

Transformed From the Inside Out

Pastor Jason Epperson on the Transfiguration, Daily Surrender, God's Glory, and the Life-Changing Presence of Jesus

Program Summary

Pastor Jason Epperson takes listeners into Mark 9 and the transfiguration of Jesus. Peter, James, and John see Jesus radiant with glory alongside Moses and Elijah and hear the Father's command: 'This is my beloved Son; listen to Him.' Yet the deepest miracle is not simply what the disciples saw on the mountain. Jesus was always God; the wonder is that He ordinarily veiled His glory and entered our world. The message contrasts outward behavior modification - a masquerade - with genuine transformation from the inside out. Through the cross, resurrection, the indwelling Holy Spirit, and daily surrender, Jesus does not merely help people look better; He gives new life.

Key Takeaways

The transfiguration reveals glory that was already in Jesus; He was always God.
Behavior modification can become a masquerade that covers problems without changing the heart.
Real transformation begins when I stop pretending I can fix myself and surrender to Jesus.
Moses and Elijah remind believers that suffering and death are not the end; glory is ahead.
Sometimes I need to stop doing and simply be present with God.
Romans 12 connects transformation with daily surrender and the renewing of the mind.
Knowing God's Word is essential in a world filled with competing claims and false truths.
The glory cloud throughout Scripture points repeatedly to God's presence.
The disciples' lasting transformation came through the cross, resurrection, and indwelling Holy Spirit.
Anything I make my ultimate identity apart from Jesus can become a spiritual crisis.
If the Lord is God, follow Him - not only on the mountaintop but in ordinary daily life.

Scripture References

Mark 9:2-13, Mark 9:7, Romans 12:1-2, Galatians 2:20, Exodus 13:21-22, 1 Kings 8:10-11, Luke 1:35, Acts 1:9, Luke 21:27, Malachi 4:5-6, Acts 2:1-4

Quote of the Day

"If the Lord is God, follow Him."

Broadcast Notes

Pastor Jason begins with hardship but insists suffering does not have the final word because Jesus is present and glory is coming. In Mark 9, Jesus is transfigured before Peter, James, and John. Jason emphasizes that Jesus did not suddenly become divine; His glory shone from within. This leads to the contrast between transformation and masquerade. Moses and Elijah provide visible encouragement that life continues beyond death. Jason tells the tender story of his friend Greg, who was baptized after many conversations about Jesus and later, while in hospice, asked Jason to sit on the deck and talk about heaven. Peter's offer to build tents becomes another application: servant-oriented Christians can rush to do something when sometimes God is inviting them simply to remain in His presence. The Father's voice leads into Romans 12 and daily surrender. Jason traces the biblical imagery of God's glory cloud and concludes that the disciples' courageous transformation came after the cross, resurrection, and Pentecost when the Holy Spirit dwelt within them.

Practical Applications

Ask whether I am pursuing genuine transformation or merely improving the mask.
Begin each day: 'Jesus, I trust You more than I trust myself.'
Remember that suffering is real but not final; glory is ahead for those who belong to Jesus.
Spend unhurried time simply being with God.

Offer one selfish desire to God as a living sacrifice.

Replace some worldly input with God's Word.

Place work, politics, relationships, success, and possessions beneath my identity in Jesus.

Ask the Holy Spirit where I am conforming rather than being transformed.

Listen for Jesus before rushing to speak, build, fix, or perform.

Take Elijah's question personally: if I believe the Lord is God, what would following Him look like tomorrow morning?

Today's Challenge

For seven mornings, read Romans 12:1-2 and pray: 'Jesus, I trust You more than I trust myself. Transform me from the inside out.' Identify one area where you are tempted to masquerade, control, or conform, surrender it to God, and take one obedient step.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for revealing Your glory in Jesus. I do not want merely to look changed on the outside while hiding the same struggles within. Transform me from the inside out. Teach me to surrender my selfishness, fears, ambitions, habits, and identity to Jesus day by day. When hardship, sickness, grief, or rejection comes, anchor me in the hope that suffering is not final and glory is ahead. Help me slow down enough to be present with You instead of always rushing to do something. Renew my mind through Your Word. Holy Spirit, make Your home in me and continue the work of sanctification that I cannot accomplish by willpower alone. If You are God - and I believe You are - help me follow You today, tomorrow, and every day. In Jesus' name, Amen.

