

Series: Hidden Life

March 18, 2018

## **Title: Are We There Yet?**

**[Slide 1]**

**Text: Mark 9:2-10**

### **Stuck in a Rut**

**Going bust:**

**[Slide 2]**

Remember Blockbuster? It was founded in 1985 – way back in the days of VCRs. In 1991 it sold for \$8.4 billion: a smashing success by anyone's standards.

Blockbuster raked in the cash through *late fees*. Remember them? But then a guy named Reed Hastings got dinged for \$40 worth of late fees after renting Apollo 13. So he went out and founded a new movie rental company. He named it Netflix.

In 2000 Blockbuster took in \$800 million in late fees alone. It had the chance to pick up Netflix for a mere \$20 million, but turned the deal down.

End of story.

### **The Pitfall of *Stagnation*:**

Why did Blockbuster go bust? After revolutionizing the video rental world, it failed to catch the next wave. Its leaders – addicted to all that late fee money – refused to think outside the box and imagine a world in which you could make even more money without charging outrageous late fees. So, when Blockbuster pulled in enough *late fee money* in a single year to buy 40 Netflix's, it stuck with the old plan instead.

Robert Quinn says that the fourth pitfall in a transformational journey is the pitfall of *stagnation*. When we've experienced the excitement and elation of a transformative time in our lives, we will be tempted to set up camp right there and fail to move on. After all, why would we stop doing something that's working so well?

But the transformational journey requires that we do just that: start the cycle all over again.

### **Stuck in a rut:**

What happened to Blockbuster can happen to you and me on our own life journeys. How tempting to think that yesterday's insights and transformation must be good enough for today's challenges. But yesterday's victories were for yesterday's battles. This is a new day. No time to sit around, stuck in a rut. If we do that, we will totally miss the next step in God's transformation of our lives!

## **Camping on the Mountain**

### **New Exodus Moment:**

#### **[Slide 3]**

Peter walked right into this pitfall of getting stuck in a rut when Jesus took him, and James and John, on a mountain climb. The entire expedition was soaked with Exodus connections. The Exodus story tells of Moses climbing Mt. Sinai to meet God and receive His commandments:

#### **[Slide 4]**

*Exodus 24:15-18 NIV*

*When Moses went up on the mountain, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD settled on Mount Sinai. For 6 days the cloud covered the mountain, and on the 7<sup>th</sup> day the LORD called to Moses from within the cloud. To the Israelites the glory of the LORD looked like a consuming fire on top of the mountain. Then Moses entered the cloud as he went up on the mountain. And he stayed on the mountain 40 days and 40 nights.*

Mark tells us that when Jesus took the 3 disciples up a high mountain, He was recreating this moment of encounter with God:

- First there is the statement that they climbed the mountain "after 6 days." Like Moses, Jesus waited for a Sabbath, or 7<sup>th</sup> day to make this journey up the mountain. The encounter on the mountaintop would be stepping into God's Sabbath.
- Second, just as Moses was instructed to bring certain people with him part way up the mountain, Jesus brings His 3 closest disciples.

- Third, in the Exodus story, Moses and his company experience the glory and presence of God Himself!

*Exodus 24:9-10 NIV*

*Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the 70 elders of Israel went up and saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of lapis lazuli, as bright blue as the sky.*

- Fourth, Mark tells us that Jesus Himself was transformed – transfigured – so that His true identity and splendor could be seen:

**[Slide 5]**

*Mark 9:3 NIV*

*His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them.*

- Finally, Mark tells us that Moses and Elijah appeared before them and talked with Jesus. Both Moses and Elijah were “men of the desert,” the Law Giver and the Prophet. Their presence in this Exodus-like moment confirmed that this was indeed God’s long-awaited “New Exodus.”

**Peter’s request:**

So it is any surprise that Peter spoke up the way he did?

**[Slide 6]**

*Mark 9:5-6 NIV amended*

*Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up 3 tents – one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” (He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.)*

In Exodus, Moses met the LORD on a regular basis in a tent called “The Tent of Meeting.” When he came out from those meetings, his face would glow with the glory of God, so much so, that the Israelites demanded he wear a veil over his face until the glory faded away!

Peter is thinking in these terms as he sees Jesus transfigured into the Glorious Son of God. Moses and Elijah are there to validate Jesus and affirm

that this is the New Exodus when God will again return to His people and lead them to victory.

This is the moment! This is what we've been waiting for. No need to go any further. "It is good for us to be here!"

### **"This is my Son!"**

But the most important thing was what happened next:

#### **[Slide 7]**

*Mark 9:7-8 NIV*

*Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!"*

*Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus.*

The overshadowing cloud was the cloud of God's presence, appearing on the mountain as it had in the glorious climax of the Book of Exodus, when the cloud of God's presence came to rest upon the desert sanctuary.

But now God is announcing a New Exodus, led by a new Moses. In Deuteronomy Moses had promised that the LORD would raise up another prophet to lead His people:

#### **[Slide 8]**

*Deuteronomy 18:15 NIV*

*The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. **You must listen to him.**"*

Now that new Prophet is here on the mountain. This is no re-make of the old Exodus Journey. This is not the time to pitch tents and try to re-capture an old moment. This is time for a new journey, a New Exodus. God announces that this new Moses figure is none less than His own Son.

And that is why when God is finished speaking, there is no one present but Jesus.

### **Are We There Yet?**

## **Coming down the mountain:**

On the way down the mountain, Jesus gave specific instructions:

### **[Slide 9]**

*Mark 9:9-10 NIV*

*As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. They kept the matter to themselves, discussing what "rising from the dead" meant.*

You see, Peter had naively assumed that this mountaintop adventure was the end of the journey: they had at last arrived at God's "eternal Sabbath." The consummation of all things had happened. Heaven had come to earth.

Peter was like the kids in the back seat asking for the hundredth time: "Are we there yet?" It's already been a long trip. The kids got up extra early, had breakfast on the road, and now when you're pulling into a motel all they can think about is a swim in the pool and chicken nuggets at McDonalds. They've done the traveling thing. Little do they know, but this is only Day One.

But in reality, they had by no means "arrived." The top of the mountain was not the Promised Land, after all. It was more of a starting point than the destination. And this New Exodus, with its Mount Sinai moment on a summit in northern Galilee, would go through the Valley of the Shadow of Death before Jesus won the final victory. Resurrection, yes! But only after dying on a Roman cross.

## **Are we there yet?**

### **[Slide 10]**

Following Jesus is our Exodus Journey. There will be many times when we want to ask, "Are we there yet?" It may be because we like where we are, or feel like we have indeed "arrived." Or it may be because we feel tired and discouraged. You can't want me to step out in radical faith *again*, can You, Lord?

A butterfly begins its life journey as a tiny egg, glued to the underside of a leaf. Then comes a transformation: The egg becomes a caterpillar. Yet as we all know, this is just the *first* transformation. The caterpillar will spin a

cocoon and cease to be a caterpillar. From the cocoon will emerge the adult butterfly. No shortcuts. Instead, we see cycles of change and transformation.

The same is true for you and me as we grow to be more and more like Jesus. It doesn't happen all at once. A glorious moment on a spiritual mountaintop with the Lord does not mean that we have attained spiritual perfection! It is part of how God is growing us for the journey ahead. There is no other way to discover the Hidden Life that is ours with Christ in God.