

Luke 9:28-36 and 2 Peter 1:16-21

Every day, we're surrounded by people who live with no regard for God whatsoever. And because we have to live with them and work with them, it's so easy for us to get caught up into their way of thinking ourselves. Before we know it, we've just spent another whole day without once thinking of the Lord. When we ought to be pleasing Him and doing His will, we find ourselves ending up talking nonsense just like everybody else. As Paul said:

Romans 7:24

"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

我真是苦阿，谁能救我脱离这取死的身體呢？

But despite all that, if we're Christians, we know the Lord is there. He's revealed Himself to us. He's changed our hearts. His Holy Spirit has come to dwell within us. We know all His promises are true. We know He loves us and cares about us. But many times, to build up our faith, we'd just like to have a bit more proof of His presence. "If only I could see God. If only He'd reveal Himself to me. Then I'd have great faith. Then I'd be able to stay closer to the Lord." Job had that problem. He'd lost everything, apart from a grumpy wife:

Job 23:3

"Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!"

惟愿我能知道在哪里可以寻见神，能到他的台前。

Then we read this passage in Luke 9, and we wish we could have the same experience of God that Peter, James and John had. Shortly before His death, Christ gave them a glimpse of His glory, in what we call His transfiguration.

28 And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray.

说了这话以后，约有八天，耶稣带着彼得，约翰，雅各，上山去祷告。

Christ took Peter, James and John aside to pray. That's a good start. We should be a praying people. But we invariably find ourselves too busy. We should never be too busy to pray. To communicate with the Lord. Prayer is so important for our spiritual well-being.

29 And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering.

正祷告的时候，他的面貌就改变了，衣服洁白放光。

While He was praying, Christ gave these three disciples a view of Himself that no-one else would ever see, not even the rest of the disciples. His appearance

was completely changed and His clothing became white and glistening.

Mark 9:3

And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.

衣服放光，极其洁白。地上漂布的，没有一个能漂得那样白。

This intensely bright light is a feature of God's presence. Paul saw it:

Acts 22:6,9

And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me.... And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid

我将到大马色，正走的时候，约在晌午，忽然从天上发大光，四面照着我。....与我同行的人，看见了那光

It was noon, yet an even greater light than the noonday sun shone from heaven. It was so bright, it made everybody in Paul's company afraid.

1 John 1:5

God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all

这是我们从主所听见，又报给你们的信息。

Revelation 21:23

And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

那城内又不用日月光照。因有神的荣耀光照。又有羔羊为城的灯

While we're in this world, I don't think we really know what light is. We're really just groping around, looking through a glass darkly.

30-31 And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.

忽然有摩西以利亚两个人，同耶稣说话。他们在荣光里显现，谈论耶稣去世的事，就是他在耶路撒冷将要成的事。

Moses and Elijah appeared in their glorified bodies, and started talking with Christ. And they were speaking about the most wonderful thing possible - the death that Christ was just about to accomplish at Jerusalem. That's the most important subject in the world. His death on the cross, whereby He'd pay the price for the sins of all those who would come to Him, so that they wouldn't have to pay for their own sins themselves. Is the death of Christ central to our

lives? How often do we speak of it with each other? I feel ashamed.

32 But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him.

彼得和他的同伴都打盹，既清醒了，就看见耶稣的荣光，并同他站着的那两个人。

Christ was standing there in His glory, talking with Moses and Elijah in their resurrection bodies, about the most glorious event this world will ever know. And Peter, James and John were asleep! And there's one other occasion when Christ took these three apart. In Gethsemane. And they were asleep there too!

Matthew 26:41
the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

你们心灵固然愿意，肉体却软弱了。

When they finally woke up, Moses and Elijah were just leaving:

33 And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said.

二人正要和耶稣分离的时候，彼得对耶稣说，夫子，我们在这里真好，可以搭三座棚，一座为你，一座为摩西，一座为以利亚。他却不知道所说的是什么。

Peter hastily asked them all to stay, so they could build three tabernacles for them. And it says here, "*not knowing what he said.*" Peter was the sort of person who, when anything unusual happened, he's got to get in there and say something, even if it's something stupid. He's got to be involved. Let's learn from this. If we don't know what to say, just shut up. Stop trying to think we're so important that we have to say or do something.