About Today's Speaker

Pastor Jason Epperson serves at CU Church and regularly teaches God's Word with a conversational style, vivid illustrations, and direct practical application. In this message from Mark 9, he uses the transfiguration to point beyond spectacular spiritual experiences toward the deeper miracle of inward transformation through Jesus and the indwelling Holy Spirit.

About Today's Host

Mark Burns is General Manager of the WLUJ Family of Stations and Great News Radio Network and host of Mark & Friends. For decades, Mark has served in Christian radio and ministry with a heart for helping listeners know Jesus and grow deeper in God's Word.

Proofread Broadcast Transcript

Reading from Mark chapter 9, verse 7. This is my beloved son, listen to him. That was Mark chapter 9, verse 7. O magnify the Lord with me, let us exalt His name together. It's Monday, September 14th, 2026.

Welcome to Mark & Friends. Today, Pastor Jason Epperson of CU Church takes us up the mountain with Peter, James, and John for an extraordinary glimpse of the glory of Jesus. But Pastor Jason reminds us that Jesus doesn't merely want us to see something spectacular.

He desires to transform us from the inside out. Here's Pastor Jason Epperson. We live in a world where there is hardship.

We live in a world where there is disease. We live in a world where there is sickness, there is pain, there is poverty. We can make lists of all the hardships.

People will reject you and you'll be rejected. It's hard. But in those moments of hardship, what Jesus says is, if you're willing to know that I'm with you in the hardship, that through the cross, through your suffering, glory is coming.

And that's where we find him. It says these words in chapter 9, verse 2. After six days, Jesus took with him Peter, James, and John and led them on a high mountain by themselves. So he takes Peter, James, and John, some of his closest buddies, they go up on the hill.

And I think there's lots of different reasons for this moment. I think this is probably happening during the Feast of Tabernacles. But as they walk up on this hillside, why is Jesus bringing them with him? Well, in some ways, these are

the leaders of these leaders.

And as they walk up on this hill, it's like, what do they need to find the courage? What do they need to find the hope in the midst of hardship? I need to point this out, that this hardship that they suffer, and the hardship that we suffer, we talk about it every week is, when sin came into the picture, God designed it perfect. I need you to nod your heads. God designed it perfect.

When sin came in, it got screwed up. Then God said, I'm going to fix it. And heaven someday is the restoration.

It is the moment when all is perfect again. It's the moment when God not only dwells within us, but God is all-encompassing us, and we are one with Him completely. It is the moment where there will be no more pain, and no more sickness, and no more darkness.

But until then, we live in this world, and God still steps in and helps us. But that's what's happening. So it goes on, and these guys are hurting.

They don't know what's happening, and then all of a sudden, this happens. And he was transfigured. So they went up on the mountain by themselves.

They're chilling with Jesus. They're talking. Then all of a sudden, it says this, And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could ever bleach them.

So literally, in Matthew, it says they fell asleep, and then they woke up, and all of a sudden, Jesus is lit up. And the word that's used here is transfigured. Another way to say it is transformed.

Another way to say it in the Greek text is it's literally the word for metamorphosis, like caterpillar to butterfly, like was transformed. Here's something I need to point out is this light that was here, it wasn't that light came down on him. It's that light came out of him.

See the difference? You're like, oh, man, what an incredible miracle, man. If I could see that, that would change everything. Here's the crazy thing is the miracle wasn't the transformation of Jesus.

The miracle wasn't the transfiguration. The miracle was every single day he didn't walk around looking like this because he was always God. The miracle was he cloaked himself to look like us.

Another way to look at it is in our lives, there's two different ways we think about transformation. In your life growing up, if you grew up in a church or you grew up in any setting, there's two different words. One is like transformation.

The other is like a masquerade. Halloween, you dress up like something. Jesus didn't dress up like something.

He was something. In your life, lots of times in your life, it's like I'm struggling with this as a parent. I'm struggling with this in life.

I'm struggling with my singleness. I'm struggling as a college student to figure things out. I'm struggling at work.

