

Luke 9:28-36 *The Transfiguration*

Now about eight days after these sayings he took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray.

And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white.

When Neil Armstrong hopped off the ladder of the lunar module Eagle and put the first footprint on the surface of the moon on July 20, 1969, the world became a very different place.

From that point on, generations of people would point to that event as the pinnacle of human achievement and subsequently wonder why everything isn't easier by comparison.

“If they can put a man on the moon ...”

- Why can't we cure cancer?
- End world hunger?
- Achieve world peace?

These are all **“moonshot”** goals.

President Kennedy said we chose to go to the moon and back because it was seemingly impossible. That goal was chosen so that we could prove to ourselves what we were capable of.

This goal was not universally accepted in America. Many believed it was mostly about the Vietnam war and beating the Russians.

But think of all the steely-eyed missile men (and women) with slide rules and those first fearless astronauts who invested their lives in the Apollo Program. A moonshot goal looks impossible on the surface but determined people with a clear vision can make what seems impossible become a reality.

When Jesus first called his disciples, many of them were signing on to a **“moonshot”**.

They had left behind their former occupations to follow an itinerant rabbi around Galilee because they were compelled by the vision of the kingdom of God.

For first-century Jews, that vision was not the peaceable kingdom of Isaiah, but the social justice of Amos or Joel. It was gritty and political. For many of them, the moonshot was someday overthrowing their Roman occupiers, God’s anointed king and messiah set on the throne, and God’s presence returned to the temple.

It was a vision of freedom from oppression with peace and security for all. It seemed like an impossibility given the number of Roman spears and warhorses that patrolled the roads and streets. But then again, there was this Jesus who (with the proper guidance and support) could make it happen. He had performed amazing miracles, drawn huge crowds and become popular with the people. Maybe he was the one who could shoot the moon, reverse their fortunes and transform them from paupers into princes.

After all, if Jesus could perform these miracles, why couldn’t he:

- **Cure all disease,**
- **End World Hunger,**
- **Achieve World Peace?**

People who make the moonshot usually gain quite a lot.

- Neal Armstrong was forever glorified as the 1st man on the moon.
- Founders of Apple, Google, Amazon, Facebook, etc. all became fabulously wealthy.
- Spielberg, Lucas and Peter Jackson are revered by countless fans.

That's the kind of **moonshot** the disciples thought they signed on for.

Jesus asked his disciples who they thought he was, and Peter answered,

“The Christ, the Messiah of God”.

You da man! And we're going to make it to the moon!

You know what happened then. Jesus said,

- Peter, you got the wrong goal, the wrong target.
- I'm not shooting for the moon!
- I'm not trying to reestablish David's piddly little throne.
- I'm shooting for the hearts and minds of the whole world!
- I'm reaching for the sun, the galaxy, the universe!
- I'm here to save all of creation!
- And in order to accomplish that, I'm going to be betrayed, shamefully treated, and put to death on a cross!

Peter instantly jumped in to correct Jesus,

No way, Lord!

That will never happen to you.

We've got it all figured out!

Luke 9:23–25

And Jesus said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.

For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world

and loses or forfeits himself?

Eight days later, Jesus pulls his executive team of Peter, James and John aside and takes them up on a mountain for a corporate retreat.

On an unnamed mountain Jesus gives them a glimpse of his ultimate **moonshot** idea!

While Jesus was praying, his face and clothes were transformed into a heavenly brilliance. It’s an image that recalls Moses’ meeting God on Mount Sinai. Moses’ face became so brilliant that he had to cover it with a veil afterward.

And Jesus is seen conversing with Moses and Elijah about his upcoming **exodus**.

That was the Old Testament **moonshot**- getting the Israelites out of Pharaoh’s clutches with a mighty, outstretched arm.

Now Jesus is talking with them about the New testament **moonshot**- salvation for the whole world through the death of the Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world by paying the price with his own blood.

The big idea is a cross and resurrection!

Peter sees this and instantly thinks his moonshot idea is back in play.

Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.

Jim Collins in his book *From Good to Great*, calls moonshot ideas

Big Hairy Audacious Goals, or BHAGs.

Peter's **BHAG** is to build 3 churches, stay on the mountain and let the world come to them.

Jesus' **BHAG** is to go down the mountain, on to Jerusalem, make the sacrifice necessary to save the world and then fill the disciples with the Holy Spirit and send them into all the world to make disciples.

Peter's idea is to bask in the glory. Jesus' invites us to take up our cross and follow in his footsteps, to serve and to seek the lost.

Luke 9:46–48 Who Is the Greatest?

An argument arose among them as to which of them was the greatest. But Jesus, knowing the reasoning of their hearts, took a child and put him by his side and said to them,

“Whoever receives this child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. For he who is least among you all is the one who is great.”

Often churches will gather their leadership together to establish goals and make strategic plans. Often this involves adopting **BHAGs**.

Very often these **BHAGs** involve building projects and program development.

They may involve spreading their church's DNA to other campuses.

Kind of sounds like Peter to me.

What is Jesus vision for his people?

- That we believe in Him and receive his grace and Holy Spirit.
- That we keep his commandments, thereby showing that we love him and are his disciples.
- That we care for the least of our brothers and sisters as Jesus himself came to seek and to serve.
- That we walk in his light and share his light to those around us.

How about these BHAGs?

- Support missionaries who go with the message of Christ to the ends of the earth.
- Support families of those who are training to become Pastors.
- Open our doors to visitors from far away lands that they might hear the word of God and come to know Jesus Christ as their Savior.
- Involve ourselves in local, national and international ministries to share the Gospel.
- Involve ourselves in local, national and international ministries to help those in need.
- Build up, encourage and equip one another to represent Christ in every aspect of our lives.
- Proclaim the Word of God, stand up for Jesus and shine with his light to all!
- Show our children how great they are in God's eyes and follow their example of faith in Jesus.

Sound like moonshots?

Sound impossible?

Not if we are trusting and following the one who put the moon there in the first place!

It takes steely eyed determination and self-sacrifice but above all faith in the one who calls us to this mission.

Jesus saved the world!

He defeated the power of hell and death!

He sent the Holy Spirit to be with all his people, all the time.

Not just to the moon and back, we are part of the greatest mission of all time.