

Help My Unbelief

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 10 September 2023

Preacher: Cory Brock

[0 : 00] Last week we started back the Gospel of Mark, so we spent all of the spring semester, and this is now our 23rd look at the Gospel of Mark.

So part two in this autumn season. Remember from the very beginning of Mark's Gospel, Mark says that his Gospel is the beginning of the Gospel. He's telling us about the history of Jesus Christ, and there's no birth narrative.

He jumps right into it. He skips the first 30 years or so, and we get instead the shortest Gospel, the most action-packed Gospel, likely the earliest Gospel.

And so Mark's giving us a very direct look at some of the most important moments of Jesus' ministry as he looks to go to the cross. Last week, Derek looked at the Transfiguration story, and that story is one of the climaxes of Mark's Gospel.

Jesus goes up the mountain, and he takes Peter, James, and John with him, and his glory is unveiled. His glory is revealed. And Elijah and Moses from the Old Testament show up as witnesses, along with Peter, James, and John, and they worship him.

[1 : 12] And you can remember in the Old Testament that Moses was on Mount Sinai. He went up Mount Sinai, and the glory cloud of the Lord came down. In the Old Testament, that's called the Shekinah glory of God, and then Elijah went up a mountain too.

He went up Mount Carmel, and the fire of the Lord came down. The glory of God and fire came down. And here in the New Testament, there's a new mountain, and Elijah and Moses are both there, and there's a new message, and that's that the glory has come down again.

In the Old Testament, it was the glory cloud or the fire, and now it's Jesus himself. He's the glory. He's the glory of God. He's the glory of God come down. Jesus deserves to be worshiped.

That's really the big idea there. Now this week, Jesus, Peter, James, and John come down the mountain. So they were up the mountain. It was glorious. They come down the mountain, and it's not.

It's not glorious. That's really what this passage is all about. What happens when you come down the mountain? We'll see two things, two lessons. This is what happens.

[2 : 18] You realize the importance of worship, and then secondly, you realize the importance of weakness for worship. So let's think about that together.

First the importance of worship. Peter, James, and John and Jesus come down the mountain. They've seen the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ. Now, can you imagine that? That is a life-changing experience, needless to say. It's why we call it the mountaintop experiences. They literally had a mountaintop experience.

They saw the glory of God unveiled. It changed their lives. They would never be the same after that. Now maybe you've had something like that in your life. You've had moments where in worship or in some context of life where the glory of God and the love of God for you became so real, you didn't just believe it, you could sense it.

You could taste it. It became palpable to you. And you might talk about that as some kind of mountaintop experience or something like that. A spiritual awakening, this moment of great renewal in your life where the fire really came down and you could really sense God's love for you.

[3 : 37] The theologians of the past have called that experiential religion, moments of experiential religion where you really do experience God's love and you can taste and see it in a new way.

Then you come down and what happens when you have something like that and then you come and hang out with everybody else, you immediately realize that people are kind of the same as you left them.

You went away and you had this moment where God's love became so real that you could taste it. And then you come back to reality and everybody is still annoyed and bitter and frustrated and mad and arguing.

Jesus Christ, Peter, James and John, they go up the mountain, they have a mountaintop experience. The love of God becomes so real to them. They see the glory in the face of Jesus Christ. They come down the mountain and what do you find?

If you look at verse 14, they come down and there's a great crowd in all the different factions of the religious people at the time are arguing with each other.

[4 : 40] There's a demon. Everybody's mad. The disciples we find out at the end of the passage have no faith. Jesus comes to them and says, you're a faithless bunch, you're a faithless generation.

And so you go and you have a mountaintop experience, then you come back down again and the world is kind of how you left it. Very little faith. Everybody's arguing with each other. People are bitter, upset, angry, mad and all the religious people who are supposed to be agreeing are all in factions.

And that's exactly what happens in this patches. Now if you just back up just a tiny bit to the end of last week's passage that Derek read from, verses 12 and following, 12 and 13, when Peter, James and John were coming down the mountain with Jesus, they said, everybody is saying that for the Messiah to truly come first, Elijah has to come.

That's a prophecy. Elijah has to come. Jesus says, well, Elijah already did come and Elijah, the new Elijah is John the Baptist.

And he said, and they did to him whatever they wanted to do. They beheaded him. They killed him. So a new Elijah has already come. You remember the two people on the mountain, Elijah and Moses.