And what you do is how can I cover up the problems so I can look okay? One of what we talk about is behavior modification. How can I act my way? How can I behave my way into something better? That's like a masquerade. You're literally just putting on a mask to cover the problem.

Been there? You can nod your head. You can blink your eyes. Whatever you want to do.

Or there's a moment in your life you are transformed. The transformation happens when you say, God, I can't fake it anymore. God, I can't do this on my own.

God, I have struggled too much. I need to be transformed. I want to give my life to you.

That's when we eat the bread of life. That's when Jesus comes into our world. We surrender us.

Jesus comes in. Right? That's the moment. Now, as this happens, you move forward.

That's what's happening here is it's a transformation from the inside. In this room, I'm telling you, you will constantly be worn out, struggle in life, if you just try to fix it yourself. Versus allowing God to do what? Transform it.

It goes on and says these words. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. So why would he do this? If you know your buddy's about to die, all of a sudden they say, Elijah, they see Moses.

Why did Elijah and Moses matter so much? Little brief background. Moses, you've probably heard about. There's a Disney movie about him.

Okay? Moses, you know, he's like the centerpiece of what they call the law. Like Moses represented the law. He's the one that went to the, he received the Ten Commandments.

He was one of the heroes of their faith. So the fact that they knew Moses was dead, literally, they carried his bones around. You with me? Like Moses is dead.

And Elijah went up into heaven on a chariot. Really cool story. But either way, both of these two people are no longer on earth.

Both of these people are with God. And so they know that Jesus is going to die. They know now that they're going to die.

They know that they're going to suffer. They know all these things. Then all of a sudden they open up their eyes and they see the encouragement of Moses and Elijah.

They see, oh, there's life after this. In my own life, lots of moments happen that it really matters there's life after it. I think it was about four weeks ago.

One of my close friends, his name was Greg, drove to his house. He'd been battling cancer for quite a while. This last winter, I think it was January or February, on a Sunday we were here.

He was kind of sitting in the back. And as he was sitting in the back at the end of the service, I was like, hey, if anyone really feels like they need to get baptized today, come on up and let's do that. Some of you might have been here that week.

And next thing you know, there's a bunch of people coming up and getting baptized. And I'm baptizing people and we're talking to them. And they're surrendering their lives to Jesus.

It's a super exciting moment. And I see Greg standing there. And me and Greg have had lots of talks about Jesus.

He had lost his son about a year and a half previously to cancer. And he looks at me and I look at him. I said, do you want to do this? And his eyes well up with tears and he started crying.

He said, I do. And he got into that water and he was baptized into Christ in this moment. He publicly told the world he loved Jesus.

Well, guess what? Three weeks ago or four weeks ago, I drive to his house and hospice had been called. And he was in his last days. And I drove over there and we're talking.

And he said, hey, can we go out on the deck? And so we sat on his deck and we talked about life after. He said, can you just talk to me about heaven? And I talked about all the different moments that we know that are encouraging. Like how encouraging was this for Peter, James and John to know, even if it's hard here, glory is in front of us.

And how encouraging is it for us to know that no matter how hard or how broken or how sick or how whatever, that glory is in front of us. And we sat there on that deck and we cried together. And this little bit of fear that he had went away.

And he asked questions that were real questions. And the answers were like, I really do believe because of what it says here. There's lots of other places in scripture.

I believe when you get to heaven, you're going to recognize people because they recognize Moses. They recognize Elijah. But the glory of the moment is not seeing people who you've lost.

The glory of the moment is seeing the God who saved them. But family, just for us in this room, I want you to know God didn't put you on this earth to suffer. God didn't put you on this earth to be addicted.

He didn't put you on this earth to struggle the way that we struggle. That was not God's purpose. God's purpose was for us to live in relationship with him in a perfect union.

Sin screwed this up. But God defeated it. God defeated it with Elijah.

God defeated it in Moses time. Like, think about Moses and Elijah. Just think about this.

Moses came in and what did God do? He flexed on all the Egyptian false gods. All the false gods, he did miraculous works to show the world, no, trust me, don't trust them. What does he do with Elijah? Elijah comes near the people.

He stands up. There's this prophet Baal, 450 prophets running around, jumping up and down, asking for fire to come down. Elijah just standing there like, come on, fellows, what's going on? Like, how's Baal doing? Baal's not doing too well.

