

Title: Jesus Only

Text: Matthew 17:1-8

Will you open your Bibles, please, to the book of Matthew chapter 17. Matthew chapter 17. In this chapter ^{we find} one of the most unbelievable, yet, exciting things that ever happened in the life of Jesus. On one occasion ^{you} he choose to unvail his glory to three men: Peter, James, and John. It is called the MOUNT OF TRANSFIGURATION. And in this experience ~~we find~~ we find some ^{wonderful} truths for our christian life. I am reading from Matthew 17 beginning at Vs 1..

(Read Matthew 17:1-8())

WILL YOU JOIN WITH ME IN A MOMENT OF PRAYER

This is an exciting experience when Jesus unvailed himself to His three disciples. And I want us to look at this experience this morning as it relates to Jesus and as it relates to us as believers. There is teaching here that you will find in no other place in the Bible to explain an important principle about the Christian life. Something that is very, very important. And very, very often misunderstood.

(2*)) Now, first of all, I would like to discuss this portion of scripture from the standpoint of the reason for this remarkable vision.

WHAT IS THE REASON, ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE AS TO WHY GOD UNVAILED HIMSELF IN JESUS CHRIST ~~ON~~ THIS SPECIAL OCCASION TO THREE MEN: Peter, James, John? No one else had this experience. No one else saw Jesus in all of his glory. On ^{the} one occasion it is as though he opened up his life and shows who He really is to three men. NOW, WHAT WAS THE REASON FOR THIS ~~VISION~~ REMARKABLE VISION? I think you find that it is two fold.

(1) First of all, ^{Look Back} ~~turn~~ to Matthew chapter 16. Matthew 16 beginning at Vs 21. Matthew 16 verse 21. Immediately preceeding Vs 21 is the great confession of Peter. And Jesus had said to him: "Thou art Peter" meaning "a little rock", "But upon this rock, this stone, myself, I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

(Read Matthew 16:21-28)

Now, all of that is important to an understanding of chapter 17... The first reason for this remarkable vision ~~is~~ these three men is that they needed assurance for that moment. Jesus just made a startling announcement to them...Vs 21. He said, "I am going to suffer and be killed." I am going to die.

Peter didn't want him to die. And he said "Peter you don't know what you are talking about. You are on the wrong track. You are not talking from God's viewpoint. You don't know what you are saying.

He then proceeds to ~~tell~~ ~~them~~ about the personal cost in following ~~him~~ him. And he mentions that the son of man will come in ~~the~~ ^{the} glory of his father. And then he turns to them and says: "there are some of you ~~standing~~ standing right here, disciples, who will see this before you die." You will see what it is like for me to be in all of my glory.

What Jesus was doing on the Mount of Transfiguration to Peter and James and John was giving them assurance on that moment that he really was who he claimed to be. For the son of man to come in the glory of his Father was a Messianic phrase. Meaning: it refers to the coming of the Messiah as King. They knew that. And Peter's mind thinking of that says: HOW IN THE WORLD CAN YOU DIE? HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE? GOD FORBID IT, LORD. And Jesus gives them a vision that convinces them. That he is not mere man because he said he had to die. That he is going to come in the glory of his Father. And once more, he has that glory right now. And he showed it to them. He gave them assurance for that moment when they needed it. For he had just told ~~them~~ that he was going to die.

(2) Now, secondly, the reason for this vision is: authority for the future. Turn in your Bibles, please, to 2 Peter chapter 1. 2 Peter chapter 1. Near the end of your N.T. 2 Peter chapter 1.....Here we have taught to us the reason for that vision he saw. Peter refers to it. 2 Peter chapter 1 beginning at Vs 15 (Read 1:15-19)

The point that Peter is making is very clear. He has authority to speak about Christ because one day he was an eye witness of his own majesty. He saw his glory on this mount. And because of this he says we have a more sure word of Prophecy. We can tell what it is like to see Jesus coming in the glory of His Father in a future date. Because we were eyewitnesses of his glory. We saw it on that occasion when we were with him on that holy mountain.

Now, the Gospel of John tells us in John chapter 1 verse 14: "we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." We beheld his glory. The Word of God is Christ in John chapter 1. He became flesh. We beheld his glory.....

