for the disciples, it's like Jesus is being a downer again. You know, here's another great moment, and then Jesus comes in to talk about the reality of suffering. Great. This doesn't fit with their vision of glory that they just received. It's not what they want to hear.

The disciples in their discomfort with Jesus' death, it leads to a curious and a clever question that they actually come up with here. We see a new question raised here that comes out in verse 11, and it's about Elijah and restoration, the question of restoration in verse 11. And it's clever because they're actually paying attention to what they've been taught and what the Old Testament speaks about, and they bring this up in a legitimate fashion; "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.'" So, this is their question, a question about Elijah coming first. How does this work? How does this fit in? After focusing upon Christ rising from the dead and His death before that, the disciples come up with this question; and it revolves around what they've been taught, what they've been taught from the Scriptures, what they've been taught from the prophets in the Word of God. It's on this idea of a future ministry of Elijah. You think, Elijah was a prophet in the time of the Old Testament in the time of Kings. This is a little odd here to now talk about a future ministry of Elijah, but it's not something that just the scribes have made up or that people randomly talked about. It's actually something that is definitely coming from the Old Testament here.

Really, just go to the end of the Old Testament. If you were to go to the last verses that you have in the Old Testament, right before Matthew starts in the New, you've got this in Malachi 4:5-6; "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction." So

they have this in mind, and they're thinking there's this prophecy and we've been taught about this prophecy, that Elijah will come and will actually do a work among the people of restoration (right?), returning them to one another, repentance even that takes place. How does this fit in. Where does this fit in? Is this just not happening anymore? What's going on with this? And Jesus has to answer them, and He actually does in the affirmative; "And he said to them, 'Elijah does come first to restore all things.' " It's true. Jesus isn't going to say, oh, yeah, well, what Malachi said was a little wrong right there. Or, yeah, that was just for a time, but, really, we kind of changed our plan. We're doing a different approach here so don't worry about that anymore. No. He affirms it. It's true; Elijah does in fact come first to restore all things. Elijah actually will do this. God's plan is still in place. God's Word is still true. God's promises, they're faithful, and they're going to come to pass. It's true.

But now you can imagine where the disciples' confusion is. So, how does this work of Elijah, a prophet coming to the people of God and restoring them, actually bringing repentance - that sounds like a good thing spiritually speaking. But then, the Messiah's going to come and die - that sounds like a bad thing spiritually speaking. How do these things work together if Elijah comes and gets all the people ready, and then the Messiah comes and gets killed by the people? Sounds like we have something that's at odds. These things don't go together. So, how does the death of Jesus and the restoring ministry of Elijah work together? And this is what Jesus has to resolve for them, and He does. This apparent dilemma gets resolved through this parallel that He gives in verse 12-13. A parallel, there's a parallel in verses 12-13. Our verses state, starting again from the beginning of verse 12; "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.' " Jesus has to address this in a parallel fashion and talking about two different people.

The first that we see in verse 12 is the suffering Son - the suffering Son or Messiah or "...the Son of Man..." as the term that He likes to use often. After addressing and acknowledging that what is written of Elijah is still true and will in fact take place in the future, He then says, what about this other portion of the Old Testament? "And how is it written of the Son of Man that he should suffer many things and be treated with contempt?" Perhaps a not

as popular and well-known portion of the Old Testament, maybe parts of the Old Testament that aren't quoted as often in reference to the Messiah, the parts about suffering. How does this fit in there? This is another piece of the puzzle that needs to be considered that Jesus is trying to help him see. This is what has been written. You see, if we look back, we've already been exposed to this concept of a suffering Messiah, just back in chapter 8:31. That was where we saw Jesus saying that "...the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed..." And Mark 8:32, he tells us, "And he said this plainly." So, that was the first time we really saw Jesus plainly telling His disciples I'm going to die - I'm going to suffer and die. Now, He's saying it again, but this time, He kind of brings in some more support with Him. How? He quotes the Old Testament. He's alluding to the Old Testament, and what about other parts of the Old Testament where it's written about my suffering?

Now it becomes even more prominent. It becomes even more really pressing upon the disciples to deal with this concept. It's not just something Jesus said and kind of invented. This is something that God wrote and told the people to expect, a suffering Messiah. This is what needs to take place. This is what will take place; so therefore, the dilemma and the problem kind of become more exposed by what Jesus says. You think, that didn't really resolve it. That kind of actually highlighted it. Right? We had the Malachi passage that talks about the people being restored by Elijah, and then you have passages like Isaiah 53:2 and Psalm 22 that talk about the Messiah and how He's going to suffer, and He's going to die. He's going to be actually rejected by the people. And we're still left by this dilemma, how do these things go together? How do you have a prophet coming, preparing the people for the Lord, and then the Lord coming and getting killed by those people? These things do not work together. This is the problem. Jesus just exposes the problem even more.