And they're doing all these things. They're cutting themselves. They're bleeding.

They're like doing everything they can for the fire to come down. And then finally, once Elijah said, okay, my turn. Hey, take 12 jars, 12 big jars of water, pour it over it, dig a trench around it.

And basically he buries his pillar of like wood and all these things in water. Like he covers it in water. He soaks it in water.

He looks at God. He's like, okay, God, let's show him what's up. Boom.

Fire come down and it literally licks it up. And in that moment, there's a contest. And guess who wins a contest? God wins the contest.

God wins a contest with Pharaoh. God wins a contest. God, listen to me, God wins.

That's why this is so encouraging. Because I know in your life, there is hard things. I know in your life, there is death.

There is pain. There is false accusations. It's hard.

But hear me say this, guys. In this world we call God created, guess what? He wins. And sometimes I just need to remember that.

It's encouraging to me. It goes on and says this. Let us make three tents.

So how's Peter react? Peter's like, uh, he's like, and Peter said to Jesus, Rabbi, is it good that we're here? Like, I don't know if we're supposed to be here. Like, I say, Elijah, I see Moses, I see you. You ever in your life, like your spouse is about to elbow you or a friend? So I'm just giving you a heads up.

You don't know what to say and you shouldn't say anything, but you say something. And then you regret like, oh, crap. That's most of us, right? Well, that's Peter right here.

Peter didn't really know what was happening, but would we? But Peter, of course, pops off and says something. I can't identify with him at all. It goes on and says this.

Let us make three tents. One for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah. If we did not know what to say, for they were terrified.

Now there is something here I want us to learn from Peter that I don't believe it was the intention of Mark when he wrote this. Like when Peter's talking to Mark, but I need to tell you something I've learned in my life. And a lot of this room is like me.

And this is what it is. In your life, when God does something crazy cool. When you are encouraged, you are convicted.

Just like a moment in your life when it's like, oh, yes. The next moment for me is this. I'm just, this is a repenting statement.

Okay, what are we going to do? Like literally God has shown up. Moses is there. Elijah is there.

Jesus is there. And his first thought is, what can I do? The reason I'm telling you that is because what I've learned in my life is sometimes I just need to be. I just need to be present with God versus hurry off and trying to do something.

Because if God wanted tense there, could he have made himself tense? Y'all, he just brought back two people. And I think sometimes as a church family, we are a church family that's involved in doing lots of things. This room is full of public servants.

Praise God. All of you are servant oriented people or you probably wouldn't call this church your home. But I just need to tell you that until we can rest in the presence of God sometimes.

When God does something crazy, just like, okay, God, I just, like Peter should have said like, hey, Lord, can we just be with you? Hey, Elijah, I got some questions. Hey, Moses, what was it like, bro? But I think sometimes we get, not you, sometimes I get too busy and I think I need to do something. Because I need to, I'm not saying it out loud, but I'm saying it out loud.

I need to earn something that's been given. When the reality is, y'all, it's a gift. Then he goes on and says this.

And a cloud overshadowed them and a voice came from the cloud. This is my beloved son. Listen to him.

And suddenly looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them, but Jesus only. So a cloud comes over them and says, this is my son. Y'all, this is crazy.

This is happening. Peter, James, and John are completely overwhelmed. But this concept of a cloud, it's not new.

I want to put some scripture on the screen. The first scripture I'm going to go through is in Romans 12. Let's put that up there first.

In Romans 12, I just need to point this out. I'm going to read it, then we're going to talk about it. It says, I appeal to you, therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual act of worship.

Okay, let's pause for a second and look over here at the cross. In your life and in my life, we do this a lot. But hear me say this, it's a struggle for us.

In your life, when you surrender your life to Jesus, whether that was the moment you prayed or the moment you said, God, come into me. Like, Lord, I trust you, God, more than I trust myself. In that moment, the Holy Spirit comes to live inside of you.

Then it tells you every single day of your life, offer your life as a living sacrifice. That's your spiritual act of worship. So then you have a choice.

Am I going to follow what the world says? And ultimately what I mean, the world says, am I going to follow what the enemy, what Satan says? Am I going to fill myself and fill the void with the things of the world? Or am I going to sacrifice my selfish desires? We all have them. Look at me. We all have them.

