

Full Spectrum

February 19, 2012

Shawn Thomas Smith

2 Corinthians 4:3-6 Mark 9:2-9

2 Corinthians 4:3-6 (page 220, New Testament)

³And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing.⁴In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake. ⁶For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Mark 9:2-9 (page 54, New Testament)

²Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, ³and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. ⁴And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. ⁵Then Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." ⁶He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. ⁷Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!" Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.

⁹As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

*Full Spectrum*¹

*A light shines,
Piercing the darkness,
A single beam
Concentrated into a pinpoint of light,
The light passes through,
Filters,
Separates,
And reveals,
This once small light
Becomes something more,
Something dazzling,
Something that must be seen,
As it separates
We see the image it casts
Radiating in kaleidoscopic wonder
As before us the single beam of light
Fully revealed giving us the warm glow.
Though not perceptible at once,
The light must be focused,
Altered into our perceptions
For total comprehension.
We see it all
In full now,
The total picture,
The beam of light,
The filter,
And then the rainbow of color
emitting on the other side,
And we have it...
Full Spectrum.*

¹ Shawn Thomas Smith, original poem, "Full Spectrum," 2012.

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2 Corinthians 4:3-6

Mark 9:2-9

Now if I have completely confused you, here is the picture in tried to guide your minds to: the cover to one of my all time favorite album covers, Pink Floyd's *The Dark Side of the Moon*.

When I look at this cover, I am reminded of the theme that runs throughout the album and if you have not listened to it, I highly recommend taking a journey with Floyd in exploration of the common thread of life that weaves a tapestry of music that is this album.

You know I love music; it is one of my favorite gifts that God has graced us with, but especially I appreciate how music can transcend and take us to different places. I recall my mom telling me about a lesson she used in her first years as a music teacher in elementary schools. She would have the children sit quietly in a room close their eyes, and then play a piece of music. She would ask the children to listen attentively; to use their imaginations and paint a picture of what they were hearing; truly a transcendent experience. One that many times in my life has taken me on a musical journey of the mind: One that allows the music to flow through me and influence my thinking and conceptualizations.

Certainly the same is true for *The Dark Side of the Moon*. Not only is this a collection of great songs, but it is a concept album, one that must be heard in its entirety. One that allows the listener to move through the many parts of life, all surrounded by the heartbeat, the life force of us all, the engine to our bodies, and the seat of emotion, and thought.

When I think of similar albums, to take one piece out of the entire work is difficult. Not only is it not in context, but it fails to live up to the genius that was intended by the musicians and composers. To think of this another way would be to take Pachelbel's Canon in D major, that familiar tune that many a wedding party has walked in to, and simplify it to only the cello part of 8 repeating notes. It leaves the music flat and without depth, it fails to bring in the harmonious elements that make the piece of music flow together and weave in such way that the intended result is what we hear.

Perception is how we identify with something, it is how we are able, in our minds eye, to visualize, or internalize events and occurrences around us. It is an internal process of the mind. When I think of the passages we heard today, there are elements of both which weave together to give us a fuller picture of Jesus and our lives: both seen and heard.

Mark accounts the transfiguration: the breaking through the human veil of Jesus as the Son of Man and revealing him as truly the Son of God. In essence, the transfiguration, as witnessed by Peter, James and John, is the full spectrum of who Jesus really is. Sure his teaching and healing were awesome powers. But to see him in the blinding light with the prophets of old, Moses and Elijah, we understand that Jesus is more than just human, he is divine, and he is the messiah.

This revelation to the three disciples is one of shock and awe. Peter blurts out the first thing that comes to his mind, "Let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."² Open mouth and insert foot Peter. Of course, we know that they were afraid, the text tells us terrified. I can only imagine having hiked up the mountain with Jesus and then to have him surrounded and bathed in light, the Glory of the Lord, shown round, and the light of the world revealed to these disciples must have been truly awe inspiring, and yet it is cheapened by a flippant comment said out of desperation of not knowing what to say. "Then Peter said, 'Rabbi,

² Mark 9:5b, NRSV.

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2 Corinthians 4:3-6 Mark 9:2-9

it is good for us to be here,”³ that way we can do the work of erecting the tents for each of you and we can be useful. But Peter is missing the point. He was there to witness who Jesus is, to bring about fuller understanding of his role and function as a disciple of Christ, not as a hired hand to erect a tent, but a messenger to proclaim Jesus, not yet as Jesus warns him, but later to be instrumental in bringing about the Way, the Truth, and the Life to every nation.

Here we have the beam of light Jesus focused on by the power of his father and revealed in a new light, filtered and separated, his radiant beauty for Peter James and John to see. And so we have the transfiguration, we have Jesus fully revealed to these three but not others. The gospel writer is bringing the reader to a better understanding of who Jesus is. Not only is he a healer, an enigmatic speaker, one who speaks with authority, but he is now fully revealed as the Son of God. We see him for who he is in all his splendor. We have the benefit of knowing the story in full. The disciples would still doubt what Jesus says; uncertain of the death he would endure, the betrayal he would face, the torture he would suffer, and the glorious resurrection he would unveil for the world.

