Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Preview of the Second Coming, Part 2
Scripture: Matthew 17:1-6
Code: 2323

Preview of Second Coming, Part 2

Matthew 17:16

Let's turn in our Bibles to the sixteenth chapter of Matthew's gospel. We're looking again at this most thrilling portion of Scripture, giving us the transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We began our study last week by looking at verse 27 and 28 of chapter 16 and then we're going to be flowing all the way through verse 13 of chapter 17, for that whole section deals with the same great subject or theme.

Now in this marvelous section, Jesus promises the disciples and a crowd who have gathered around the disciples, that He is going to return in glory. Let's look back at verse 27 of chapter 16 and get our bearings. Jesus says there, "For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels and then He shall render to every man according to his works."

Now here is the first overt promise of the Second Coming recorded in Matthew's gospel. And our Lord here is saying to the disciples, "Listen, I've been talking to you about selfdenial, I've been talking to you about bearing your cross, I've told you that I must go to Jerusalem to suffer many things and be killed. You're very much aware of the persecution, the hostility, the rejection that we've seen from the people. You know that the message that I've given you is a message of suffering and death, My death and your death. But it will not always be that way. There will be a time when there is glory. There will be a day when the Son of Man comes in the full blazing glory of the Father with His angels and then He will act in judgment upon every man. There will be a glory time. There will be a time when the Son of Man comes not in humiliation but in royal majesty."

And this is such an important message for them. It's so balancing to what they have just heard. Because they've just been told in verse 24 that Jesus requires selfdenial, cross bearing and loyal obedience, that suffering will be for them a way of life, that they are to anticipate rejection, hostility and even death. But that will be wonderfully compensated by the coming in glory.

Now the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, then, is introduced here and it becomes for Matthew a very important truth. He talks about it in some more detail in chapter 24, chapter 25 and then even in chapter 26. Because Matthew, you see, is presenting Jesus as King and as the King comes into the

world the fist time, as we know, He's rejected. And so the end of the story must be when He comes and is royally acclaimed and crowned and enters into His reign and accepts His throne and His scepter and rules as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. And so he says it will come, it will come.

In fact, in the Old Testament, there are probably one thousand, five hundred and about 25 prophecies of the Second Coming. In the New Testament, one out of every 25 verses, or 319 or 20 verses talk about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ in glory and power and majesty to judge and to reign. And so the Bible is very clear about this. And thus when our Lord says this in verse 27, it's not in obscurity. It isn't just a New Testament message, it was an Old Testament one as well. And well the disciples should have remembered that the Messiah would suffer first and then be glorified. But it seems as though all they can see is the glory and all they can anticipate is the Kingdom and all the wonder and all the majesty and all the splendor of that and they cannot handle what's going on in the present tense. They can't handle the suffering, the death, the pain, the rejection. And so the Lord makes them this promise.

But frankly, as I said last Sunday, the promise is very hard to believe...very hard. To say I'm coming in glory and some time in the future seems so far away and so hard to grab on to, so hard to really realize, so hard to make your own when you're living in the sort of present tense that they were in of hostility, rejection, crossbearing, selfdenial, even death. And so the Lord in His wonderful grace goes a step beyond the prophecy and in verse 28 He promises them a preview. I'm not only telling you I'm coming, I'm going to prove it to you by a marvelous preview. And in verse 28 He said unto them, "There are some standing here who shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in His basileia, coming in His royal splendor, coming in His majestic glory. Some of you will see it, you won't have to just hope that what I am saying will come to pass, you will have a personal preview."

And that preview begins in verse 1 of chapter 17 and runs down through verse 13, that's the full text of it. It is His transfiguration. And at that event, He gave them the picture of His majestic splendor, His majestic glory, His regal majesty. So you have then in verse 28 the promise of a preview. And then in verses 1 and following the preview itself. And what it is is a small glimpse of glory.

Now I notice that some people have a problem relating the transfiguration to the promise of verse 28. Let me see if I can give you another passage of Scripture that gives us the same kind of thing. Look at the second chapter of Acts. Now in the second chapter of Acts, you have the great day of Pentecost when the church was given its formal birth. And on that great day, you remember that the people who followed Jesus Christ, 120 of them, were gathered in an upper room and they were in prayer. And in the midst of that time of fellowship and praying, the Spirit of God came upon them and He came, as it were, with cloven tongues of fire resting upon each individual. They were given the Holy Spirit, filled with the Holy Spirit. They began to speak languages which they did not know humanly. And in those languages were words that spoke of the wonderful works of God.