And surrender and worship God by seeking him every day and eating the daily bread and the living water he gives me. And when I do that, I become transformed. Salvation is a free gift.

You are justified by God. Sanctification is where transformation happens, and it happens with the only act you have to do is surrender. But it's daily.

The passage ends this way. It goes on and says this. Do not be conformed to this world, right? Do not chase the world, but we'd be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that by testing you may discern what the will of God, what is good, what is acceptable, what is perfect.

Like I've talked about you guys a lot because God has got it on my heart. If there has ever been a season in our history, and right now I believe it's so true, if we do not know God's word and you are not digging into understanding what the Holy Spirit is doing in your life, what He is doing in your life, then the world is getting more confusing. There is more false truths out there than ever.

Guys, we've got to know Him, and we've got to know Him, and we've got to know Him, because that's the only way we're going to get through it. So the cloud comes down. You catch that part? Let's look at all the times in history the cloud comes down.

Let's put them on the screen. Here we go. First one, Exodus 13, pillar of clouds stood by Israel in the wilderness.

Remember they come to the Red Sea, the cloud comes down, the Holy Spirit's present, God's present. So the cloud is kind of used as like God's presence. It goes on and says this in Exodus 16, God spoke to Israel through the cloud of glory.

Cloud of glory where God met with Moses. So Moses goes up on the mount, right? He receives the Ten Commandments. What comes down? A cloud.

Next thing we see is cloud of glory stood by the door of the tabernacle. So when Moses went in, he would be with God. He had to come out and veil his face, right? Because the cloud of glory was on it.

Next, it goes on and says this, God appeared to the high priest in the holy place inside the veil of the cloud of glory. High priest, Titus, remember, bell around his waist, rope around his leg, he walked back, a cloud would come in, like the presence of God is represented as a cloud in these moments. Then it goes on and says, God appeared to Solomon in cloud when the temple was dedicated.

Filling the temple and priest could not continue. Next, in vision, Ezekiel saw the cloud filling the temple of God with the brightness of his glory. Cloud of glory overshadowed Mary when she conceived Jesus by the power of his Holy Spirit.

Y'all, that's so cool. That's Christmas. Actually, it's nine months before Christmas.

Ish, months. But guys, I just think, imagine in your life, a cloud of glory. Next one, it says this, cloud of glory received Jesus into heaven as ascension.

When Jesus rises from the dead and he rises into heaven, what happens? The cloud of glory brings him into heaven. And then this in the end, in Luke 21, 27, this cloud will display the glory of Jesus Christ when he returns in triumph to this earth. When Jesus returns and the dead in Christ will rise first, in that moment, when he returns and the cloud comes home, the glory of God will bring him.

My mic's cutting in and out, huh? I'm just gonna keep preaching. I gotta yell sometimes. Just point at me and say, Jason, yell, alright? I need to say this one time.

How cool would it have been to hear the audible voice of God in a cloud? And as they were coming down the mountain, he charged them to tell no one with what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So Jesus is like, hey guys, I know this is crazy. I know this is cool.

I hope you're encouraged. I hope that when you get this diagnosis, you can walk down this road and you're gonna be okay because hear me say, death has been conquered, sin has been conquered, and you're good. I hope you're gonna be okay.

And then it goes on. He says, don't tell anyone right now, which that'd be a hard secret to keep. You with me? Then it says this, so they kept their matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead, what it meant.

And then they asked him, why did the scribes say that Elijah must come first? And he said to them, Elijah does come first to restore all things and how it's written in the Son of Man that he should suffer many things and be treated with contempt. But I tell you that Elijah has come and they did to him whatever they pleased and it's written. This is from Malachi chapter 4 verses 5 and 6 that talks about Elijah coming first.

Now there's two different ways to view this passage and I'm not sure which one is right. I'm just gonna tell you. One is, this is talking specifically about in the coming of Christ, the second coming of Christ, the two witnesses, one being Elijah.

That could be it. So Elijah comes back. That could be that.

It also could be that John the Baptist lots of times too is referred to as the one who had the spirit of Elijah because John the Baptist did what? He made a way. He cleared the path by calling people to repentance. See you don't know you need Jesus until you recognize that all of us in this room are sitting in a pool of sin.