Peter recognised that this was a special experience, so he wanted to build a memorial to it. But he'd missed the most important point of the whole experience - the conversation between Christ, Moses and Elijah. He knew just enough to realise they were speaking about Christ's death, otherwise we wouldn't know about it here, but he hadn't taken in anything more than that. He didn't understand why Christ had to die. In fact later on, Peter even cut off somebody's ear to try to stop Him going to the cross.

And we're like that. We're very good at having our memorials, our church traditions and we busy ourselves about church activities, but we're not so good at just sitting down and listening to what Christ actually taught.

Next week is the 200th anniversary of this congregation. Great. Let's celebrate it. That's good. Let's celebrate God's goodness in giving us a witness to His truth in this place, for such a long time. But if all it is to us is a memorial, a

social occasion, a milestone in the church's history, then we've lost the point. We must always keep in mind why this chapel is here. It's a witness to Jesus Christ. And we should be asking ourselves such questions as: What did Jesus Christ actually teach? Why did He have to die? How can we apply this to our lives? He's the one we should be following, and His is the teaching that we should be propagating from here. That's the most important thing about this chapel - about any chapel. Otherwise we may as well not be here at all.

34 While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud.

说这话的时候，有一朵云彩来遮盖他们。他们进入云彩里就惧怕

And then a cloud came over, and they feared. In the Bible, we find that whenever anybody gets so close to the living God, a spirit of fear comes upon them. In fact, it's the unbelievers of whom it's said:

Romans 3:18
There is no fear of God before their eyes.

他们眼中不怕神。

Isaiah encourages us to:

Isaiah 8:13
Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.

但要尊万军之耶和華為聖。以他為你們所當怕的，所當畏懼的。

And then, if the cloud wasn't fearful enough, God actually spoke to them:

35 And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.

有聲音從云彩里出來，說，這是我的兒子，我所揀選的（有古卷作這是我的愛子），你們要聽他。

When God was about to give the people of Israel the Ten Commandments, they were so fearful, especially of the Lord's voice:

Exodus 20:18,19
"And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die."

众百姓见雷轰，闪电，角声，山上冒烟，就都发颤，远远地站立。对摩西说，求你和我们说话，我们必听，不要神和我们说话，

恐怕我们死亡。

36 And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. And they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.

声音住了，只见耶稣一人在那里。当那些日子，门徒不提所看见的事，一样也不告诉人。

Peter, James and John saw Christ in His glory. They heard Him speak of His death that was soon to take place. They'd seen Moses and Elijah in their glorified bodies. They'd heard the words of God the Father Himself. And they'd experienced the fear of God as they approached so close to Him. Yet it didn't actually change them at all, at the time. They still didn't understand that Christ had to die, and that He would rise from the dead. And Peter was still to deny Him three times. This weakness and ignorance was probably the reason why Christ told them not to tell anybody until after His resurrection.

After the resurrection, everything changed. Christ had made His atoning sacrifice on the cross. The apostles had seen and talked with Him in His resurrection body. Now they understood all about why Christ came to die. He came to save His people from their sins. The disciples had now become altogether different people.

And here in Peter's second letter, he writes about the importance of what he saw that day when he was half-asleep:

16 For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

我们从前，将我们主耶稣基督的大能，和他降临的事，告诉你们，并不是随从乖巧捏造的虚言，乃是亲眼见过他的威荣。

Peter was an actual eyewitness of Christ's majesty. He now knew for sure that Jesus Christ has all power, and that He's coming again, next time in glory.

And Peter feels the needs to tell his readers that he's not just making all this up. Why? He's now absolutely sure in his own mind about his experience of the glorified Christ on that day. But how could he convince others of it? Why should others believe him? It was only a personal experience. Many people today say, "God told me to do this, God told me to do that." Well, let's suppose He did. The problem is, how can you convince me that God has spoken to you? And how can I convince you that God has spoken to me?