And so, you have the coming of the Holy Spirit. You have the manifestation of fire coming down on the individuals. You have signs and wonders by the speaking of languages they didn't know. All of this announcing the arrival of the Spirit of God giving birth to the church.

Now the people didn't really understand what all this was. In verse 12 it says they were perplexed and they said, "What is this?" And some decided they must be drunk. But down in verse 16, Peter says, "This is that which was spoken through the prophet Joel." And then he quotes down through verse...no 20, 21, a whole section out of Joel 2. Now listen, that is to be fulfilled at the Second Coming, that whole section. Verse 17, "It come to pass in the last days...I'll pour out My Spirit on all flesh, your sons and daughters prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams, on My servants and handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit, they shall prophesy," it talks about wonders in heaven, signs in the earth, blood, fire, vapor of smoke, the sun turn to darkness, the moon to blood, before the great notable day of the Lord comes and so forth.

Now, as you read that prophecy of Joel, you know that it's related to the Second Coming. You also know that everything that is promised in that prophecy by Joel did not happen on the day of Pentecost. But what did happen on the day of Pentecost, according to verse 16, is this is that which was spoken. In other words, here is a preview, or here is a sample, or here is an element of final glory, of final Kingdom events. You have a taste today at Pentecost of what will come in its fullness when Jesus returns, you see? It isn't that Peter is saying all of that is fulfilled today, no, he's saying you're getting a glimpse of that final glory, you're getting a taste of that final fulfillment.

And in fact, it isn't just that this can be seen in Acts 2, everything Jesus did, all of His signs and wonders and miracles, all of those done by the Apostles, all of His marvelous teaching, His effect in the world, was a taste of Second Coming glory. That's why the writer of Hebrews says, "You have had a taste of the good things to come."

And so what you have here then is our Lord saying to them so that you will never doubt the reality of the Second Coming, I'm going to give you a glimpse of glory, I'm going to give you another taste of SecondComing reality so that you do not doubt. And as I said, it comes in a marvelously important time because it comes at a time when they needed balance. They had just heard about suffering. They had learned that Jesus was a suffering Savior and now they needed to see a glimpse of Him as a glorious King. They had been reminded that His...His followers would share His sorrows and they needed also to know that His followers could share His glory as well. They knew that as a suffering Savior He called them to selfdenial, cross bearing, and loyal obedience at any price, even their life. They needed also to know that as a King He offered them a King's reward. And so there's a balancing here in their hearts as they are exposed to the majesty of SecondComing glory that they might know that humiliation now means glory then. And as the epistles tell us, if we suffer with Him, we shall be glorified with Him also.

And so, the marvelous, miraculous preview of final glory is to remind them that it is going to come to pass. And to fill their hearts with assurance and hope in the midst of great despair.

Now there's another thought that I would just add as a footnote here. In my understanding of the Old Testament, it was not uncommon for a prophet when he made a prediction about a far distant event and said something was going to happen in the distant future, the coming of the Messiah, to also make a prediction about something going to happen in the near future. Very often, in fact, the prophecy would have a near fulfillment and a future fulfillment. And the reason the prophets did this was in order to verify themselves as prophets and to give hope for the future fulfillment. In other words, if someone predicted something to happen in the end time, how would you able to trust them? How would you know such a thing would come to pass? Well, the prophet would then predict something in the near future and when the near event came to pass, you could believe him that the future would as well. And so it was a part of prophetic credential to affirm something in the far distant future and then verify your trustworthiness by an immediate prophetic utterance which had fulfillment during the life of the those who heard you speak.

And so I think in a very real sense Jesus is accrediting Himself as a true and trustworthy prophet by saying yes I will come in the future, in the last day in the great Second Coming. And to prove it, I predict that some of you won't die until you see Me in My regal majesty. And when the near event came to pass, they knew He spoke as a trustworthy prophet and could trust Him as well for the future event.

Let's look at the scene in verse 1. "And after six days," by the way, Luke says eight days. No, Luke says about eight days so that Matthew may be speaking in absolute exactness, Luke may be speaking in general terms, Matthew may be only talking about the days in between the promise and its fulfillment, Luke may be including the day the promise was given and the day it was fulfilled which would add the two days to make it eight. So we don't see any contradiction there. It's just their perception.

