

Bible Study for Sunday, Sunday Feb 23, 2020

Our texts for this Sunday are:

2 Peter 1:16-21

Matthew 17:1-9

Read Matthew 17:1-9 The Transfiguration

17 Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. ² And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. ³ Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. ⁴ Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I^[a] will make three dwellings^[b] here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." ⁵ While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, "This is my Son, the Beloved;^[c] with him I am well pleased; listen to him!" ⁶ When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. ⁷ But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Get up and do not be afraid." ⁸ And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone. ⁹ As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, "Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

What does it say about this event that it is recorded in all three Synoptic Gospels (M, M & L)?

Which is more important – Jesus' *identity* or His *activity*? How about for us?

Generally, the synoptic Gospels present the disciples as clueless about Jesus' real nature until after the Resurrection. But why wouldn't an experience such as the Transfiguration make it very clear to the inner circle at least who Jesus was? In what way might verse 9 have some bearing on this issue? Why (do you think) Jesus might say that?

When you think of Jesus, do you have a tendency to forget about, or to downplay, His power and holiness?

Have you ever been in a situation where you just didn't know what to do or say so you started making suggestions to get beyond the uncomfortable moment? Is that what Peter was doing?

Many Christians have had "mountain top" experiences in worship, on retreats, or in other settings. What is the basic value of these experiences: to deepen our personal faith, to inspire us for more commitment to Christ's mission in the world, or some combination of both?

The Greek word used for the transfiguration is the same word that Paul uses to describe the change that is to take place within ourselves: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be

transformed (transfigured) by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Romans 12:2)

- What does it mean for you and me to be transformed (or “transfigured”) as followers of Jesus?

Read 2 Peter 1:16-21. Eyewitnesses of the Transfiguration

¹⁶ For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷ For he received honor and glory from God the Father when that voice was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory, saying, “This is my Son, my Beloved,^[a] with whom I am well pleased.” ¹⁸ We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven, while we were with him on the holy mountain. ¹⁹ So we have the prophetic message more fully confirmed. You will do well to be attentive to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. ²⁰ First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, ²¹ because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.^[b]

Jesus’ return has been long awaited. The community addressed in 2 Peter got tired of waiting and let their faith commitments and morals slide.

Why do you think Peter says what he says in vs 16? What do you think was happening that he felt the need to say that?

What is Peter saying to them in vs 19?

What role does Jesus’ promised return play in your own faith-understanding? Does it even play a role?

Is it difficult to “keep the faith” when we sometimes can’t see any evidence of God being present?