Like surrendering your life to Jesus without recognizing what you're surrendering is your selfishness and your sinfulness isn't surrender. Elijah, in the moment I talked about, he said a lot of incredible things and it was like God versus Baal and God versus Jezebel and Moses versus all the false gods of Egypt. But the greatest victory was when? Jesus on a cross.

Hey family, imagine being Peter, James, and John and you got to see with your own eyes Elijah and Moses. Wee boy! Ain't no Disney movie like real deal. But just imagine seeing Moses and Elijah.

Imagine now how crazy it would be to see the glory of who God is and the character nature and the transfigured body of Jesus. What? Give me some of that. And then it gets even better.

A cloud comes down and you hear the voice of God. What? Like what would happen in your life if you saw that? What would happen in your life if you heard that? What would happen in your life if you experienced that? Let me tell you what happened to Peter, James, and John. It was a highlight but it wasn't the moment of transformation for them.

See the moment of transformation was not seeing Moses and Elijah, not seeing Jesus in his glory, and not hearing the audible voice of God. That was not the moment that they were transformed into the likeness of God. The moment was this.

Jesus goes to a cross, he dies on a cross for their sins and my sins and your sins. He raises from the dead and death is conquered. Still not the moment of transformation.

It changed everything but then you go 40 days, Jesus is with them, 10 more days, there's this day called Pentecost. They walk into the temple, don't know what to do, don't know where to go, not real courageous. The Holy Spirit comes down and dwells inside their hearts.

God's in their hearts. And when God joins them inside, y'all watch out. It went from 12 to 50 to 150 to 2,000 and now there's 4 billion people saying we love Jesus today in this world because of the transformation that happens when God dwells inside of you.

Family, it would be cool to see Moses and Elijah. It'd be cool to hear the audible voice of God through a cloud. It'd be so cool to see the transformational visual image of Jesus.

But nothing is as cool as God making his home in you. He lives in you. He's for you.

And that's the hope I have. I don't need to see a risen Moses and Elijah to believe in life after death. Why? Because God's inside of me and God doesn't reject himself.

Elijah came near the people at the end of his ministry life. He's standing up on this hill and this is his comment. If the Lord is God, then follow him.

Students, like follow him. It's this. Like this is the visual imagery we do here.

If God is God and Jesus is God and you believe that he's God, then follow him. But if you believe the world is better, you believe Baal is better, you believe Jezebel is better, you believe your phone is better, you believe your work is better, you believe that guy, that girl, you believe this organization, you believe this political party, you believe this nation, like whatever you want to identify yourself with because the reality is anything you identify yourself with outside of the blood of Jesus is literally a crisis waiting to happen. So if you want to make that your God, Elijah's like here's the line.

Go follow him. See how it works out for you. But if you want to follow the God of all creation, if you want to follow the transformation of power, of the God that brings fire down and licks up the offering, if you want to follow a God that rests in a cloud, the God that raises the dead to life, the God that transforms the world with a moment, if you want to follow that God, then turn right.

And it starts with me recognizing every day that my death is what brings me life. My surrender of my selfishness, my surrender of the things of this world and my following Christ is where my hope is found. Jesus.

How long will we wait for two opinions, y'all? If the Lord is God, follow him. If the things of the world are God, follow it. Keep on coming back.

We're glad you're here. And when the pieces fall, we'll be there to pick them up with you. But family, there is one way under heaven in which we must be safe and his name is Jesus.

And his name is Jesus, listening friend. The one who died for our sins, conquered death, rose again and offers something far greater than simply changing our outward behavior. He offers us new life, transformation from the inside out.

So if the Lord is God, as Pastor Jason challenged us, follow him. Not merely on the mountaintop, but tomorrow morning and the morning after that, daily surrendering ourselves and allowing the Holy Spirit to reshape our hearts and lives. And continue growing with us under the Mark & Friends tab at greatnewsradio.org or wluj.org where you can hear today's program again, read the transcripts, explore the scriptures, key takeaways, practical applications, today's challenge, and additional resources to help you grow deeper in your walk with Jesus.

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God bless you and have a great day and night.