So, Matthew uses the more exact Jewish chronology and says, "After six days," that is six intervening days, "Jesus takes Peter, James and John his brother." And these were the intimates of our Lord. They seemed to be with Him at times of intimacy. They were the closest to Him. They, according to John chapter 1, were the first ones gathered to His side along with Andrew. And so they're very close to the Lord. And He takes them and it says He brings them up into an high mountain privately.

Now He draws them away. Now we ask ourselves at this point, "Why does Jesus do this? Why does He take Peter, James and John?" Let me suggest some reasons. First of all, to be witnesses. He needed to have witnesses to see His glory. Now Deuteronomy 19:15 laid down and established a principle that any testimony was confirmed in the mouth of how many? Two or three witnesses. And

so the Lord going to display His glory wants it confirmed in the mouth of three witnesses, trustworthy witnesses. And so they are taken to be those three witnesses.

Secondly, they are taken because they were the intimates of the Savior. They were the closest to Him. They were around Him the most. And very frequently perhaps accompanied Him into intimate times of prayer. And so, as He takes them into them into the high mountain, I don't think they would have been very shocked by that, it perhaps had happened on many occasions. They were frequently alone with Jesus, certainly Mark 5:37 indicates they were there at the raising of the young girl. They accompanied Him, you remember, in Mark 14 it says, into the garden of Gethsemane the night that He agonized and sweat, as it were, great drops of blood, they were there with Him in His intimacy also. And so, we're not surprised that it's Peter, James and John.

And, I guess, in a way we can understand why, because it seems proper that those who most intimately knew His sorrow, and those who most intimately knew His suffering should most intimately see His glory. And I think, too, they who would suffer, Peter crucified upside down, James beheaded and John exiled, should as well see His glory. And so it was their intimacy with the Lord that drew them to this occasion.

And thirdly, I think another reason He took them was because they were acknowledged trustworthy leaders. They were men of great spiritual report and leadership. And when it came time to articulate what happened, they would be trusted. They would be the most believed. They could convince and influence the rest.

Those are positive reasons why He took them. There's a negative reason why He only took three. If all of the disciples had seen this, or if all of the disciples plus the crowd that was gathered there that day in upper Galilee, if all of them had seen it, too, there would have been no way to prevent widespread chaos because having seen the glory of Jesus Christ on display, you can imagine that those people would have come running down that hillside and been unable to restrain themselves. And they would have propagated what they had seen and again Jesus would have been pushed into becoming the political military Messiah that the people wanted Him to be. And so, that they might not do that, He restricts it just to three, three that He can trust, three that are very intimate with Him, but three that can confirm Him as the Son of God.

Now notice verse 1 again. It says He took them into a high mountain. Now we don't know what mountain it was, somewhere in upper Galilee south of Caesarea, Philippi where they had been for awhile in rest and teaching. And now they're moving toward Jerusalem as Christ moves that way knowing it's only months now till He will die. And as they're coming down from Caesarea, Philippi on their way to Jerusalem about to enter into Capernaum, in some mountain in upper Galilee in a high place that we'll not know He takes these three. And it is perfect timing. They need this so much.

Now when they get up in the mountain, what do you think the disciples were doing? Well, they did what they usually did...slept. Matthew doesn't tell us that. But Luke does in the parallel account. Luke says they were sleeping. And Jesus was...what?...praying, that's right. Went into the high mountain they went, Jesus would pray and they would sleep, and we're not surprised because we see this again. In fact, we see it later on, don't we, when the Lord is in the garden of Gethsemane pouring out His heart to the Father in that agonizing prayer. And at that very time the disciples also sleep. And Jesus, in fact, rebuked them and said, "Can't you even watch with Me for an hour?"

But if you were to look into Luke's gospel chapter 22 verse 45 you would find that there was a reason they were asleep. The Bible says they were sleeping for sorrow. You know what happens when you get really depressed? You want to sleep. Many people do that. In fact, ultimately depressed people want to sleep for good so they take their life. Sleep is a way to escape, isn't it? Some people take sleeping pills just so they can get away from things. And maybe it was what happened in Luke 22, they were sleeping because it was the only way to deal with their sorrow was just to shut it out by falling asleep. Maybe here the same thing because here, too, they are living in the very near announcement of the fact that everybody's going to die in this deal. And, you know, they always see the worst of it, like later on when Jesus gets very near Jerusalem and Thomas says, "Well, we'll just go to Jerusalem with You and die." By the time they get to the garden in Luke 22 for the prayer there, they have heard about His death over and over and over and over and the despair is great there but perhaps it's nearly as great here. And they may have been sleeping because it was one way to deal with their depression. Jesus was praying, they were sleeping.

