

A Glimpse of Glory

Spilman Memorial Baptist Church, Kinston NC

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Text: Matthew 17:1-13, Mark 9:2-13, Luke 9:28-36

Purpose: We need to be reminded of the glory of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, who was fully divine and fully human, manifested Himself primarily as a man. But the encounter at the mount of transfiguration was a brief glimpse of His prior and future glory. We need to be reminded that Jesus was not just a man beaten, scourged, and crucified – as the *Passion of the Christ* demonstrated to us. Rather He is the King of Glory – God’s Son whom we are to listen to.

Fresh out of seminary, a young pastor found an associate position at a prestigious church. One Sunday early on in his ministry, he was given the opportunity to preach. He prepared diligently, perhaps a bit too excited to use all the learning he'd acquired from seminary. He worked hard to make his words eloquent and smooth.



Shaking hands at the end of the service, he was approached by one of the older ladies who was known and respected in both the church and community.

"Sir," she said with a smile, "your sermon was like the peace of God!" The young preacher's grin widened and his chest puffed out a bit ... until she continued on, "it surpassed ALL understanding!"¹

I. Introduction

We often speak of our “secular” society, referring to the fact that people are geared to what is temporary, not eternal. People live their lives as if there is no eternity, just “here and now.”



Yet even among those who scoff at God’s truth about eternal concerns, there is a tremendous fascination with such things as reincarnation and so called “out of body experiences.” Satan, the ancient liar, continues to twist truth and package the resulting lie so that men would seek out a lie instead of God’s Word.



Today we are looking at the New Testament account of the event called the Transfiguration of Jesus there on a Galilean Mountain with two of His disciples. Next week, the last Sunday in the liturgical year, we will examine Christ our eternal reigning King.

The amazing account of Jesus’ transfiguration is the revelation of God’s truth. Moses and Elijah’s appearance with Christ on the mountain gives us a beautiful glimpse of eternal life and the glory of Jesus Christ. These two men, Moses and Elijah, had long since passed from earthly life, but they were not dead, because they had believed in God’s future provision of a Savior.

Men and women today have been seduced by Satan to believe that they will reappear in other forms, such as



an animal or another human. This idea of reincarnation is one of Satan’s cruel tricks to fool people into having a false sense of hope for eternity. Reincarnation is not found in the Bible. There is a large segment of our society that seeks spirituality without the Savior Jesus Christ.

Sometimes you may hear of someone that has been clinically dead and then revived. They may describe an “out of body experience” in which they see themselves going into life after death with no hint of judgment for sin. These mental experiences may be real in the mind of the unbeliever, but the source of these thoughts comes from the enemy of men’s souls. The truth affirmed in scripture time and time again is that apart from faith in Jesus Christ, eternity holds only separation from God forever and eternal punishment in hell.

To my knowledge, every person gathered here today believes God has provided an eternal place (Heaven) for those that have trusted in Jesus Christ. For those that have not accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior, they will be eternally separated from God and will go into everlasting, eternal punishment. Eternity is affirmed in scripture repeatedly.



Daniel 12:2 says, *“And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.”*

Matthew 25:46 says, *“And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”*

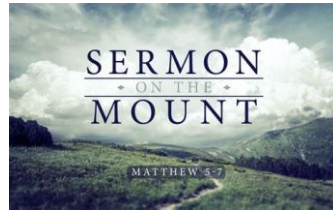
John 5:28, 29 says, *“Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment.”*

Acts 24:15 says, *“having a hope in God which these themselves accept that there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust.”*

Today, as we examine the encounter Jesus’ disciples had there on the mountainside, I want us to have a true sense of eternity as God has shown us in His Word. This passage of scripture gives us a glimpse of Jesus’ glory and it should fill our hearts with wonder and hope and joy in Jesus Christ.

II. Background

Jesus’ ministry was well underway by the time of the transfiguration on that Galilean Mountain. Jesus has given the Sermon on the Mount as found in Matthew, chapters 5 to 7. He had given them the Beatitudes, cleansed the leper, healed the centurion’s servant, calmed the storm on the sea, cast out demons, healed Peter’s mother-in-law, raised a ruler’s daughter from the dead, given sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf, called out the twelve disciples and began teaching large crowds.



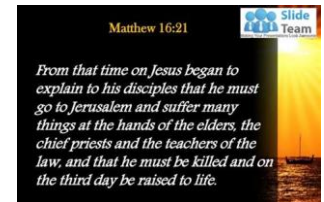
John the Baptist, the cousin of Jesus, has been actively calling Jerusalem and the surround area’s inhabitants to repentance. He was baptizing people as they repented and turned from their sinful ways.



King Herod became angry with John the Baptist and had him beheaded for speaking against Herod when he married his brother’s wife.