We on the other hand have the full picture. We see the evidence just as we saw the cover of the album. We can perceive it in more than our minds eye. But herein is the rub. We are not only called to see, we are called to listen. “This is my Son, the Beloved, Listen to him!”⁴

Now that you have seen the cover of the album, do you not wonder what it sounds like, what musical interpretations are within? As I said, this album gives us the full spectrum of life, traveling with the heartbeat from beginning to end. But to merely stare at the cover is only half of it. The same is true for Christ. We see him as Messiah, Savior, the Chosen One, the Light of the World, The Bread of Life, and The Prince of Peace. But if we do not listen to his words, we are no better than the countless others who have seen and not heard.

It is the teaching, the words, and the actions of Jesus’ life that speak to us: these show us of God’s love, and demonstrate the faithful life we are called to follow. And this is a tall order. Discipleship is a word that is sometimes reserved for super Christians, but I tell you the truth, you are called to be a disciple just as much as the next person. And all the excuses are just that, an excuse

“But I do not have the tools I need. I do not have the right words to say. I do not know how to profess my faith. I am unsure of how I should go about doing this.” Or better yet: “I might look stupid, and make myself vulnerable.” Yes, take our example from the disciples Jesus called, all flawed, all lacking, but persistent nonetheless.

Paul writes that that the world has blinded the minds of unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For Paul, the world has a veil that keeps it from recognizing Jesus as God in human form, but more so that Jesus is the light of God that shines in our lives. What is the veil that is your stumbling block? What is standing in the way of your commitment to discipleship?

Let’s think about the album cover again. Without the prism, we are unable to see the rainbow of color that the ray of light emits. Think of it this way: we need something to focus us in order

³ Mark 9:5a, NRSV.

⁴ Mark 9:7b, NRSV.

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2 Corinthians 4:3-6

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to shine out in the darkness. “Let the light shine out of darkness”⁵ says the Lord. The light is the light of the world. It is shining here in our sanctuary this morning. And it is within each of you. The question then remains, what is my focus? How is God using me to be an instrument of transmission? How do I proclaim Jesus as Lord and myself as a slave for Jesus sake?

Slave, δουλος in Greek, it means servant; it means one who is willing to have a master. One who will follow the master. Do not get me wrong. I am not talking of the chattel slavery that remains a scar on our country. But the understanding that as a slave/servant of Christ, we yield our own wills to follow the will of the master. This means surrendering, this means claiming the Lordship of Christ in your life. Letting go of all that hinders and causes us to stumble and placing our trust in Christ as the way to live life.

It is interesting that within Marks passage we read today, the emphatic statement from the cloud a voice is heard, “This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!”⁶ Listen ακουω from the word we derive acoustic, listen, listen, listen. This is very important, listen to him! As he teaches; listen to him! As he instructs; listen to him! As he lives; listen to him! As he encourages; listen to him! As he prays; listen to him! As he guides; listen to him! As he calls us to himself; listen to him! As the scriptures speak from the mouth of God: Listen to Him!

If we remain as merely passive observers, we gain nothing, but when we take the time to delve into conversation, to listen and respond, we move further in our own journeys as disciples. You heard me say that for many of us a disciple is a super Christian, one who has studied and knows, one who has knowledge and an air of wisdom and calmness in demeanor that I cannot emulate. Well the truth of that is, if you know that person, ask them to share with you. Seek out people who build your faith. But remember this: the journey is reciprocal. What you give you get, and what you get you give.

Let’s put this into perspective with words from Pink Floyd’s *The Dark Side of the Moon* with the lyrics from the concluding song Eclipse:

Eclipse

All that you touch
All that you see
All that you taste
All you feel.
All that you love
All that you hate
All you distrust
All you save.
All that you give
All that you deal
All that you buy,
beg, borrow or steal.
All you create
All you destroy

⁵ 2 Corinthians 4:6b, NRSV

⁶ Ibid.

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All that you do
All that you say.
All that you eat
And everyone you meet
All that you slight
And everyone you fight.
All that is now
All that is gone
All that's to come
and everything under the sun is in tune
but the sun is eclipsed by the moon.⁷

The prism is out there. And you can have the light focused through it will reach even the darkest places, Listen to Christ: Hear what he says! See the glory of the Lord. Allow the light of Christ to seep into your heart to shine forth for others to see. Do not let an eclipse stand in your way. Allow your light to shine through the darkness. Allow the Prism that is Christ radiate your light into the beautiful rainbow of color, wonder, and brightness. Read the scriptures, seek out relationships that build your faith, and remember that all you do-- do in the name of Christ that others may know of his love. Amen.



⁷ Pink Floyd, "Eclipse," *The Dark Side of the Moon*, 1973, Harvest Capitol.

⁸ George Hardie, Hypgnosis, original cover to the LP album *The Dark Side of the Moon*, 1973.