But they woke out of their sleep and Jesus rose from His prayer. And an utterly incredible thing happened. One unlike any other thing that ever happened in the history of the world and we're going to have the privilege of looking at it. In the events that follow from verse 5 to 13, we have five great proofs that this is the King of glory, five great verifications that this is the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of the living God, five great testimonies to the fact that Jesus is the promised King, in spite of what it looks like on the outside. He is the one and they need this affirmation, and so do we.

Let's look at the first element of that testimony. I'll call it the transformation of the Son...the transformation of the Son. Verse 2, "And He was transformed," metamorphosis, He was totally changed and that term morpheoshas to do with the body and form. His body, His form was totally changed. And that's all really we can say about it, we don't know any of the explanation for it, it's supernatural. "And His face did shine like the sun, and His clothing was as white as the light." It was dazzling, glistening, blazing. "And His face was like the unclouded sun at high noon." Literally, the glory inside was unveiled. And here was the transformation of the Son. This Jesus whom they had seen walking around every day with very human form and characteristic was none other than the blazing effulgence of God veiled. And this, beloved, is the greatest testimony to Jesus Christ, I think, of any passage in the Bible. If you really want to know who Jesus is, here it is. The glory is radiating

from the inside out. You can only understand it if you can understand some kind of supernaturally infinite light bulb. The light coming within spreads out and Jesus is aglow like a divine light bulb and His brilliance is as the sun. The glow right through His garments sends its beams of light.

There's little doubt who this is, folks...little doubt. For whenever scripturally God manifests His invisible Spirit essence, it is manifest as light, isn't it? You go back and find the Shekinah, the glow of God's light in the Old Testament. God manifest Himself in blazing light, pillars of fire, a cloud. In fact, that light appears as fire sometimes and as a brilliant cloud, other times and here as just blazing light like the sun. When God who is invisible spirit chooses to take a form to reveal Himself, apart from the incarnation of Jesus Christ that form is light, blazing light. This is God.

And Peter gave testimony to that. In 2 Peter 1 he says, "And we do not speak to you about the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in power as some fable, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. We saw it." And John writes, "We beheld His glory," John 1:14, "glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. We saw the very essence of God pouring out of that human form, transformed before our very eyes."

And, of course, when the Son of Man comesMatthew 24:31 and 25:31 sayswhen the Son of Man comes He comes in power and great glory, blazing glory. And lest you think this might be some other thing, in Revelation chapter 1 we have a picture of Jesus Christ in marvelous terms. It shows Him moving among His churches and it says His head and His hair were white like wool, as white as snow, His eyes were like a flame of fire, His feet like fine bronze as if they burned in a furnace, His voice like the sound of many waters and He had in His right hand seven stars and out of His mouth went a sharp twoedged sword and His face was as the sun shining in its strength. His face was like the brightest sun, blaze...it's the same picture you see right here.

You see, Jesus Christ in His human form is veiled. The body is a veil. It is a wall. It closes out the reality. But when He pulls that veil back for a moment, it is the blazing sun that is seen. And that's what they saw. And that's what you see as you look at this text. There's no doubt who He was. This is God who is synonymous with glory, the revealed essence of His nature. When Jesus came into the world He is God but He took that veil of humanity and clothed the glory. But here He gave a glimpse. This is God, don't let anybody come and tell you Jesus isn't God, the glory came from within. And so His deity, His majestic Kingship, His regal majesty, His royalty as the Son of God, the anointed One of the Father is seen by the transformation of the Son.

Secondly, by the testimony of the saints...by the testimony of the saints. Look at verse 3. "And behold there appeared unto Him..." and Luke adds "in glory," not with glory but in His glory, shrouded by it, surrounded by it, encompassed by it, "Moses and Elijah, and they were talking with Him." And now Peter, James and John are not only seeing something that's beyond their comprehension, they are hearing a conversation. Here is the second great confirmation of Jesus Christ. They, too, that is

Moses and Elijah, appeared in His glory.