[5 : 54] And so Mark has been building a case, we've talked about this throughout this gospel, that Jesus Christ has come to be to appear as the new Moses.

He's come to be a greater Moses in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew and Luke. He goes up the mountain and he gives the law. Like it's the Ten Commandments all over again. He's the new Moses. He's the mediator of God's people like Moses was on top of Mount Sinai.

You see, they said, for the Messiah to come, there has to be a new Elijah. And Jesus says, there has been John the Baptist. But where's the new Moses? And the answer that Mark's been giving us is Jesus Christ is the new Moses.

He's the new mediator. There's a new Elijah. There's a new Moses. Now, why does that matter? Because when Moses was up on Mount Sinai, remember, he received the Ten Commandments. He came down back into the valley. And what did he find? You know, Moses had a mountain type experience. He saw the glory of God. His face was actually shining.

[6 : 52] And he came back down the mountain and there was the religious people all in faction arguing with each other. There was a demon, the golden calf in their midst.

You see, when Moses came down, he looked out and said, oh, faithless generation of Israel. When Jesus comes down the mountain, he says, oh, faithless generation of disciples. Jesus is the new Moses.

He's come back down to the same exact situation as when Moses came down from the mountain in the Old Testament and happened upon this golden calf. They said, you know, we had a problem. We had a demon come in our midst and we didn't know what to do about it. So we made our own way. And the Israelites in the Old Testament said, you know, we had a problem. You left. We didn't know how to get to God.

So we made a golden calf to be our new mediator. It's the same exact situation all over again. Jesus comes down like the new Moses, finds his disciples failing in the exact same ways as the Israelites had failed in the Old Testament.

[7 : 51] And you're meant to see, you're meant to look at this passage and say, the disciples are ultimately failures. Jesus goes up to have his glory unveiled, the disciples who are left behind forget about him.

Now, three lessons. What does that matter for you? Three lessons. You could take these things from each of the perspectives of the different characters that show up in the story.

First, imagine being Peter, James and John. Peter, James and John, they've been up on the mountain of transfiguration. They've seen the glory of Jesus unveiled. Their hearts are on fire. They've never had an experience like this before. The first thing we learn, I think, in these two stories combined is that there is a reality. There is a reality and a possibility for real gospel renewal where you really do have moments in your life where God changes your heart or brings you back by showing you how palpable and real God's love is for you.

[9 : 03] There really are mountaintop experiences. Some of you can tell stories from your own life about that where you can say, these moments of renewal are the moments I remember where God showed up and where God changed my heart and changed my life.

When I was wandering away and I was struggling, I came to worship. I came to this conversation. I came to scripture. It was as if the love of Jesus Christ became real for me again. I not only believed it by faith, but I sensed it. I tasted it. I touched it. There really are these moments in life. There are these mountaintop experiences.

Where does it take place most often? In this passage, it takes place when they're on the mountain. That means that where does this happen? It happens in worship because the New Testament over and over again is trying to give you a sense that coming to worship with God's people is like coming to the mountain of the living God.

It's like approaching the holy mountain. When you come to worship, you come with the possibility that God will show up and change you and change your life.

[10 : 15] Now the question today is, do you believe that? Do you believe that when you come to worship with God's people, that God wants to come and change your heart and change your life and give you gospel spiritual renewal, set you on fire, turn you upside down?

Do you believe that? Even more, are you looking for that? Are you looking for that? Let me ask you this. Do you struggle with this? Like me, do you come to St. Columbus on Sundays, if that's your regular thing, because this is where you go to church?

Because you come to St. Columbus on Sundays, or do you come here to meet with God's people so that you can encounter the living God? Do you prepare in that way?

Do you come and say, I'm coming to meet the Lord today. I'm coming to sit in the presence of God. I want to be changed. So if you're struggling this morning, like so many of us, it seasons in our path as Christians.

If you're struggling and you say, I'm stale, I don't feel spiritual renewal, I don't feel gospel renewal, have you come to approach and encounter the living God today?

[11 : 28] Is that what you've come, is that what you're awakened to? Is that the purpose of you being here? The mountaintop experience really is possible. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 3, he says it like this, we now, after Jesus, we all can have unveiled faces.