We love hearing testimonies. Every believer's got a testimony of God's dealings with them. And hearing testimonies is a very encouraging thing. But we also ought to acknowledge that a person's experience of God is a very difficult thing to actually prove to anybody else.

So, when we're giving our testimony to an unbeliever, we should give it by all means, but be aware that they're probably going to want to see proof of something, otherwise they might be thinking it's just a "*cunningly devised fable*." Now, if our life has completely changed, and they've seen the difference, that's going to be the best witness we could be to them.

17 For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

他从父神得尊贵荣耀的时候，从极大荣光之中，有声音出来向他说，这是我的爱子，我所喜悦的。

18 And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.

我们同他在圣山的时候，亲自听见这声音从天上出来。

Peter testifies that he heard the voice of God Himself, when he was on the mountain. He was actually half-asleep, and missed most of what happened, but now he realises how important and "holy" that mountain really was.

Maybe we've had some tremendous experiences of God in the past. And that's great. Let's recall them, like Peter is doing here. When we look back, we can see where the Lord has led us, and that will help to strengthen our faith.

But, in difficult times, we can begin to doubt even these real experiences of God that we were once so sure of in the past. "Was that really God leading me to do that?" "Did God really work then, or was it my imagination?"

In the Lord's goodness, He's given us something far better and far more reliable than our own experiences of Him to strengthen our faith. And He's given us something far better than our own unproveable experiences to convince others of the truth.

At the end of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16, Christ said:

Luke 16:31

"If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

若不听从摩西和先知的話，就是有一个从死里复活的，他们也是不听劝。

The heart of the natural man is so dark, we are told here that even if he saw for himself someone rising from the dead, it won't necessarily convince him of anything. Even if he receives all the physical proof he was demanding, it still may not be enough to convince an unbeliever. Something far more is needed. And here we've got the answer. The Lord has given us today a far greater witness in this world, even than any experience of God's power, great though

that might have been. He's given us "*Moses and the prophets.*" If we don't hear what they have to say, we won't be convinced by lesser proofs of God, like someone rising from the dead.

19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

我们并有先知更确的预言，如同灯照在暗处。你们在这预言上留意，直等到天发亮晨星在你们心里出现的时候，才是好的。

The only way we can come to know God for ourselves is if He chooses to reveal Himself to us. There are three ways God has revealed Himself to us: God has revealed Himself to all men in creation:

Romans 1:20

"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse"

自从造天地以来，神的永能和神性是明明可知的，虽是眼不能见，但借着所造之物，就可以晓得，叫人无可推诿。

But Creation only reveals that an all-powerful creator God exists, i.e. His "*eternal power and godhead.*" That's enough to render all men without excuse for their sin, because they know they're responsible to this God.

For us to know anything else about God, His attributes, His love, His kindness, His justice, His mercy, His plan of salvation, we need Him to reveal more of Himself to us. The second way He has revealed Himself is in Jesus Christ. God became a man. Jesus Christ is called the Word of God:

John 1:14

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

道成了肉身住在我们中间，充充满满的有恩典有真理。我们也见过他的荣光，正是父独生子的荣光。

And Christ is called the Light of the World:

John 8:12

"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

耶稣又对众人说，我是世界的光。跟从我的，就不在黑暗里走，必要得着生命的光。

But Christ only came into the world for a short time, in one particular place. Most of us will never actually physically see Him. So the Lord has revealed Himself in a third way, by providing a completely reliable witness to Him accessible to everybody in every age.

And that's what we've got in the Scriptures. "*Moses and the prophets.*" This is what we need. We do well to take heed to this book. It is like a light that shines in a dark place. It's all we've got. All other writings in the world are purely the ideas of men. But this is altogether different. It's the Word of God Himself.

Christ is central throughout this book. It's a reliable history book. It's an accurate record of what we need to know about the life and death and resurrection of Christ. It's a reliable guide as to what God requires of us. It's a reliable manual of Christian living. In fact, it's everything we need.

