

JESUS: THE SERVANT AT WORK

VOLUME TWO

STUDY THIRTEEN

SHHH! You're Witnessing a Divine Phenomenon

Mark 9:1–13

One of my prayers for us as a body of people is that we will cultivate a love for silence, solitude, and intimacy with the living God.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

WE often talk too much. Words bubble out of our mouths like water from a fountain. Someone hasn't finished speaking, and we're ready with a quick response. Silence can create an awkward social vacuum, and the urge to say something, anything, generates pressure we can't resist. To fill the vacuum, we make comments about things we really don't know that much about!

The problem of the undisciplined tongue springs from our fallen condition. Sin has polluted the fountain that flows in our hearts, our minds, and our mouths (Romans 3:13–14). So even after we've come to faith in Christ, our struggles with the tongue make us realize that it takes more than willpower to cure the affliction.

Jesus' disciples had the same problem of not knowing when to talk and when to listen. For example, in one moment, Peter bravely confessed to Jesus, "You are the Messiah" (Mark 8:29), but in the next, he brazenly rebuked Jesus for saying He "must suffer" (8:31).

In the passage for this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study, we'll explore another of Peter's verbal blunders, when he witnessed a truly divine phenomenon: Jesus' transfiguration. Once again, Peter spoke when he should have bowed his head in reverential awe.

In our relationship with God, it's not always what we say but *how well we listen* that's important. Through Peter's experience and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we'll learn vital principles on how to cultivate a love for silence as we pursue intimacy with the living God.



INSIGHT FOR LIVING



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SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES
BIBLE STUDIES

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PREPARE YOUR HEART

Keep prayer a priority!

Speak, Lord, in the stillness as we wait on You. Hush our hearts to listen with expectancy. Open our eyes so that we might understand what You have written. And then equally important, open our hearts that we might apply what we understand. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Echo this desire for stillness in your soul so that your heart can listen with expectancy. Ask the Lord to help you live in the awareness of His presence as you study and practice His Word.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Early in His Galilean ministry, Jesus preached good news—“the Kingdom of God is near!” (Mark 1:15). Now, Jesus announced more good news to His disciples:

“I tell you the truth, some standing here right now will not die before they see the Kingdom of God arrive in great power!” (9:1)

This verse is like a hinge, linking the previous section of Mark to the rest of the book. Jesus had just laid out the conditions of discipleship—they must “deny” themselves, “take up [their] cross,” and be willing to lose their life for His sake (8:34–35 NASB). From chapter 9 and onward, Mark traces Jesus’ path to the cross. But Jesus’ death won’t be the end for Him, nor will it be the end for His followers. Just as Jesus was raised, so will we be raised. What a glorious hope!

Remember, Mark was writing to give hope to persecuted believers in Rome. Mark includes the account of Jesus’ transfiguration here, at the beginning of Jesus’ journey to the cross, as a reminder of our Savior’s divine identity and a glimpse of His future glory when He returns in power. It was a vision of Christ that His followers would never forget and, someday, would carry to the world.

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Observation: The Disciples See Jesus' Transfiguration

Read [Mark 9:1–13](#) carefully in various translations and pay attention to the details. This step of the *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, observation, is foundational for interpretation—discovering the meaning of the passage.¹

Look at the different parts of 9:1 carefully. Note how the first word, “and” (NASB), connects this verse to what appears before. To whom was Jesus speaking? What did He say to them?

Six days later, Jesus took Peter, James, and John up a high mountain, probably Mount Hermon, to be alone. What happened to Jesus' appearance and clothes while He was praying (Luke 9:29)? Who appeared and began talking with Jesus? Put yourself in the scene. What thoughts and feelings would be coursing through your mind and heart?

What did Peter exclaim? Why do you think he said this? What did the voice that came out of the cloud say? Then, what happened when they looked around?

Peter did not know what to say because they were terrified. Right after Peter blurted this strange statement, a cloud formed, overshadowing them, and a voice came out of the cloud, “This is My Son, the beloved One.” And then He said, “Listen to Him.” In other words, “Stop talking! Listen.”

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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Mark 9:1–13

Follow the disciples down the mountain after Jesus' transfiguration and the Father's admonition. Summarize the conversation that takes place in Mark 9:9–13. What are your observations?