Remember Moses went up the mountain, he had to veil his face. He couldn't see the fullness of God's glory. But he says now, as a Christian, you can have an unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord and being transformed consistently into the image from one degree of glory to another, for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

He says, this is real. You can do this. It's impossible. God really can show up and change you. Are you looking for that? Do you want that? The second thing here, the second lesson, not just imagine being Peter, James and John having a mountaintop experience, but imagine being the disciples. I think if anything in this passage, Mark is trying to get us to see that if you are somewhere, if I am somewhere, I'm in the valley while Jesus is up on the mountain.

I'm the disciples dealing with this problem while Jesus was being transfigured. They remember Israel at the base of the mountain. Moses was up on the mountain and they said, Moses is gone, he might be dead.

[12 : 49] I don't know. We've got to figure out another way. Let's build the golden calf. In the same way, the disciples were being told implicitly. The disciples here are saying, Jesus is gone.

I don't know what he's up to on that mountain. We've got to find our own way. You read this in verse 29. Jesus says that the demon could not be driven out by anything but prayer.

When you read that in the context of the Moses story, you realize that what he's saying is the disciples tried to drive out the demon that showed up without prayer. Meaning they tried to do it without any reliance on God.

They tried to just basically say, I've got this. I can do this by my own skills and talents, my own abilities. They tried to do that and they couldn't do that. They were completely self-reliant, not dependent in any way on God.

You see what's happening here? This is an invitation today to honesty. It's an invitation to be honest, that there has to be, for true worship to actually happen, there has to be a recognition and an acknowledgement that because we don't see Jesus yet with our eyes, because he is on the holy mountain of the Lord right now, exalted in the heavenly places, that we as disciples are living down in the valley and that we are prone to wander away.

[14:16] That we're prone to wander, Lord, I feel it. The disciples' actions here are an invitation for every single one of us to say, if you want to experience real change in worship, one of the conditions for that is to come to worship and say, I know that every week I am prone to walk away.

I'm prone to wander. I'm prone to say, I want sight, not faith. And all I have right now is faith and not sight, and that actually causes me to want to leave it all behind.

And that's exactly what had happened to these disciples, and I think Mark's trying to say, this is you, this is me, this is the Christian walk. And he's actually doing something surprising. He's reversing what happens here, reversing, flipping on its head what they do here, because I think he's actually telling us that actually the condition for true spiritual renewal for God to really show up this morning in your life and change you is to actually come and say, that is me.

I know, I can say, can you say, right now to the Lord in prayer, I am prone to wander, Lord, I feel it. Because I cannot yet see you with the eyes of sight, I struggle with the eyes of faith.

It's easy for me to walk away. And he actually wants us to say that. That's the condition for coming to the Lord in true worship. Now third and finally, for point one, imagine not only Peter, James and John's mountaintop experience, imagine not only the disciples' valley experience, but imagine Jesus and how he sees all this.

[15:57] So Jesus comes down the mountain, and he sees fighting, faction, a demon, suffering, no faith disciples, a ragtag group that he's been training, but aren't doing so great.

And remember, Jesus has been on the mountain. For a moment, the curtain was pulled back, and Jesus' ultimate glory was unveiled.

And for a moment, you see that this man is God himself, the creator of the universe, the King of kings, the Lord of lords. And when he comes down the mountain, I would have to think that he immediately remembers what he's come for.

For a moment, all of his glory was unveiled, utter satisfaction in the presence of God the Father and God the Spirit, with God the Son. And then he comes back down, and he sees this mess, and immediately he realizes, I was born to die.

I was born to suffer. He says it at the end. At the capstone, at the very end of this passage, he reminds them the Son of man is about to be killed. And you see, Jesus Christ deserves to be on the mountain, but he chose to come down to the valley.

[17:11] He deserves to have nothing but glorification in the presence of God, his face shining, everybody else looking at him and saying, who is this? But he comes back down the valley, and he sees that the disciples aren't really men of faith yet, and he remembers, I've come to suffer.

I've come to be for them because of what they are not. I've come for this ragtag group that really isn't that great and is not that polished and that has very, very weak faith at its best.

He realizes that his path to the mountain, his path to glory again, is actually to go into the ultimate valley. That's what he awakens to again because he says it at the very end of this passage.

Now, before we move on to the second and final point, Mark has told us in three different passages already in his gospel, Jesus Christ has come to die for you, for the sins of the world, and Jesus says to the disciples and to anybody who wants to follow him today, that grace is not cheap, it's costly.