Christ gave this vision to three men to give them authority. To be eyewitnesses of his majesty. That is the reason for this vision.

(2) Now, come back to Matthew 17, please. I would, now, like you to notice the revelation that actually occurred. The word "revelation" means "to put on display." For example, the last book of the Bible is called the Revelation of Jesus Christ. Which means to put on display, to reveal. Jesus Christ is put on display in the book of Revelation like no other book. In the first chapter all of his glory is seen. John has a vision of Christ ^{in the Bible} and on the mount of transfiguration we have a revelation. We have an open display by Jesus of what he is actually like. Now, what was that revelation which occurred.

(10) Vs 2 says this: He was transfigured before them.

By the way, there is some interesting things about this whole section. One is, from the other accounts in Mark and Luke, we learn that the disciples were asleep when this happened. And they woke up and saw it all. Some other interesting things. You will notice in Vs 5 it says "a bright cloud". A cloud of great light, literally, overshadowed them.

We also believe this event occurred at night because in another passage "the next day" is under discussion. And the fact that the disciples went to sleep.

(1) Now, THINK OF THIS VISION. IT IS AT NIGHT. And what a tremendous thing is happening. A cloud, now gray in color, but a cloud that the Bible says is full of light. A bright cloud. It is there shining. Can you imagine what that looked like? And then Christ is transfigured. And the bible says in Vs 2 that His face shone like the ^{SUN} sun. The brilliance of the day sun is seen in a human body. And the disciples experience that vision. Imagine yourself seeing a bright cloud and seeing the brilliance of the sun on the face of Jesus? Wow!

It, also, says in vs 2 that His garments became as white as light. That is what they were seeing when they saw Jesus transfigured.

Now, obviously, the key word in this passage is "transfigured." WHAT DOES THAT WORD MEAN?

The Word "Transfigured" is our English word "metamorphosis." If I were to ask any of you who had taken Biology..WHAT IS A METAMORPHOSIS?..you would probably use the illustration of a caterpillar in explaining the word. Everyone knows that a caterpillar goes through the process of metamorphosis.

O.K. WHAT IS METAMORPHOSIS?

Metamorphosis means that the inward nature of that caterpillar is not a caterpillar at all. It is a butterfly. But, he is in a caterpillar shell.

Now, he goes into this cocoon. And eventually he will come out as a butterfly. And that is the process of metamorphosis. And when that butterfly flies away that isn't the beginning of the process. That is the end of the process. The process goes on all the time in the caterpillar. He is constantly in the process of metamorphosis. And finally it is over and the butterfly flies away.

Now, that is the word that is used here..Metamorphosis. He was transfigured or metamorphosed before them.

We, also, see this word in Romans chapter 12. Would you turn there, please. Romans chapter 12 and notice Vs 1..

(READ 12:1-2)

The word "transformed" in romans 12:2 is the same word in Matthew 17:2, when it says that Jesus was "transfigured."

Please notice, Paul is writting to Christians. And he is saying "don't be "conformed" to ~~the~~ ^{This} world, but be transformed or transfigured."

HOW? "By the renewing of your mind." WHY? so that you "may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE WILL OF GOD IS FOR EVERY CHRISTIAN HERE TODAY?

The will of God for every one of us is to glory God. That is God's ultimate intention. And the only way that we can glory God is ~~not~~ ^{by being} conformed to this world. But, to be transfigured by the renewing of your mind. You will then test, prove, and show to yourself that the will of God is good, acceptable and perfect. That is...it will give glory to God.

And dear friends, this will happen if you will do it..Transfigured. I will be transformed by the renewing of my mind.

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(2) Now, keep your figure in Romans, but turn to 2 Corinthians chapter 3.
2 Corinthians chapter 3 verse 18.

This third chapter of 2 Corinthians is dealing with an ^{event} that happened to Mosess in the O.T. I am sure you know the story. After Moses received the law on Mt. Sini, the Bible says his face was shining like the sun. And he had to put a vail over his face because it was blinding the eyes of the people who were looking at him.

Now, notice verse 18 of chapter 3.."But we all, with unveiled face behold as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being trnsformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the..or by the Spirit.