Now, somebody asked a silly question, "Well, how did Peter, James and John recognize them? How did they know they were Moses and Elijah?" Well, I don't know why people bother with questions like that. I don't know, maybe they had a name tag. And if they didn't have a name tag maybe they had some kind of supernatural intuition. But I'm sure if God could have put this whole thing on, He sure could have impressed them with who it was. That's not really a big problem even for those who didn't have picture Bibles. So Moses and Elijah are there.

Why? That's a fair question. That's a more fair question, why are they there? Moses...Moses is synonymous with Old Testament, isn't he? In fact, do you know that sometimes the Old Testament is called Moses? Well, that's right, it's called Moses and the prophets. I mean, it's almost synonymous with Moses. And the law is called the law of Moses. Moses is synonymous with the Old Testament. Raised in the court of a king, pharaoh, the king of Egypt, exiled to the fields and flocks of Median to learn humility and to be a servant of God, chosen by God to confront the Egyptians and lead the people of Israel out of that land and through the Sinai wilderness to the borders of the promised land. Moses, perhaps the greatest leader of human kind who ever lived. Moses who coordinated two million people in a 40year trek in the desert. Moses who in a time when Israel had no king was their king and authority. In a time when they had no prophets, was their prophet in speaking for God. In a time when they had no priest was their priest who took them to God. Moses, king, priest, prophet...Moses, leader among leaders, leader over leaders, leader unequalled.

Beyond all of that, Moses was the agent of the coming of the Ten Commandments. He was the instrument through whom God gave the law expressing His will and revealing His character. In fact, as I said, the Old Testament is known as Moses and the prophets. Moses was the greatest man of all men in the Jewish mind. Who could stand with Moses? Only one, Elijah...Elijah. He fought against the nation's idolatry. If Moses gave the law, Elijah guarded the law, the greatest guardian of God's law. The man was zeal personified. He had courage. He spoke words of bold and profound judgment. He had a heart for God. He walked with God. He had miraculous power. You read 1 Kings, 2 Kings, and you see the miraculous nature of this man's miracles and prophecies. He was zeal incarnate. His zeal for God was unequaled. Every prophet should be like Elijah. Elijah stands for all the prophets. He is considered the most zealous and preeminent of them all.

So Moses gave the law, its great giver; Elijah, its great guardian. And what do they represent? The law and the prophets. And what is the law and the prophets? It's the Old Testament. And why are they there? They are there as the Old Testament saying, "This is the One of whom we spoke." It is the affirmation of the law and the prophets. Tremendous scene. It is Old Testament verification. It is all that Jesus said when He said, "I have come to fulfill the law and the prophets, coming and gathering around Him, standing in His glory and saying, Yea, it is He." It is the affirmation.

Now I don't know how Moses and Elijah got there. I don't know what kind of form they had. It doesn't tell me that. I'm not really interested in that. But I am interested in why they were there and they were there so that the people could see that the Old Testament was indeed fulfilled in this person Jesus Christ. He is the King. They needed to hear that. They needed to see that. We do as well.

There's something more. And I think it's wonderful. Look at Luke 9:31. It says in Matthew they were talking with Jesus, Moses and Elijah were, and having a conversation. So they must have been in some physical form or at least perceptibly physical. But in Luke 9 it tells us what they were talking about. Isn't that marvelous? Just to read Matthew would leave you frustrated. They were talking but what were they saying? And you go to Luke 9 and it says, "Behold," in verse 30, "there talked with Him two men who were Moses and Elijah who appeared in glory in the Lord's glory and they were speaking about His departure which He should accomplish at Jerusalem."

What were they talking about? Talking about Christ's what? Christ's death. Was that important? O was that important. The word, by the way, there for decease, you might have decease, you might have departure, it's a Greek word exodos, final outcome, it means. They were talking about His final outcome. They were talking about His coup de grace. They were talking about the big event at the end. And what was the big event? The cross...departure, exodosis a soft word for death. And so they were speaking of Christ's death as an exodos, just as the exodus under Moses delivered the people from the bondage of Egypt, so the exodus of Christ's death would deliver His people from the bondage of sin. A beautiful use of the word.

Is it important that they talk about His death? Sure, because what was the one element about this whole thing the disciples couldn't understand, didn't fit their Messianic program? His what? His death. They couldn't handle that. And so here is the law and the prophets represented in these two men and they're saying, "Hey, Lord, we're on schedule. We're talking about Your final outcome when You go to Jerusalem to die." Oh what an important conversation to hear. And maybe that's why later it was easier for them to talk about the fact that Christ must needs have suffered and given His life because that was the plan. And that's why Peter could stand up at Pentecost and say that the Lord was crucified by the determinant counsel and foreknowledge of God.