Allow yourself a little imagination here. You're James or Peter or John. You've had this reproof from the Father. You've witnessed this incredible transfiguration, and none of the other disciples have ever seen anything like it. You've been told to listen to Him, and you're coming down the mountain. Do you think by now you'd listen? —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: A Divine Phenomenon

What did Jesus mean when He said, “Some standing here right now will not die before they see the Kingdom of God arrive in great power!” (Mark 9:1)? Perhaps Jesus was referring to His resurrection and ascension that His disciples would later witness. Perhaps He meant the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Or the spread of the gospel throughout the world. Or John's vision of Christ's return and the end times recorded in the book of Revelation.

A good rule of thumb for interpretation is to first examine the context. Most likely, Jesus had in mind the transfiguration itself. How might Jesus' revealing His divinity and glory foreshadow the kingdom of God coming in power? Consult Pastor Chuck's commentary, [Insights on Mark](#), for help, or you can look online at [Constable's Notes](#) at netbible.org.

Why do you think Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus? What did each one represent, and how was Jesus the fulfillment of both?

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Look up [Mark 9:2–6](#) in the MSG and the J. B. Phillips translations. Explain what happened to Jesus when He was transfigured and Peter's response.

He slipped back, if you will, into His prehuman existence in eternity past and the resplendent glory of His essence burst forth. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

The heavenly cloud covered the mountain as it covered Mount Sinai, but Jesus isn't just another Moses or Elijah. He is the "Messiah," as Peter confessed (8:29). God said, "This is my dearly loved Son. Listen to him" (9:7). Why do you think God made this pronouncement in this context?

Coming down the mountain, the disciples discussed the rabbis' views on Elijah, probably drawn from Malachi 4:5, which says Elijah would come "before the great and dreadful day of the LORD arrives." How did Jesus' response in [Mark 9:12–13](#) clarify the Scripture's teaching about the Messiah as a servant who must suffer?



Correlation: Cultivating Silence

Peter referred to his experience on the mountain in [2 Peter 1:16–17](#). How does correlating what Peter later wrote help you grasp the meaning of this passage?

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James, Jesus' half-brother, left us some timeless truths about the necessity of taming our tongue. How can the tongue be tamed? How can believers' fountains produce only fresh water according to [Galatians 5:16–23](#) and [James 3:1–13](#)? What do passages such as [Proverbs 10:19](#); [13:3](#); [17:27–28](#); [21:23](#); [Ecclesiastes 5:2–3](#); and [James 1:19](#) teach us?

When you don't know what to say, don't say it. Seal your lips and listen. Observe. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: Cultivate a Love for Silence, Solitude, and Intimacy with God

As we reflect on the eternal truths that we've learned, we let God's light penetrate the dark areas of our lives. This is where transformation happens—when we quiet ourselves before Him as He guides us in His way. How does this Bible passage usher God's light into the dark areas of your soul?

Through protracted periods of quietness, you learn to be contented. You don't always need to buy something else. You don't need "more." You don't need "another." You don't need "bigger." In the quietness, you find contentment takes the place of this hunger for more and more. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Pastor Chuck shares with us seven benefits of listening:

1. *You learn longer-lasting lessons.*
2. *You observe others with more discernment.*
3. *You think deeper thoughts.*
4. *You develop increased self-awareness.*
5. *You glean greater meaning from life experiences.*
6. *You cultivate genuine contentment.*
7. *You become intimately acquainted with God.*

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Taming the tongue necessitates God's power! Why not take some time to request His assistance as you seek to practice the discipline of silence?

What have you learned about Jesus through this passage that inspires your worship? Pause in a moment of silence as you draw near in intimate connection with your glorious, resplendent Savior. What is He saying to you through His Word? What would you like to say to Him?

We are not silent people. So, we don't glean from life experiences. This is not about human stuff. This is about divine messages that you don't get when you're busy talking. One of my prayers for us as a body of people is that we will cultivate a love for silence, solitude, and intimacy with the living God. I want that for you as much as I want anything. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



A FINAL PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your timely message. Help me to be quick to listen and slow to speak. Attune my heart to Your plan, Your time, and Your glory. In the name of the Anointed One, I pray. Amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the web page "*How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?*" at insight.org.

For the 2026–2027 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study was developed by Mirlenda Noëlliste in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages. Copyright © 2011, 2026 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

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