Because such a large crowd was now following Jesus, the current political and religious rulers became suspicious of Jesus. The Pharisees and Sadducees sought to trick and trap Jesus with various tests. Jesus’ disciples were waiting with anticipation to see how it would turn out. They were desiring an earthly Kingdom, while Jesus was focusing on a Heavenly Kingdom. His Kingdom was not of this world.

Jesus told them in Matthew 16:21, *“From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribe and be killed, and on the third day be raised.”*



III. The Glimpse of Glory at the Mount of Transfiguration

As the three disciples went up the mountain, they came to understand how

A. Being Alone with the Lord is a Glorious Privilege

Jesus told the disciples of His soon coming death, then about a week later, He took the inner three disciples with Him up to a mountain to pray. These were the same three disciples that accompanied Jesus at Gethsemane as He took them a little further to pray with Him on the night He was betrayed. These three, Peter,



James, and John, witnessed Christ's transfiguration and beheld the glory of Christ. They were eye witnesses of His glory. In order for us to behold the glory of Christ, we need to spend time with Him in prayer and through meditating on His word.

The three disciples also learned ...

B. The Lord is Infinitely more Glorious than Men see Him to be.



In verse two we read, *“While He prayed His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light.”* This glorious light was a glory that reflected the Father from heaven as well as the glory of Jesus Christ Himself.

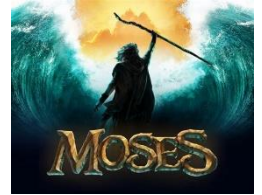
2 Corinthians 3:18 says, *“And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into His likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is spirit.”* The scripture says we will be changed into His likeness.

I John 3:1, 2 says, *“See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know Him. Beloved, we are God's children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He appears we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”*

The disciples may not have understood all that was happening there on that mountainside. Today, because we understand what Jesus was saying concerning His death in Jerusalem, we grasp the truth that

C. The Death of Christ is the most important subject under heaven.

On that day when Jesus revealed His glory, Moses and Elijah joined Him.



Moses' death had taken place almost 1400 years before Jesus came to earth. The Bible tells us in the book of Deuteronomy that when Moses died, God Himself buried Moses on Mount Nebo, near the Salt Sea.

Elijah was a mighty prophet of God that did not die like other men. There were only two men in the Bible that did not die. The first one was Enoch, *“who walked with God and then was not.”* (Genesis 5:24) And the other was Elijah. When it came time for Elijah to depart, He simply rode a chariot into the sky to be with God. (2 Kings 2:11)



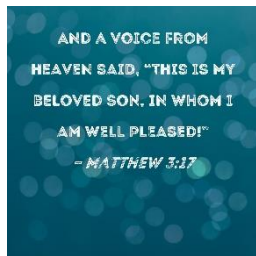
In the book of Luke, the subject they were discussing was mentioned. They were discussing the departure of Jesus Christ in Jerusalem which was coming soon. They were discussing the significance of the death of Christ on the cross. Of all the topics in heaven and earth, none are more significant. Jesus was the only one who could atone for the sins of the world. He was the sinless, spotless, Lamb of God. He was

appointed to die upon the cross for the sins of the world. His death would once and for all, pay the penalty for sin. Only those that trust in His death on the cross will be saved.

The disciples discovered when the Glory of Jesus Christ was revealed

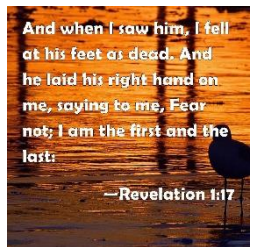
D. The Glory of the Lord invokes fear and reverence.

Peter, James, and John were so struck by what they saw that they wanted to do something to remember this event. They offered to build a booth or place to worship on that very ground as a memorial to remember what had occurred. They were willing to build three booths (for Jesus, Moses, Elijah) to commemorate the occasion.



But as they were speaking of their building plans, a voice from Heaven interrupted them and said, *“THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, WITH WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED. LISTEN TO HIM.”*

God is not interested in man’s plans or projects; God is more interested in our listening and obeying Jesus. How many times have we gone off “doing” the work of the church instead of “hearing” the word of God? God is more interested in our becoming Christlike than in our doing Christlike things.



After that voice came from heaven, they fell to the ground in fear. Much like the fear Moses felt as God gave the Ten Commandments. Moses hid behind the cliff of the rock to catch a glimpse the glory. Likewise, when John saw the

resurrected Christ as recorded in the Book of Revelation in chapter one on the isle of Patmos, John too, fell to the ground in fear of what he saw.

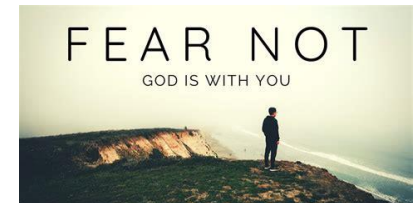
When we have a proper understanding of the glory of God, the power and majesty of God, we too will fall on our face in reverence and fear.