So, what is going on here is a tremendous testimony from the Old Testament saying this is indeed the King and He is indeed on schedule. And death is a part of the plan in spite of what some people have tried to do with the life of Jesus Christ. He didn't die as a wellmeaning patriot who got in over His head. He died as the one ordained died from before the foundation of the world and His death was as much a part of the plan as His Second Coming will be and it's so important for the disciples to know that. And so they see and they hear the Old Testament representatives affirming Christ.

Do you see why I say this passage is so important as to the deity of Jesus Christ? Tremendous passage, unequalled in all the gospel records for testimony to Jesus Christ.

Well, what do you do when you're in that kind of situation? I mean, you're just...you know, Peter, James and John. I mean, they've never seen anything like this. I mean, I can't even portray this. There are some passages, you know, that are just kind of skin and bones and you can sort of feed in the flesh on them and make them live and make them rich. This is one you can't even approach. You can't even get to it. It's not a question of embellishing it. You can't get there. I can't reproduce it. I can't do it for you. I can't draw it. I can't show it on a screen. Nothing they can do but just tell you this is what happened. It's irreproducible. And I can only imagine what I would have done but Luke says the disciples were really scared. But their fear was mingled with a sense of awe and so that they were afraid on the one hand and they were thrilled on the other hand. And in the midst of that they're just there in a state of sort of frozen frenzy, panic. And very often in a state of great emotion, when you really don't know what to say, you just open your mouth and dumb things come out. And that was sort of way of life for Peter. And this is another one of those occasions.

In the middle of all this glory and majesty and splendor and wonder, we are brought right back to the reality of what a klutz we are. "Then answered Peter," verse 4, "and said to Jesus," so you could still discern Jesus was there, of course, in some transfigured form and perhaps the form we'll see Him in glory where He's recognizable in form and yet glorious. He says, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If You will, let's make three booths." In fact, he even volunteered, according to Luke, to do them himself...rather, according to Mark to do them himself, "Let's make three booths, one for You and one for Moses and one for Elijah."

In other words, what Peter is saying is this is so good I don't want it to ever end, we'll build permanent places here. And you three can stay in them, we're going to be humble, we'll sleep outside but we're not having you...it might get cold tonight and you need a place.

So dumb. I mean, how do you put glory in a booth? Right? You just, you just don't know why he says things like this. But he does and it's wonderful that he does, so comforting for the rest of us. By the way, the phrase that he uses there, he says, "Lord, it is good," is excellent. It's really...it is excellent, this is the best thing that ever happened to me, he says. I mean, I've caught a lot of fish in my day...but this is the best thing that ever happened to me. I have never had an experience like this and this, Lord, You see, now You're getting close to what we've been talking about, Lord. I mean, this is...this is what we want, see. So, Lord, let's make some places and we'll just stay here.

Now we don't know what his motive was. We don't know what all of the things going through his mind were. But he really liked what he was experiencing and the ambivalence of his thrill and his terror, he made this suggestion. One of the other gospel writers says he said this because he had no idea of what he was saying. Isn't that good? He didn't know what he was saying so he just said whatever

came out of his mouth. But it's helpful here as a contrast to what was going on.

And then in verse 5 you have a most interesting response. "While he yet spoke, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them, behold a voice out of the cloud which said, This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, listen to Him." Which being interpreted is to say to Peter what? Shut up. This is not the time for dumb suggestions.

Now it's interesting. What was wrong with what Peter said? Was it wrong? Oh, his heart wasn't wrong, I don't think. But there was something foolish about it. And I guess it was this. You...he didn't understand two things. One, he didn't understand that this was only a preview and he had to go back to the valley and go through the suffering and the hardships and the cross bearing and the selfdenial and all that stuff and the Messiah still had to suffer and die. I mean, he couldn't grab this deal and tie it up and make it permanent, he just couldn't do that. And the second thing he didn't understand was you can't put Jesus, Moses and Elijah in equal places. You see, Luke says that when Peter said this, Moses and Elijah were moving away. Moses and Elijah came in a very temporary fashion and their purpose was to salute their divine successor, the one who fulfilled the law and the prophets. That was their purpose. And then to leave Him alone in the glory of unchallenged supremacy and to fade away so that the soulremaining object of the adoration of the disciples and the adoration of the Father was none other than the Lord Jesus Christ in glory. And capturing all three of them and putting them in boxes wasn't the point. Let those two go and leave the one who belongs to stay and that is Jesus alone. Peter didn't even know what he was talking about. They couldn't stay. They wouldn't stay because there had to be the suffering and there had to be the single unchallenged supremacy of the transformed Lord Jesus Christ.