There, dear friends, the whole plan of God for the Christian. The purpose of the Christian life is to bring glory to God. ^{of course} You cannot do that when you are without Christ. The Bible says that all have sinned..missed the mark... and have come short of what?..... THE GLORY OF GOD..

You see, we are sinners. And we are separated from God. That is why we cannot glorfy Him. We cannot fulfill the ultimate intention and purpose for which we were created. And that is to bring glory to God.

We are all sinners and we have come short of God's glory.

Therefore
~~Now~~, this verse is telling me that I am going to be transfigured into the glory that God intended for me to have. And this is done, as 2 Corinthians 3:18 clearly says, by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit transforms me.

Does that mean that I have no responsibility? NO WAY! I learn from this passage and the passage in Romans 12:2 that I have a big responsibility. I must do ~~two~~ ^{more} things if I really want the Holy Spirit to transform me.

(1) One, according to 2 Corinthians 3:18 I must look into a mirror. And I must do this with an unveiled face.

You see, a lot of people have a veil over their face. Maybe it is pride.... or selfishness...or the desire for riches...or an unforgiving spirit...or what ever..But, the result is that they cannot see what the Bible is really saying.

Now, when you look into a mirror, meaning the Bible, you must do so with unvailed faces. Don't put on blinders. So, that is my first responsibility if the Holy Spirit is going to transform me.

(2) Secondly, coming back to Romans 12:2, I am told that I should not be conformed to this world. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

The word "conformed" is the exact opposite of "TRANSFORMED."

Now, remember, that the word "transfigured" or "transformed" means that the inward nature is coming out. That new nature that you have in Christ is manifesting itself.

On the other hand, "Conformity" means that I am trying "to be something that I am not." It was used in Greek plays of putting on "a mask in order to portray a character." Like playing a roll. Our word "hypocrite" comes from that word. Playing a roll. Being a hypocrite. Trying to be something you are not.

So, here is what Paul is saying. Don't put on the mask of the world. This is my responsibility. It is put in a tense which means ..YOU DO THIS. Stop conforming. You have been conforming. So, stop putting on the mask of the world. Because that is not your nature. When you accepted Christ, God gave you a new nature. You are not part of the world. You are in Christ Jesus.

So, don't put on the mask of the world. If you do, you will just frustrate your Christian life..

Dear friends, this is one of the main reasons as to why many Christians do not experience the fruits of the Holy Spirit. They are trying to be something they are not. Thus, there is frustration, discouragement, unforgiveness, jealousy. *and you will have a root of bitterness - No Communion*

So, stop putting on the world's mask and instead be transformed by the Holy Spirit.

(3) Third, as to my responsibility. Romans 12:2 says to renew your mind. How?

~~Please, notice, these two verses tell me that I must look with an unveiled face into a mirror. And in this mirror I see something. It is the glory of the Lord. And when I do this and I stop putting on the World's mask, but instead *renew my mind* with the Word of God, *Then* I will be transfigured by the Holy Spirit. And this is a daily process. Until one day when I die, or, Christ comes again, at that moment I John 3 says "We shall be like him, for we shall see him as He is."~~

And, dear friends, the process of metamorphosis in your life will be complete. Praise God.

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Now, come back to Matthew chapter 17. It says that Jesus was transfigured. We know that this was His glory. The brilliance of it shining like the sun. And the essential nature of Jesus was all of a sudden manifested through the outward person. That which Christ really was in essence and being. All of a sudden was manifested through that body which He willingly and voluntarily took in order to come into this world as man. In one moment of time, Jesus who had voluntarily restricted Himself by become man, let His real nature come forth. And there He was as He will appear at the second coming. There He was as we will see Him forever. The glory of God was seen in a human vessel. And three men saw it: Peter, James, and John..

Wouldn't you like to have been one of those men? Wow!

Now, there are several things that happened. And they are summarized in the reaction of Peter.

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During this transfiguration two people appeared with Jesus: Moses and Elijah. Moses, of course, was the great law giver. And Elijah was the greatest prophet of Israel. They summarize in themselves the law and the prophets.

Now, please notice that there are several groups of people here. You have Jesus, glorified. You have Moses and Elijah. You have Peter, James, and John. And you have a multitude of people at the bottom of the mountain.

And there you have portrayed in a nut shell the whole kingdom of God. And it is very fascinating. I wish I had time to refer to all of it.