And so he says it like this. He says, if you want to follow me, you've got to also take up your cross. You're going to suffer too. So forgiveness is free, but entering into the path of the Christian life is not cheap.

[18:32] It is costly. You are going to have to lose. You're going to have to lose relationships and time and talent and treasure and all sorts of things to follow me. You're going to have to bear a cross too. He said that three or four times already in Mark's gospel.

And I think when Peter, James, and John go down the mountain with them after seeing what they had seen, they too must have realized, oh boy, the people are like we left them.

You know, I too have to with Jesus step back down into the valley and bear my cross. He's talking about, you see, the invitation to bear the cross as the path of the Christian life.

Jesus says it in the other gospels. He says in this life, you will have tribulation. So you have mountaintop experiences where the love of God becomes so real.

Have you had that in your life? And then you go back down into the valley and you want everybody around you to be on fire for Jesus, as they say.

[19 : 32] And it's just not that way all the time. And sometimes you're not that way. And you're struggling with your faith and you're doubting and you're having real uncertainty. And Jesus says, look, in this life, you are going to have tribulation.

You are going to have to walk through the valley. You're going to have to suffer. That's not just a Christian problem. That's a human problem. That's a human problem. You know, see, when you encounter suffering, you know, there's only a few ways to approach suffering.

Either you're in the midst of it, you're about to get there, or you've been there. And when the valleys of life hit you, you can have a couple of possible responses.

One response can be that you lose things, you lose the things that you really love in life and your heart gets really hard. And you become angry and you become bitter, you become jealous, you become hateful and spiteful and vengeful or deeply sorrowful.

Or you learn something that is surprising and that's that it is actually possible to live in your heart as if you're standing on the mountaintop viewing the face of God while you're walking through the midst of the valley, where it's actually possible to have joy and for the suffering to actually make your joy go up, not down.

[20 : 50] That's what Christianity says it offers. That's what Jesus says it offers. How do you do that? How do you get there? You have to face the tribulation. You have to suffer. But how do you become a great person, a mountaintop person in the midst of valley-like pain?

And the answer is worship. The answer is worship. The answer is actually that the real secret of becoming a person of joy in the midst of the valley is to regularly, regularly, regularly come to the Lord and get out of your head and lose yourself.

Get out of your own mind, get out of your own thoughts and cross the threshold and say, my only object for these next few moments is to look up and see the face and the love of the living God for me.

Now, let me ask you, do you approach God daily?

Do you have a moment every day where you step across the threshold and say, I am now entering the presence of the living God in a unique and special way? I want to hear the voice of the Lord.

[22 : 02] I want to come to Him through the mediation of holy scripture and prayer and find the living God for me right now. Do you have that in your life? That is what can actually make you into a changed person.

The secret of life really is just worship. The more and more and more you give yourself away to God in worship and behold His face, the more and more and more you find that you become a person who can have joy in the midst of the valley.

Jesus Christ walked through the ultimate valley so you could live on the mountain even when you're walking through the midst of the valley. And the real key and the real secret for that is just to say, I've come to worship.

I've come to get out of my own head. I'm not here today because I go to St. C's. I'm here today to encounter the living God. All right.

Secondly and finally, not only is worship incredibly important, we see here but also weakness, the importance of seeing your own weakness in worship.

[23 : 02] Now we've already sort of said this but let me tune into this a little more in the case of this demon-possessed boy and his dad.

So let me just give a brief side note on a tricky bit in this text. We're told in this passage that the demon that takes over this boy oftentimes will throw him into fire.

The text says he will cause him to convulse into foam, all these symptoms that the demon causes. This is one of the famous passages where for the past couple of centuries, some New Testament scholars have come and said, look, in the Gospels when we see these demon possessions, really what's going on is just medical problems.

So a lot of scholars have come to this and said, this is just an epileptic, I can't say it. Like there it is, seizure.

I knew I would get it eventually. Epileptic seizure, I shouldn't try again. They've just come and said, look, that's actually what's happening in the demon possession stories is that these are first century people and they're working with a pretty underdeveloped understanding of medical history and an underdeveloped view of what religion really is.

[24 : 21] And so this boy is suffering from seizures. It's not a demon. Look, you can't do that. Here's why you can't do that, because all throughout Mark's Gospel, there are plenty of people who have medical problems that Jesus heals that aren't demon possessed.

It's that simple. They come across many, many people and they don't say that's demon possession. They say that's a medical problem. First century people are not dumb.

