

January 16, 2021

7. Beholding God's Beloved Son — **Mark 9:2-8, NRSV**

The Southern Baptist church I attended growing up emphasized the importance of the Bible. We used to play a game called Sword Drill. The Sunday school teacher would call out a Bible verse, and all the kids would race to find it in their Bibles. We would even win prizes for finding the correct verse the fastest. I was great at this game. I learned the order of the books of the Bible and memorized such Bible verses as John 3:16 and Philippians 4:13.

The idea was that somehow, by memorizing more Bible verses, we could be ready to give a defense for the gospel at any moment. I was ready for every argument. I knew how a person became saved. I knew what sins were and how Christ died for mine. My big problem, however, was that I paid so much attention to the text that I forgot to pay attention to Jesus.

The story of the transfiguration in Mark's gospel points us toward Jesus and Jesus only. As Michael Pahl mentions in this study, we interpret Scripture through Jesus. We discern God's will for our lives through the life and teachings of Jesus. Some would argue that in doing so we somehow show disrespect to the Bible. The truth is that by focusing on Jesus we elevate the Bible to its appropriate place. We acknowledge and honor both as the Word of God.

The Bible has been and is often used to harm people. I have heard countless stories about people who have left the church due to the Bible being used in discriminating ways. The Bible has been used to justify slavery, hate against the LGBTQ community, and hate against women. When we encounter conflicting messages from different biblical texts, remembering that Jesus must be the lens through which we engage with the Bible is important.

Consider these questions as you study Mark 9:2–8 and the session for this week:

- How have you engaged with the Bible throughout your life?
- How have you used the Bible to justify something that you now see as wrong?
- How have you been changed by looking toward Jesus?

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Resources for this session

Looking for participant guide page numbers in the leader guide? The page numbers in the leader guide work for both guides.

Salt & Light Videos

Jennifer Davis Sensenig is the presenter for Unit 2, Participating with God in Awe. These teaching videos are great for leader preparation or introducing each weekly session. The videos are free and available on [MennoMedia's YouTube channel](#).