

Lesson 27: Review of Matthew 17:1-13: "The Transfiguration of Jesus"

An Overview of the Transfiguration (17:1-13)

The transfiguration is a magnificent event recorded in both Matthew and Luke's gospel. For the three disciples who accompanied Jesus up the mountain it was life changing. Peter, James and John would never look at Jesus the same again! They would forever behold Him as the radiance of God's glory!

Transfiguration means that Christ was in essence turned inside out. That is, the glory of His person was unveiled as His deity eclipsed His humanity, even if for a few moments. For a few moments the disciples saw the glorious Sovereign before their eyes! They saw Him conversing with Moses, the law giver, and Elijah the great prophet of reformation, both of historical significance in Israel's history.

Immediately impetuous Peter began serving the transfigured Lord Jesus! "Shall I *pitch a tent*," asked Peter? Oh, how he loved the Lord Jesus. In many ways pastors and church leaders are like Peter. We want to erect "tents" or better said great structures to serve as the "church". But, as Peter would learn, so pastors and church leaders should learn, buildings, structures, facilities are temporary and short lived. So often they stand as monuments to the "golden years" of days gone by! Peter had much to learn as do we! But we can learn!

For Peter the mount of transfiguration would be a keystone of his testimony. In 2 Peter 1:18 Peter indicates that his whole ministry hinges on the confirmation given by God through the revelation of Christ's majesty and glory (2 Pet. 1:16ff). He affirms that he and the two others heard the voice of the Father from heaven while they were on the "sacred mountain". This mount of transfiguration is even more glorious than the mount on which Moses saw the burning bush and heard the voice of God out of the bush namely because on the mount of the Lord's transfiguration they saw the glory of God in Christ (see also John 1:14; Heb. 1:3), a glory revealing the grace and truth of God in Christ! This glory is what the Old Testament calls *the Presence*, or *Shekinah* of God.

Oddly enough when the disciples came down the mountain Jesus told them not to tell anyone! Why? We would like to think that a revelation of glory would be the ultimate sign that Jesus was the Christ. But according to Romans 1:4 it is through His resurrection from the dead that He is confirmed as the Christ, the Son of God! So, as tempting as it would be to glory in His pre-resurrection glory they would have to wait because first there would be His death before His resurrection! The old saying goes, "First the cross then the crown!" So often we want the crown without the cross! That is the trouble Peter ran in to in Matthew 16:21ff.

Jesus Christ: the Glory and Pleasure of God (17:2,5)

On the mountain the disciples saw Christ *transfigured* (turned inside out) and they heard a voice from heaven! I find it interesting that Matthew notes that "while he (Peter) was still speaking the *Shekinah* enveloped them and a voice from the cloud spoke. Peter's insistence upon erecting tents was silenced by the voice. And from the cloud, the voice, the voice of the Father spoke, "This is My beloved Son! With Him I am well pleased. Listen to Him!"

It is so tempting for us to speak for God and to work for God. In this case Peter wanted to both speak and work. But the Father made clear that Jesus is *His Son*. That it is *His Son* that is His beloved. And, that it is *His Son* they must listen too! What counsel can we give Jesus Christ? What can we add to Him? It is He we must cheerfully obey, serve and worship! Peter would soon understand this as he and his fellows "fell down, terrified".

We must also, like them, that Jesus Christ is the glory and pleasure of God. As one who claims Him as your Lord and Savior, is He your glory and pleasure?

None But Jesus—Our Gospel (17:8-9)

Finally, We proclaim no other Sovereign but Christ. It is His words that we must proclaim and obey. He alone is God's salvation for us! We see a great symbol of this truth in 17:8. After they are told to "get up" they open their eyes and see "no one but Jesus". The Voice was terrifying; Moses and Elijah were important! Yet, when they stood there was "no one but Jesus". It is the Gospel of Jesus Christ that provides us the sweet savor of God's grace! He alone can eclipse our self-orientation and set His glory far and above all others!

I would encourage you to pray and to seek the Lord Jesus until after you "open your eyes" you see "no one else but Jesus"!

Questions for Matthew 17:14-27: "By Faith Alone in Christ Alone"

1. From the notes on page 1, **A)** what impressed and/or helped you? **B)** Explain "A".

Introduction to Matthew 17:14-27: In our last lesson we saw the glory of Christ revealed on the Mount of Transfiguration. This week we see the disciples, having come down the mountain begin to learn "how" to put the power of Christ to work by faith.

2. Read Matthew 17:14-21. "Faith's Foundation: The Person of Christ": **A)** Describe what has been happening at the foot of the mountain while Jesus and the three were on the mountain? (vv.14-16) **B)** Describe the "mood" of the people who come to Jesus in vv.14-16. **C)** What was the real problem according to Jesus? **D)** How would you describe the essence of "mustard seed" sized faith? Why is it so potent? **E)** What are the "mountains" Jesus is talking about? **F)** What mountains need moved in your life?

3. Read Matthew 17:22-23: "Faith's Focalization: The Power of Christ" **A)** What does verse 22 indicate? What do you think transpired during the time mentioned in verse 22? **B)** What did Jesus say was going to happen to Him? **C)** What does Jesus focus on in these two verses and what seemed to be their focus? **D)** Who is responsible for Jesus' "betrayal into the hands of men"? The phrase can also be understood at "handed over". Use verses that you know, plus, look at John 10:28; Acts 4:27-28; Heb. 9:14) **E)** What if Christ had not have died on the cross? (see Eph. 1:7) **F)** What if Christ had not been raised from the dead as He promised in 17:23?

4. Read Matthew 17:24-27: "Faith's Fortification: The Provision of Christ" **A)** What is your favorite part of this story? Why? **B)** What do you think about Peter's answer to the question about the temple tax? **C)** What did Jesus indicate to Peter was the reality of their status in His Kingdom as compared to Ceasar's? **D)** Read verse 27. Notice the word "But". Why is this a significant word in this verse? **E)** What do you learn about the provision of Jesus? How could you apply it to your finances? Or, to an area of ministry interest? Or, other?