And so it's a real chronological snobbery to say something like that. Maybe we could ask a question like this. And imagine, read the Gospel of John and then ask yourself, could I have written this?

And the answer is none of us are smart enough not to write the Gospel of John. Have you read it?

No, that's not what's going on here. This is a demon possession. Mark knows the difference.

Jesus knew the difference. What happens in this demon possession is really important because remember the problem. The problem is that this is a golden calf-like incident all over again.

[25 : 22] The disciples have failed. They are a faithless generation, we're told in this passage. Just like the Israelites were a faithless generation when Moses was up on the mountain. So we're meant to see the disciples' failure as one of the primary points of the passage.

Nobody has faith except for one person. And that one person is the dad. We know very little about him, but he's desperate for the life of his boy.

And so he brings his boy hoping beyond hope that maybe Jesus can help him. So the dad is the only person in this passage who has faith, we're told.

Now you say, wait a minute, does he? Does this dad actually have any faith? Because when you look down at verse 22, we're told that when he describes what happens to his boy, his son, what the demon does to him, he says, now, if you can do it, you can do anything, Jesus.

If you can do anything, Jesus, have compassion on us. In Jesus, we know what he meant because Jesus immediately in 23 says, if...

[26 : 34] So nobody has faith in this story except the dad, but when the dad exhibits his faith, he says, if Jesus, you are able in some way to do something, that would be really great.

And then Jesus says, 23, what do you mean, if? And so immediately you realize that Jesus realizes that this dad's faith is not so good.

He's similar to the disciples. And back before that, just right before that, when Jesus says, how long has this been happening from childhood? He gives this long list, he throws them into fire, he throws them into water.

And you immediately get the sense that this man has come as a last resort to Jesus. He's come thinking, I don't really know if this is going to be any good. I don't know if this is going to work if maybe. Peter, James, and John are standing there.

What are they thinking? You know, Peter, James, and John have got to be like, you did not see what just happened on top of the mountain. You know, you're saying, if to this man, I saw what happened to him. I saw the witnesses Moses and Elijah show up with his face unveiled.

[27 : 38] They know the dad, the only man with faith in this story at best, it's incredibly weak. At best, it's incredibly weak faith. And so then he responds and says, okay, I believe, you know, I've taken a step towards you Jesus, help my unbelief.

And so he admits it. He says, I'm looking to you for help, but I have doubt. I have uncertainty. I'm not so sure. I'm not sure how this is going to go.

I'm not exactly yet sure what to think about you. He owns that. He completely admits it. Now three lessons as we close at three lessons in the first point, let's have three lessons.

How about it in the second point? Make it a nice outline. Three lessons here. First, this dad came looking for Jesus, hoping beyond hope that Jesus could do something for him, save the life of his son, looking for the possibility of life.

And he came uncertain. He came with doubt. And Mark is teaching us here that the quality of his faith and the quality of your faith is not what saves you.

[28 : 57] You know, you come to Jesus with weak faith. It is not the quality of your faith that saves you. It is not the quality of your faith that gets Jesus to do something for you. Jesus came to save you despite your terrible faith, your weak faith, your little faith, your doubts.

It's not the quality of your faith that saves you. It is only him, the object he saves. You know, the man says, if you can, and Jesus turns around and saves his boy.

It's not the quality of your faith. You see, actually, let's bring it back to the first point. What is the condition for having a real encounter with the living God today and being changed in the midst of worship?

The condition is actually, remember saying, I know, I'm prone to wonder, Lord, I feel that today. Or saying, I know that my faith at its best is a spark, that I do have wavering faith, that I do come with different levels of faith, that I do come with doubts and struggles and uncertainties.

Jesus turns around and says, okay, I'll save your boy. Jesus has time for that. All right, secondly, maybe you've come today.

[30 : 10] I see faces I don't recognize. Maybe you've come today and you've been looking for hope. You've been looking for somebody to save you. You know, you've been looking for meaning in this life.

Maybe you've walked through a season where you finally hit the valley, you've suffered in a way that's been pretty unique for you and that's hit you really hard. Maybe you would even say today, I never expected to be a religious person.

I have lots of conversations with people that say I never would have expected to be a religious person. I start with it like that, but here you are. Here I am. I don't really know what I'm looking for, but I know that the life I've been living has not provided me the things that I need.

I'm looking for hope. I'm looking for salvation. This man came in a very similar condition. He was uncertain. He was doubting. He was looking for hope.