2 Timothy 3:16,17

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

圣经都是神所默示的（或作凡神所默示的圣经），于教训，督责，使人归正，教导人学义，都是有益的。叫属神的人得以完全，预备行各样的善事。

The Scriptures weren't written by a single man. That's important, because if that was the case, it would just be somebody's opinion. Mohammed wrote the whole of the Koran. Joseph Smith wrote the whole of the Book of Mormon. The words of one man can't be a witness to anybody. The Bible says:

2 Corinthians 13:1

In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.

凭两三个人的口作见证，句句都要定准。

The Bible is a collection of 66 books, written over about 1600 years, by many different authors, who all bear testimony to the same one true living God.

But, you may say, aren't there contradictions in the Bible? There are several accounts of the same event, with seemingly different information.

I don't recommend reading novels or watching films particularly, it's a complete waste of time if you ask me, but let's suppose we read a novel. It's fine first time around, we don't have a problem with the text. But read it a second time through, and a third time, and we'll soon discover mistakes in it. "That can't be true, because this happens later." Or try watching a film. You can watch it once and it's fine, but watch it a few times, and you soon begin to see the continuity errors in it. And that's what it's like with every work of man. They all contain mistakes. But with the Bible, the opposite is the case. When you first read it, you might think there are lots of contradictions in it, but the more you read it, the more these apparent contradictions are resolved.

The Bible is different from every work of man. The more you read it, the fewer apparent contradictions you find, and the more it becomes one unified whole. And that's because, although many human authors wrote the Scriptures down, they're not the words of men:

20-21 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

第一要紧的，该知道经上所有的预言，没有可随私意解说的。因为预言从来没有出于人意的，乃是人受圣灵感动说出神的话来

The Holy Spirit moved the writers to write the words God wanted them to write. And it's the Holy Spirit we need, to understand the words properly too. There are many people who know the Bible well, but they're completely wrong because they don't have the Holy Spirit. And there are a lot of people who say they've got the Holy Spirit, but ignore the Bible altogether. We need both.

Remember, this isn't an ordinary piece of literature. The Holy Spirit inspired the words. Christians know that already. They know there's something different about this book. It moves us whenever we read it:

Luke 24:32

"And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?"

他们彼此说，在路上，他和我们说话，给我们讲解圣经的时候，我们的心岂不是火热的吗？

Jeremiah 20:9

"Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay."

我若说，我不再提耶和華，也不再奉他的名讲论，我便心里觉得似乎有烧着的火闭塞在我骨中，我就含忍不住，不能自禁。

The Word of God is alive. It is living and powerful:

Hebrews 4:12, 13

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

神的道是活泼的，是有功效的，比一切两刃的剑更快，甚至魂与灵，骨节与骨髓，都能刺入剖开，连心中的思念和主意，都能辨明。并且被造的，没有一样在他面前不显然的。原来万物，在那

与我们有关系的主眼前，都是赤露敞开的。

The Bible is living and powerful. It's got power to convert the soul, to change people's hearts, to convince them of the truth. And it has power to help the believer grow in the faith:

Psalm 19:7,8

"The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes."

耶和华的律法全备，能苏醒人心。耶和华的法度确定，能使愚人有智慧。耶和华的训词正直，能快活人的心。耶和华的命令清洁，能明亮人的眼目。

The Bible is living and powerful. It's exciting to the believer. It burns within his bones. But there are many others who are totally unmoved by it.

Terry Waite was the Archbishop of Canterbury's special envoy during the war in Lebanon in the 1970s. He was captured by muslims and imprisoned in a cellar for five years on his own. The war eventually ended and he was successfully released. Years later he spoke at a Christian convention. He said that after four years of imprisonment, his captors gave him a Bible. What a wonderful provision from God! But he said "I read through it several times (he had nothing else to do of course), and I found no comfort in it whatsoever." I know we're not supposed to judge people, but I can honestly say that, at that time, He can't possibly have known the Lord - because the Bible meant nothing to him. Maybe he's become a Christian since, I don't know.