But, just this. ^{SO} Moses and Elijah were there. WHAT WERE THEY TALKING ABOUT?

In Luke chapter 9 verse 31, the Bible says that they were talking about the death of Jesus Christ. They used the word "departure" which is a word for "a way out." You see, his death on the cross was not a final end. They were discussing his "departure." How he will die on the cross and then he will depart. He will conquer death and be resurrected and then depart to be with the Father in heaven. So, they were speaking of this event.

Now, what does Peter Do? Vs 4 "And Peter answered and said to Jesus, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here.'"

Man! Peter was excited. You know, I believe if we had been there, we would have been excited too. And I think we would have reacted just like Peter. "Man! this is exciting. It is so good to be here. I don't want to go home." "And boy, do I have a great idea. Let's make three tabernacles. One for Jesus, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

DO YOU KNOW WHAT PETER IS SAYING? He is saying, "let's keep them here. Let's never leave. I don't ever want to go back again." "I just want to stay here. Let's make three tabaernacles.

Hay! Peter acted just like we would have acted.

Now, why did Peter say all of this? I believe the answer is seen in what God said. Watch it carefully. Vs 5 says....(Read Vs 5)

Do you know what God is saying to Peter?

"Peter, there is only one person who is important, here. There is only one tabernacle that you should make if you want to build one. Peter, I don't want Moses and Elijah included in this."

You see, God is telling Peter that Jesus is greater than the law which is represented by Moses. Jesus is greater than the prophets represented by Elijah. Even though they spoke and had authority, Jesus is greater.

So, now here Him...WHY? ...BECAUSE Jesus is God..That is God being transfigured. He is revealing Himself to you in all of His glory. So, listen to Him, Peter. He is the only one you should notice...HERE HIM! THIS IS MY BELOVED SON WITH WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED.

Dear friends, do you know that God isn't pleased with you until you are in Christ? Did you know that?

The Bible says to the one who receives Christ that God takes that person and makes him one of his children. And that person becomes ⁴in Christ. ⁴God is now well pleased with me only because I am in Christ. Because in Christ He is well pleased. It is the son that did the will of the Father, perfectly. It is the son that always glorifies the Father. And it is the son who siad to me: "Let your light so shine that men may glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Now, knowing all of this there are two things here that we should learn. Two very important principles.

(1) Number one..this vision teaches me the pre-emenience of Christ over everything. Oh, if you haven't listened to Christ, today, you don't know who He is. He is God. And He demands our attention.

You know, Jesus often spoke that way. People would ask him what to do. And he said: "Repent....Believe....Flee the wrath of God before it is eternally to late."

And Jesus spoke from authority. He wasn't suggesting that you believe in Him. He is demanding it. NOW....TODAY...REPENT....CONFESS YOUR SIN...WHY? Because Jesus is God.

And this whole vision teaches us that Jesus was more than man. He was God, Almighty. And he revealed His diety to three men. He is pre-emenient over everything. HEAR HIM...WHATEVER HE SAYS TO YOU...DO IT....WHY? Because He is Lord...He is soveriegn...He is master...He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords.....I must listen to Him. And my friend, so must you.

(2) And the second thing I learn is that His very presence will bring the comfort and assurance and answers that I need in life.

Look at what happened in verses 6-8..(Read Vs 6-8)

You see, there is nothing to worry about. And when they lifted up their eyes they saw no one except Jesus, himself.

The point is: that it is Jesus who has the answer. This whole vision is about Jesus. They saw Jesus and they were no longer afriad.

Wouldn't it be great if we could get our eyes off the circumstances of life? Wouldn't it be great if we could ger out eyes off of each other? Wouldn't it be great if we could see only Jesus. *and accept people as they are?*

"Turn your eyes upon Jesus," the song writer says, "Look full into His wonderful fact."

Dear friends, Jesus knows your needs. He wants to give you eternal life, and complete forgiveness of sin. He wants to bless you with all spiritual blessings. But you must accept Him as your saviour. HEAR HIM...HE IS THE BELOVED SON. HE IS THE ALMIGHTY GOD IN HUMAN FLESH. And you must believe in Him before it is eternally to late.

Let Us close in Prayer