He was looking for salvation. Jesus has time for that. Jesus has time for that. He has time for you if you're coming today and saying I'm not exactly sure what I'm looking for, but I'm hoping to find salvation.

[31 : 22] Jesus has time for that. He wants you to draw near and He wants to turn around and say, okay, I'll save you. He said to this man, I'll save your son no matter how weak your faith might be.

You might say today, I'm just not sure yet that I have enough proof. I want sight and Christianity says right now you've got to live by faith.

Let me ask you, what would be enough for you? What would be enough? Maybe you're starting to awaken to this simple fact that without faith in God, maybe you're realizing it's really hard to move forward and claim any real sense of meaning, of justice, of a moral order, of life itself, of an origin story, of purpose, of hope.

What would be enough to really prove? And instead, actually what the Bible does is it comes to you and says that the path is not find great understanding and then believe, but instead it's believe and then seek understanding.

Believe even weakly and He will save you and then He will bring you towards understanding over time. You will actually grow in confidence and certainty and knowledge over time, but take a step forward.

[32 : 36] At some point, if that's you today, you have to decide. You have to make a decision. You have to say, I'm going to believe. I'm going to take the step of faith. I'm going to move forward. Even though I can't see, I don't have all the answers, I have doubts and uncertainties, Jesus had time for that.

His brother wrote in the book, his biological brother and his disciple wrote in the book of James, be patient with those who are doubting. God has patience for that. Believe and then seek understanding.

That's the invitation. Lastly, by the way, I hope that you can see Christian or curious today that this is good news. Yeah? Do you know that Jesus has time for a weak faith?

He has time for doubt. This is good news for everybody, for everybody today. Lastly, finally, back to the beginning, are you struggling to worship this morning?

Are you struggling to worship this morning? Are you struggling to worship meaningfully, to have an experience of God today? William Keller really helped me see this final fundamental point that I did not notice at first.

[33 : 43] He says this, that renewal requires bringing to God that which is most precious to you. The last thing, to really encounter the living God this morning, you've got to see that renewal, spiritual renewal, requires bringing to the Lord today that which is most precious to you.

The man brought the most precious thing in his life to Jesus, his son. It could be the case that you've been, like me at times, unwilling to approach God and lose control of the things in your life that you're holding too closely, the things that are most precious to you.

In other words, that you come to worship but you have functional idols, things that you love truly more than you love God on a daily basis.

It could be your success and your reputation or a person, a relationship, a hope for a relationship. You say, actually, this is the God of my life. This is the thing I want the most.

This is the thing that would bring me the most satisfaction. I know that deep down in my heart. One of the invitations here is to see that in weak faith, you've got to come to the Lord and say, I'm losing control of the stuff all around me.

[35 : 01] I can't control it. I can't control my family and my successes and my bank account and my reputation and my security. I don't have ultimate control.

Whatever God ordains is right. I know I'm going to step into the valley. I know it. I know I'm going to lose. I know it. When you lose, if that thing you lost was your functional God, you will be destroyed. You will be crushed. You will come to a place of deep, deep sorrow. But if God is your functional God, if God is your God, if the Lord is your God, then you have something you can never lose no matter what.

And then the Lord gives you everything else as a gift. He says, shoot for heaven and then earth makes sense. Even when you're in the midst of the valley, you have the possibility of joy.

You have the possibility of the mountain. You know that one day, no matter how bad the valley gets, you are headed for the mountain, the vision of the living God, true hope, true joy, true family, true society, true success.

[36 : 09] If you come to worship this morning and you say, show me your glory, Lord, I want a real encounter. Show me that your love is greater than life. I give you my precious things. He will show you.

He will. He will show you the glory of Jesus' love. That Jesus lost everything in the most ultimate valley so that you could have the mountain of God.

Let's pray together. Father, we ask today that you would teach us, teach us, Lord, in our hearts what it means to truly worship. So we ask now for an encounter with you, and we do encounter you as we come to the Lord's table.

So you promise, Lord, to show up when we take and we eat. So we ask for that. Oh, Lord, be near as we draw near to you. Show us yourself in the body, in the blood, the real presence of Jesus Christ accompanying the sacrament.

We ask for that now so that we could taste and see and experience the love of God, that we'd sense it, not just intellectually know it. So we ask for that now.

[37 : 13] In Christ's name, amen.