Contrast that with a man I met once. When he was young, he was walking with some friends, and they came across an empty church. The door was open and there was nobody around, so they went inside. And, just fooling around, they pretended to play church. His mates all sat in the pews, and he got into the pulpit and pretended to be the preacher. He opened the Bible randomly, and started reading from it, and as he was reading the words, suddenly in his heart he realised that it was all true. None of his other friends had any reaction at all to the words that were read, but his heart had been changed forever.

Suddenly, what we've always thought was just a boring stuffy book, comes alive. We realise that it's all true. Then it becomes so precious to us. Because it's living and powerful. It's got a life of it's own. It's God's Word, not man's.

Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox and others who want the church to be a higher authority than the Scriptures, would tell us that the Bible is a product of the church - the church decided in about the fourth century which books would go in the Bible - but that's not true. This verse proves that. "*Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*" Scripture became Scripture as soon as it came off the pen of the writer, whether church councils recognised it as Scripture or not. The fact that it took nearly 400 years for a

church council to decide what Scripture was, just proves how long it takes church councils to agree on anything.

And then they got it wrong. They got the 27 books of the New Testament right, but they got the Old Testament wrong. They decided that a Greek translation known as the Septuagint was the inspired Word of God. Not only was that a translation from the original Hebrew, but it contained 14 extra books, which we know today as the Apocrypha. And that's why Roman Catholic Bibles contain these extra books.

It's the original Hebrew Old Testament that's the inspired Word of God:

Romans 3:1,2

“What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.”

这样说来，犹太人有什么长处？割礼有什么益处呢？凡事大有好处。第一是神的圣言交托他们。

How do I know that the Apocrypha is not the Word of God? It's got mistakes in it, the oracles of God were committed to the Jews not Greeks, and it doesn't burn in my bones when I read it.

Let's go back to verse 19:

“ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts”

你们在这预言上留意，直等到天发亮晨星在你们心里出现的时候，才是好的。

We should take heed to this book. It's far more sure than even our own experience. It's a light that shines in a dark place. It's the only light we've got. But we've only got it for a short time.

“until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.”

One day, we'll get to glory, and we'll no longer need the Bible any more.

1 Corinthians 13:12

“For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.”

我们如今仿佛对着镜子观看，模糊不清（模糊不清原文作如同猜谜）。到那时，就要面对面了。我如今所知道的有限。到那时就全知道，如同主知道我一样。

While we're here in this world, we need direction. We need guidance. We need

the Lord to show us the way. Here, we still only see the things of God through a glass darkly. Many people disagree on many different Scriptures and their interpretation. And that's always going to be the case. But that doesn't stop the Scriptures being a light shining in a dark place. It's all we have to go on. But the Lord will make sure that we've got enough light to see our way through this world, and bring us safely to our home in the next world.

Do you want to know what heaven's like? There are glimpses of it in this book. Do you want to know what Christ was like? Do you want to know why He came into the world? He came into the world to save sinners. That's us. If we put our trust completely in Him and His saving work on the cross, He can take us out of this miserable old life of ours, into to a new life, an eternal life with Christ ruling in our hearts. Why would anyone not want that? Let's read this book and find out all we can about our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

He can change our lives forever through this book. And this book can also give us everything we need to know for life and godliness. It keeps us from sin:

Psalm 119:11

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."

我将你的话藏在心里，免得我得罪你。

Psalm 119:105

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

你的话是我脚前的灯，是我路上的光。

Let's love this book. Let's take heed to it. Let's be converted by it. Let's live by it. Let's make it our most precious possession. And let us allow it to change us day by day, so that we can become ever more like Christ. He said:

John 17:17

"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."

求你用真理使他们成圣。你的道就是真理。

This book is a far more sure word of prophecy than any experience we can ever have. And it's a far better witness to unbelievers than we can ever be ourselves. The best thing we can do is point people to this book. To the extent that the truth from this book is preached, propagated and lived out in our lives, that's the extent to which the Lord can use us to bring people to Himself.