The disciples also realized

E. Only the Lord is sufficient to comfort a Troubled Heart.

Jesus reached out and touched them and gave them a word of comfort. *“But Jesus came and touched them saying, “Rise, and have no fear.”*

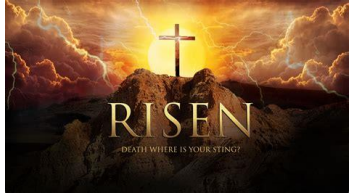
Only Jesus can bring peace in the midst of our trials and tribulations. When the living word of God reaches out and touches us, we experience peace. There is no other substitute that can give us this kind of peace.



After the disciples were touched by Jesus, they lifted their eyes and only saw Jesus. If we would fix our eyes upon Christ, our hearts would be comforted. But if we keep our eyes on others as our model or goal, then that comfort will not come. We may find substitutes, but not real peace.

At the mount of transfiguration, we also learn the ...

F. The Foundational importance of the Resurrection.



As Jesus and the three began to walk down the mountain, Jesus said, “Tell no one the vision, until the Son of man is raised from the dead.” The gospel of the glory

must come after the gospel of the cross. I Corinthians 15:14 says, “If Christ be not risen, then our preaching is in vain.” But we know the “rest of the story.” On Easter Sunday morning, we shout: CHRIST IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN INDEED! Therefore, it is incumbent for us to be telling others about our risen Savior.



The resurrection of Christ is essential for salvation. Without the resurrection, Jesus would have been like any other religious leader. Mohammad is dead. Buddha is dead. Hare Krishna is dead. Only Christ has been victorious over death. Those that are in Christ will be victorious over death. We may very well taste death if Christ tarries, but one day, we will be raised up.

In our Sunday school lesson last week, we read in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 about the Rapture.



¹³ But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

We can take comfort in the truth found in God’s word.

Lastly, because of the Transfiguration, we need to

G. To Hear the Word of the Lord as a Divine Command.



The voice from heaven said, “This is my Beloved Son, hear ye Him.” As Jesus teaches us, we need to hear

1. THE VOICE OF HIS WORD

Jesus’ words bring us life. He has given us guidelines for relating to each other as well as God. The voice of Jesus is the voice that sinful men and women need to hear. Only Christ can bring life. His word brings us life.

2. THE VOICE OF HIS WORKS

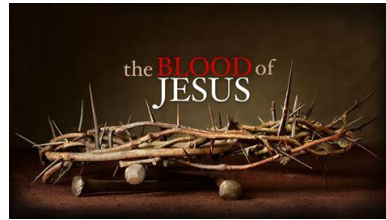
John 5:36 says, “But the testimony which I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father has granted me to accomplish, these very

works which I am doing, bear me witness that the Father has sent me.”

Jesus gave sight to the blind, gave hearing to the deaf, healed thousands, fed over five thousand with five loaves and two fish, and raised several from the dead. Jesus’ works demonstrated that He was from God. God demonstrated that Jesus was from the Father by raising Him from the dead.

3. **THE VOICE OF HIS BLOOD**

When Christ died on the cross, His blood spoke volumes.



Hebrews 9:11-14 says, *“But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent, (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) He entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but His own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.”*

The blood of Christ has sanctified us. It has eternally paid the price for our transgressions. We need to listen and learn that truth concerning the blood of Christ. Paul in this passage from Hebrews tells us,

based upon this truth concerning the blood of Christ, to *“serve the living God.”*

4. **THE VOICE OF HIS SPIRIT**

We need to heed the voice of God’s call in our life. The Spirit of God that is within us makes intercession for us. Often, we cannot pray, but the Spirit that is within us is able to intercede on our behalf. This inner voice of Christ’s spirit is also seeking to transform us into the image of Christ. We need to hear the words of Christ this day.



Hear His words, hear His works, hear His blood speaking, and hear His Holy Spirit calling.

H. Conclusion

That day, the disciples left the mountain side with a greater understanding of the glory of the One they had claimed as the Son of God, the Messiah, the Christ. As they were walking down the mountain, they asked about the return of Elijah. Jesus explained that Elijah has already come. This fore runner was in fact, John the Baptist. Just as John suffered at the hands of others, so would Jesus.

Their mountain top experience guided them to a deeper understanding of who Jesus really was. We also have opportunities to walk closer to Jesus Christ and catch a glimpse of who Jesus really is. We can experience it only as we stay close



to Him in His word, spend time in prayer, allow His word to abide in us, and as we focus our energies upon worshipping Him.

We may never experience this kind of encounter with God. However, the Holy Spirit can guide us to into a greater understanding of Him as we meditate upon Christ.

LET US PRAY

Notes:

¹*Handfuls on Purpose*, Vol. 1, pages 165-167.

²*Firm Foundations*, Creation to Christ, Lesson 41, pages 487-494.

– New Tribes Mission

³Mikey's Funnies, A Sermon Funny, Oct. 31, 2023