

## THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

AUGUST 1ST-2ND, 2020 // BOOK OF MATTHEW

### COMING DOWN THE MOUNTAIN (MATTHEW 17:9-13)

As Jesus is traveling down the mountain of transfiguration with three of disciples, He issues an interesting instruction.

- “Tell no-one the vision until the Son of Man is raised from the dead” (vs. 9)- maybe because this testimony could turn into a show and distract from Jesus’ purpose in going to the cross.
- These disciples weren’t to talk (or boast?) about what they’d seen until after the resurrection.

This prohibition was rooted in the fact that Israel had a wrong understanding of Messiah.

- They didn’t expect a suffering servant, they wanted a conquering King.
- If the masses discovered this magnificent display of Jesus’ glory, they might attempt to interfere with His plans to go to Jerusalem to suffer and die.
- There were (and still are) many who are attracted to Jesus for the wrong reasons.

The disciples have questions- regarding the presence of Elijah on the mountain (vs. 10).

- They had been taught that Elijah would come first to prepare for the establishing of the Kingdom (Mal. 4:5-6), so they were probably wondering if his presence on the mountain was the fulfillment of this prophecy.
- Jesus is O.K. with our questions- so He gave a two-fold answer to His disciples.

Yes, Elijah would come as Malachi 4:5-6 promised, but spiritually speaking, Elijah already came in the person of John the Baptist (vs. 11).

- The problem was that the people of God, “didn’t recognize him, but did to him whatever they pleased” (vs. 12).
- John had been sent by God to speak truth and prepare the way for Jesus, but the people didn’t want to hear truth and had him killed.

Just as the people had killed the Messiah’s forerunner, so they would the Son of Man (vs. 12).

- The disciples were being prepared for the reality that Jesus’ ministry of redemption would be accomplished through His suffering and death.
- When they’d seen Elijah and Moses on the mountain, they might have thought they were witnessing the inauguration of the Kingdom on earth (which explains Peter’s desire to set up 3 tents).

But God had refused (vs. 5), because the cross had to come before the crown of Christ.

- What Jesus would accomplish through the cross would make it possible for sinful humanity to have access to the glory and perfection of God the disciples had caught a tiny glimpse of.
- God’s plan of salvation would deal with the biggest problem of humanity- our sinfulness that separates us from God and His glory.

### LIKE A MUSTARD SEED (MATTHEW 17:14-20)

At the bottom of the mountain, a crowd is waiting along with a father whose son has been experiencing seizures because of a demon that has taken possession of him (vs. 15).

- One of the aims of demonic possession is the death of the person who is possessed.
- This demon had been attempting to kill the boy by throwing him into fire and water.

Since Jesus was on the mountain with Peter, James, and John, we can presume the man first went to the disciples with his request (vs. 16a).

- But the disciples, despite their best efforts and maybe even their previous successes, could not meet exercise their delegated authority and cast this demon out.
- Jesus seems frustrated by this (vs. 17).

He calls His own disciples part of a “faithless and twisted generation” (vs. 17) and laments “how long” He must continue to endure them like the Psalmists lamented before God (Ps. 4:2).

- If His own disciples who knew Him lacked the faith and confidence in God to work amid darkness, what hope was there for the whole generation?
- What must the Lord feel today as He looks at powerless & ineffective believers?

Casting out this demon was no problem to Jesus. He rebukes the unclean spirit and commands it to leave, and the boy is healed (vs. 18)

- Why hadn’t the disciples been able to perform this miracle? (vs. 19).
- Jesus’ answer? Because of their “little faith” (vs. 20)- this is more a reference to the quality of their faith, not the quantity.

Jesus had given the disciples authority to cast out demons, and yet they weren’t able to do it.

- Why? Maybe their lack of faith led to them relying on their own power and on the fact that they had authority and that was what gave THEM power.
- But the authority Jesus had given them was not one He had designed to be exercised apart from Him.

In order to see God do a miracle, the disciples needed to rely on God through faith.

- Jesus would say in John 15:5, “apart from me, you can do nothing!”
- What Jesus was saying to these disciples was that in the challenges, battles, struggles and demons in our lives we cannot conquer them unless we are intentionally placing faith in God for victory.

Even a tiny quantity of faith (“like a mustard seed”- size, life, and growth), if it’s placed in the power of God, can “move mountains” (vs. 20).

- In fact, if we place our faith in God’s infinite power, “nothing will be impossible”.
- There’s a common misperception that faith in itself is a source of power.
- Biblical faith is an admission of our own powerlessness and dependence on God’s power.

Our lack of faith in God’s ability to work affects our ability to appropriate His power to do His work through us to advance the Kingdom.

- If we don’t have faith in God’s ability and power to work through us, we won’t practice obedience to His commands for our lives when they seem difficult or even impossible.
- But with faith, we can boldly claim the authority that is ours in Christ and lean on His power to do impossible things in His name.

### GREATLY DISTRESSED (MATTHEW 17:22-23)

Matthew tells us that Jesus was with His disciples, “gathering in Galilee” (vs. 22) before He moves down to Jerusalem for the events that lead up to the cross (19:1).

- We get a picture of maybe an intimate gathering between Jesus and His close friends.
- Jesus makes his 2nd formal prediction of His suffering, death, and resurrection.

It’s interesting to note their reaction- no-one had ever been raised from the dead after 3 days of being dead.

- Jesus is predicting the greatest miracle and proof of His divinity that will ever happen.
- And yet His disciples seemed to not even notice-they were “greatly distressed” because of the news that Jesus would suffer at the hands of men.

These disciples had a hard time grasping why the Messiah would be voluntarily killed by the Jewish leaders of the day.

- He’s God, the King of Kings, and the Lord of Hosts! Why would He willingly allow Himself to be put to death?
- They couldn’t see in the moment that Jesus’ death was part of God’s plan to redeem humanity back to Himself.

This willing sacrifice of Jesus would provide humanity eternal life because on the cross Jesus would die and bear the entire penalty for our sins, brokenness, shame, and guilt.

- The resurrection of Jesus would be given as proof that Jesus is God and we might believe in Him, receive Him as Lord, and have life in His name.

But in the moment, all the disciples seemed to hear was the horrific news that their Messiah would suffer and die.

- In their distress, fear, confusion, and lack of faith, they overlooked the hope that Jesus was proclaiming to them.
- The truth was that God was going to work all things together-even the horrific death of His son- for good (Rom. 8:28).

But in the moment, it didn’t sound good and it certainly didn’t feel good (“distressed”, vs. 23).

- Sometimes it’s hard in the moment for us to have faith and believe that God will work for His glory and our good in tragedy and hardship.
- Our perspective is so limited, and we so often forget that what is unknown and confusing to us is never unknown or confusing to God.
- He’s promised us victory in the end (Rev. 22).

### THESE ARE UNKNOWN AND CONFUSING TIMES.

Finding peace in unknown-whether that’s walking towards it, learning to live in it, or waiting for it-has nothing to do with knowing the unknown...it has everything to do with knowing, following, and trusting the One who knows.

**Faith to Move. Faith to stay Faithful. Faith to Wait.**

### IN THESE UNKNOWN AND CONFUSING TIMES, HOW IS GOD GROWING YOUR FAITH?

- How is He inviting you to grow your faith in Him and move?
- How is He calling you to trust in Him and stay faithful in where you are now?
- How is He asking you to have faith and wait on His timing?