Jesus has to resolve this, and really before we see how He does resolve it, we really have in our shoes, in our time, we have with the completed Word of God a way to see what's happening here and what Jesus is really alluding to, and as far as we understand, the whole of Scripture. It's this concept of how the Old Testament prophets spoke of what they saw when God gave them revelation. When God showed them what He would do, the prophets would write it down, as they should've done and in obedient fashion and give it to

the people. But what they might not have known or necessarily what the people didn't know is that when they were talking about, like, the Messiah to come, they might've been describing Him in different ways, not realizing that there's different times when the Messiah comes to this earth. You and I know this now because we can look back on the first coming, and we still await the second coming with joy. They didn't know this. They had no concept of that. So, the prophet looks out and he just sees these mountain peaks, and he describes them all or he sees these descriptions of the Messiah, and he writes them all down not realizing there's time in between them. This happens often in the Old Testament. So, what Jesus is getting at is really this same idea. He's saying so you just saw Me up on the mountain in My glory and the promise of the kingdom, and yet here I am telling you that the Old Testament describes that I will suffer and die. How does that work together? And it's this concept because we know we can look back on the first coming of Christ and what the intention was, that He would come, that He would suffer, that He would die and pay the price, the penalty of our sin. But we await that second coming like all these prophecies that describe about Him coming as the King, victorious, ruling the nations, a wonderful time that will be as well. This is what Jesus is getting at.

This is not the easiest thing for the disciples to probably receive right on the spot. Right? This isn't something that they're, you know, thinking, oh, I get it now. Okay, this is making a lot of sense. Alright? This is something that just continues to pound at them, and go I am confused. When I thought Messiah, I kind of thought one thing, and now you're starting to give me two things, and this is really, really hard for me to understand. So, Jesus has to still resolve their question about Elijah, and how to do that. He's described what they know now about the Son, about the Messiah, that He will come and suffer, but at the same time, He will come and reign. So, what about Elijah? In the same way, he is a suffering seer or prophet. Elijah is a suffering seer or a prophet. In verse 13 we read, "But I tell you that Elijah has come, and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written of him." Jesus states this definitively and clearly. This is not a guess. This is not a maybe. He's stating that Elijah has come. It's a fact. It happened. So, what is this referring to? We actually... you might even have guesses, but we get even more help from Matthew's account and how he describes this conversation Matthew 17:12-13 " 'But I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they pleased.

So also the Son of Man will certainly suffer at their hands.’ Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist.”

So, this isn’t too surprising to us when we think about the ministry of John the Baptist. It was not a light ministry. It was a radical ministry of what he did. Alright? The guy dressed like Elijah for crying out loud. Right? He dressed like him. He was trying to, hello! People! I’m Elijah. I’m trying to look like him. And then the message he proclaimed was one of repentance, trying to return the people, restore the people, get right with God, so that you can be prepared and ready for your king to come. This is exactly what John the Baptist was doing, very much like Elijah in the spirit and the power of Elijah as we read elsewhere in the gospels. But even though John the Baptist did this - he dressed like Elijah - he preached like him - calling the nation to repent and return to Yahweh - we know the end of the story. Is that what happened? No. The people rejected him to the point that he eventually gets arrested, and he’s in prison. And as we saw back in Mark 6, he gets beheaded because of the Herod family. John the Baptist was not one who came and restored the people and brought the glorious kind of preparation for the King, the Son of Man, to come. Instead, he suffered and died. That’s what took place. That’s the parallel.

Jesus goes on to say, “...as it is written of him.” This is exactly, kind of, the ministry that Elijah had in the Old Testament. If you were to look at Elijah’s ministry, there’s a picture, an illustration of what John the Baptist experienced. Elijah called Israel to turn away from Baal and idol worship, to turn back to Yahweh. And John the Baptist went out in the wilderness and called Israel to repent and turn from her sin. Elijah was threatened and persecuted by Jezebel the evil queen of Ahab. John the Baptist was imprisoned by Herod and killed on behalf of Herodias and that scandalous account as we saw. John the Baptist definitely doing his ministry in the spirit and power of Elijah when he came; John the Baptist unfortunately suffering, being persecuted and dying. As Jesus says, “...they did to him whatever they pleased.” And how that parallels, the Son of Man suffering, being despised and rejected. If this is what happened to John the Baptist, how much more so has it happened to Jesus in His destiny. Not only is He following the example of the Elijah before Him, of John the Baptist, how he would suffer and die, Jesus, too, now will suffer and die, but He’s also submitting Himself to God in obedience and what the Scriptures teach, the truth that

was prophesized that the Messiah would come, suffer and die for the sake of the people.

See, Christ had to come first to offer Himself for the sins of many. It's what He had to do, and He's trying to explain it to these people that are not only slow to learn and understand because they're humans, but they've just been taught so differently. They've been so obsessed with the concept of a reigning and conquering King, to wrap their arms around the idea of a suffering servant, it's so difficult - not one that they're easily and readily willing to accept. But we can rejoice and praise God. As we sit in this valley in between, we can look back on the first coming of Christ and rejoice knowing what is accomplished. We're so privileged to be here. We have great blessing showered upon us because we can look back on the events of Christ and His life, and we're not confused, but we're completely confident, and we're thankful for what took place. Christ not only living a perfect life of obedience to His Father, but also being a substitute that you need, that I need, to go on the cross, to experience the fury and the wrath of God who is just and almighty. We can celebrate and rejoice that because we have grace extended to us, we have forgiveness, sins washed away, removed from us as far as the east is from the west, thrown into the bottom of the ocean. What a wonderful blessing we have, and we know this, we can look back on this and not be confused but thankful for the work of Christ.