We'll see Him again this way. That's right, when He comes in glory, won't we? So I'm just going to have to tell you, you're in the same place the other nine disciples were which isn't too bad. You got in on the preview and you're going to have to wait for the real thing, till the Second Coming.

So, the testimony to the Kingship and royal majesty of Jesus Christ comes from the transformation of the Son and the testimony of the saints and then thirdly, and I'm just going to introduce this point, the terror of the Father. Back to verse 5...the terror of the Father. "While he yet spoke," while Peter was just dribbling, you know, and talking, he doesn't even get a direct answer, "a bright cloud overshadowed them."

Now who's this? Someone else arriving. Starting in Exodus chapter 13 verse 21, take your Bible sometime and just begin to look for white clouds. And whenever you see one, guess who will be there. God...God will be there. And you can follow those white clouds all the way to the fourteenth chapter of Revelation. And when you get to the fourteenth chapter of Revelation, you will read this, "And I looked and behold a white cloud and upon the cloud one sat like the Son of Man." And it says, "He had on His head a golden crown." Who's that? Jesus Christ. "In His hand a sharp sickle and an

angel came out of the temple crying with a loud voice to Him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in the sickle and reap for the time is come for Thee to reap for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And He that sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth and the earth was reaped."

In other words, Jesus sitting on that white cloud coming in glory to judge the earth. White clouds, brilliant blazing, dazzling, glistening clouds wherein God sits. And it came down over the scene, just a mindboggling scene. And it says a voice out of the cloud. And it said, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye Him." And now we are face to face with the awesome awful terrifying presence of Almighty God. And verse 6, "The disciples heard it, they fell on their face and they were literally terrified." Totally traumatized.

God was there. Boy, this is some scene, folks. And God was there to say in addition to the testimony of the Old Testament, in addition to the testimony of the transformed Son is the testimony of the Father, "This is...what?...My beloved Son." O what a testimony.

Do you have any questions about who Jesus Christ is? I hope not. It's right here. Our response should be as the response of Peter, James and John. We at the one point are thrilled beyond words, it is good to be in His presence. It is the best thing that ever happened to me to be in His presence. But I am also very much afraid.

Beloved, that is a divine tension that ought to exist in every Christian's life. That on the one hand it is good to walk with God. On the other hand, it is fearful. It is good because He is there in mercy and grace. It is fearful because He is there in holiness and judgment. And as we walk in obedience, hear ye Him. As we walk in obedience we know the excellence of His presence. We walk in disobedience, we experience the terror of it.

Well, what happened? That's for next week.

Father, we thank You so much for the fact that You have given to us a true word concerning Christ. Lord, we don't understand all these things. We can't put ourselves back nearly two thousand years ago and be on that place to perceive what they perceived who were there. So give us the eyes of understanding and may we at least understand this, that Jesus is God veiled in human flesh, that Jesus is the one of whom the Old Testament and the New Testament speak as the fulfiller of the law and the prophets, that Jesus is the one beloved of the Father who is fulfilling the divine plan which pleases the Father and who is to be heard and obeyed by every soul. Father, we pray that we would understand the weight of this Scripture. How terrifying it would have been to have stood on that mountain with Peter, James and John, but how equally terrifying to know that that same glory is within us for Christ is within us and Christ in us is glory. And though it be veiled in us, may we know that the same God that was transfigured that day on the mountain dwells in us and may we be so in awe and know that same ambivalent tension that they knew, on the one hand it is so excellent, on the other

hand it is so terrifying.

While your heads are bowed in just a closing word, those of you who have never opened your heart to Jesus Christ, you cannot escape the reality of who He is nor the Father's words to listen to Him and what He says is to come after Him, deny yourself, take up your cross and follow. Be obedient to His Word, accept Him as your Lord and Savior. Are you hearing Him?

Available online at: http://www.gty.org
COPYRIGHT (C) 2014 Grace to You
You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright).