



Loving Jesus, Loving People, Plowing a Counter-Culture

SERMON TEXT: Matthew 17:1-13

KEY POINT(S): Jesus gives him a vision of his glory to prepare them for the work he has or them.

FOR LEADERS

- Apprenticeship - As a group leader, remember that your primary role is to help challenge people in taking their next steps toward Jesus...whatever that may be. For some, this will mean leadership opportunities in their own ministry areas. Be mindful of who is in your group, and look for others you can invest in as potential leaders!
Core Groups - We're introducing a new concept to Communities this year, which we're calling "Core Groups." You'll find out more about the idea behind Core Groups in the coming weeks, but understand that a Core Group is essentially an "inner two or three" that you walk with in a bit more depth than your Community. We recommend that a core group be two or three people close to you, who can challenge you, dive deeper with, hold you accountable, and walk with.

GETTING STARTED

- [1] Communities Video - Watch this week's community extras video.
[2] Icebreaker - Name a time where you were dragged into an experience that ended up completely surprising you!
[3] Opener - What were some things that stood out to you from the sermon or text this week? Anything particularly eye-opening, helpful, or insightful?

THE GLORY OF JESUS

In our passage this week, we dive into a crazy section of scripture where we get to witness the transfiguration of Jesus right before the disciples' eyes. It's important to note that this passage is actually sandwiched between two predictions by Jesus of his own death (Matthew 16:21-17:12).

Ask for a volunteer to read Matthew 17:1-13.

- [1] How familiar are you with this passage? What do you make of this crazy experience that Jesus invites James, John and Peter to?
[2] In your opinion, why do you think Jesus only brought James, Peter and John with him up the mountain, instead of revealing himself in his glory before all of the disciples and crowds?
[3] Do you think it is still important for Christians today to "behold the glory" of Jesus? Why or why not, and what does this look like, practically?
[4] What do you think the significance is of Moses and Elijah being present for the transfiguration? What does this communicate about Jesus?

Leaders: There is certainly a significance with this passage being sandwiched between Jesus' predictions of his death. Note that God's words here are directly reminiscent of his words during Jesus' baptism in Chapter 3 - "Listen to him." These words are meant to both confirm what this transfiguration is revealing; that Jesus truly is the Messiah and that there are, indeed, dark days ahead. For the disciples, and these three apostles in particular, they will need to cling closer to Jesus than ever. It is not a mistake to follow Jesus, even when everything around us is crashing down. This is just as important today for Christians! We must cling closely to Jesus, in worship,





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*in discipleship, in prayer, in reading God's Word, in meditation, in everything. The significance of Moses and Elijah being present is a testament (get it?!) of the truth that Jesus is the Messiah – He is the one who was promised in Genesis, and He is the one hoped for by the prophets.*

**THE SUPERIORITY OF JESUS**

In the sermon, Ryan recounted an experience he had when he saw a man wearing a “Jesus is my homeboy” t-shirt. He mentioned how it made him think about this specific passage, and how silly such nonchalant attitudes can be in light of Scriptural accounts of people who actually encountered God (e.g. Moses, Isaiah, Ezekiel, John, etc.).

- [5]** What are some ways that you feel people may take Jesus for granted and treat him less than what his glory deserves?
- [6]** Where do you, personally, feel that you could better honor Jesus in your own life?
- [7]** If you're honest, what are some of the most common areas of our lives that tend to take priority over Jesus?

*Leaders: Remember also, the Bible's stern truth – one day EVERY knee shall bow and declare Jesus Lord. And if Jesus is truly God, our Savior, and our suffering servant, then shouldn't we honor him with more than t-shirts and bumper stickers? Doesn't the King of all Creation and the author of salvation deserve, at least, our whole lives?*

**THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF JESUS**

This week we heard about the importance of the Christian life both being “on the mountain” and being “on mission.” Ryan went on to explain that the absence of either or both of these is almost as dangerous as focusing on one over another.

- [8]** In your opinion, what does each of these things mean, and why is it important to have a healthy balance of both as we walk with Jesus?
- [9]** In what way can becoming super-committed to being on mission, while neglecting our time with Jesus on the mountain, be unhealthy? What about the opposite?
- [10]** What are some ways in which people today seek “mountaintop experiences” with God? Why are these necessary? At what point could they become unhealthy?
- [11]** What are some rhythms you have in place in your own life to make sure you are striking a balance between these two things? Where do you hope to grow in this?

*Leaders: An over-focus on mission, apart from a relationship with Christ is extremely dangerous. It results in a movement that isn't really about Jesus so much as it is about “the mission” itself. Usually, this breeds poor understanding of Jesus', His Gospel, and salvation, which often results in people leaving the faith. The opposite is also dangerous – a true commitment to God in a mountaintop experience will always result in a call to action. If all we ever desire is the mountain, and it never leads to action or obedience, perhaps we should ask ourselves if its really Jesus we're meeting with. Remember, we aren't seeking God experiences – we're seeking God himself.*

**PRAYER**

- [1]** Pray that the Lord would help you to have a clear vision of his glory and would encourage you to live out the mission he calls us to.