



MATTHEW

The Savior-King and His Kingdom

The King's Transfiguration!

Matthew 17:1-13

Message #47 of 80 – S1080

Sermon given on January 14, 2024



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

The King's Transfiguration!

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Opening Comments

- Open your Bibles to **Matthew 17**
- Today, we continue a series through the gospel of Matthew – **The Savior-King and His Kingdom**
- Let's open this time in our service with a word of prayer. - **Pray**

Teaching

- **The King's Transfiguration!**
- I grew up believing Santa Claus was real and that I had better be good or else I would be getting lumps of coal in my stocking for Christmas.
- I did eventually grow out of that childish belief.
- I didn't grow up with any beliefs about Jesus.
- It really wasn't until I met Kelly that I gave Him any thought at all.
- And for the most part, I didn't think very much of Him.
- To me, He was a religious figure in a religious system that I didn't believe in.
- I didn't know who Jesus was, but He knew me.
- And when the time was right, He helped me to know Him.
- And since then, I have been getting to know Him better and better.
- And the better I get to know Him the better my life becomes.
- It is not always easier – but it is better.
- In today's text we get a special glimpse into who Jesus is.
- **Matthew 17:1-2**
- We know this event as the Transfiguration.
- This is His glory shining out from Him.
- This is His divine nature shining forth in all its brilliance.
- John would later write of this glory (**John 1:14**).
- **And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.**
- When John said we 'beheld His glory', this is what he meant.
- This event is likely what Jesus was referring to in (**Matthew 16:27-28**).

For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works. ²⁸ Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.

- Peter, James, and John get a glimpse of what Jesus will look like at His Second Coming.
- This is the King of kings in all His glory.
- Peter would later write of this vision (**2 Peter 1:16**).

For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

- Santa Claus is a fable – Jesus is real!
- Peter, James, and John see this amazing display of Christ's glory and then suddenly He is not alone.

- **Matthew 17:3**

- Moses and Elijah – Moses had died almost fifteen hundred years earlier and Elijah was taken up to heaven nine hundred years earlier.
- Luke adds a couple of details about this event (**Luke 9:29-30**).

As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening. ³⁰ And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, ³¹ who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

- First, Jesus prayed. Second, Moses and Elijah talked to Jesus about His upcoming death on the cross.
- I would like to know more about this conversation.
- As seems to be his pattern, Peter speaks without thinking.

- **Matthew 17:4-5**

- Mankind has rejected, despised, mocked, minimized, and denied Christ for two-thousand years.
- Some consider Him to be fiction – like Santa Claus.
- Others claim He was nothing more than a good teacher or a prophet.
- God says He is My Son, and I am well-pleased with Him.
- Who is wrong if your idea of who Jesus is differs from God's declaration of who Jesus is?
- 'Hear Him!' – When the disciples lift their eyes and Moses and Elijah are gone.
- The inferred message is, 'Listen to Jesus and Him alone.'

- God will send men and women to give messages to His people and to the world.
- We should respect them and listen to them.
- But only as they lead us to a deeper understanding of Christ.
- God's holy voice thundering out of the cloud has an expected response.
- **Matthew 17:6-8**
- By wanting to build three tabernacles Peter had made the mistake of putting Jesus on the same level as Moses and Elijah.
- Moses and Elijah are important in God's plan, but Jesus is infinitely more important.
- Moses and Elijah had completed the tasks God gave them.
- Moses and Elijah represent the whole of the Old Testament.
- For centuries the Jews had looked to them for guidance and instruction. But their primary role was to point people to Jesus.
- Once Jesus arrived, they are to look to Jesus only.
- The same is true for us – it is Jesus first, last, and only.
- Even as we read and study the Old Testament, it is so that we can see Jesus more clearly.
- This glorious moment passes, and it is time to head back down the mountain.
- **Matthew 17:9-13**
- I can imagine Peter saying, 'I can't wait to tell Thomas about this. He will never believe it!'
- Jesus tells them not to mention it, not even to the other disciples.
- They have just seen Jesus in His glorified state.
- Jesus doesn't want them telling this part of the story until the rest of the story has played out – His resurrection.
- And before the resurrection is the cross.
- The gospel message is not just about the glory of heaven – it is also about the cross of atonement for sin.
- No one will experience the glory of heaven without first visiting the cross and having their sins forgiven.

- And to do that they must place their trust in Christ who died for their sins.
- Why do they ask this question about Elijah?
- The answer is found in the last words of the Old Testament (**Malachi 4:5-6**).

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. ⁶ And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.

- The scribes taught that the return of Elijah was one of the primary signs of the coming Messiah and deliverance from their enemies.
- They just saw Elijah, but he didn't stay, and he didn't do anything.
- They are beginning to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, but they don't understand how everything fits together.
- John the Baptist came in the type and spirit of Elijah.
- The religious establishment rejected him and then Herod had him beheaded.
- In a similar way, Jesus would be rejected by the religious establishment and Pilate would have Him crucified.
- Within this account we see the paradox of Christ.
- On this high mountain the glorified Christ is flanked by two spiritual giants of the past.
- As they head down from that high mountain, Jesus wants them to focus on the low hill outside Jerusalem where Jesus will be flanked by two criminals as they hang on crosses.
- The glory is coming but not until He has kept His appointment on the cross.
- Most normal people resist the idea of suffering.
- Even as Christ-followers we would like to believe that our faith can keep us from suffering.
- Suffering is part of living in a world that has been broken by sin (**John 16:33**).

These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

- The apostle Paul tells us to not let that reality discourage us (**2 Corinthians 4:16-18**).

Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward *man* is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory, ¹⁸ while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen *are* temporary, but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.

- Glory is the future of all Christ-followers, but that glory may include a life that is touched by suffering.
- Christ suffered on our behalf – we should be willing to endure suffering from time to time as we wait for the glory of heaven.
- Jesus said that very thing (**Matthew 16:24-25**).

Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. ²⁵ For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.”

- Glory is coming, but it is probably not today.
- Knowing that glory is coming helps us in those days when it is not very glorious. **Pray!**
- The ushers will now come and pass out the Communion elements!
- As we prepare ourselves to partake of Communion, we want to reflect upon what it means.
- Communion is a sacrament to remember what Jesus did on the cross for us.
- While the elements are being passed, remind yourself what Jesus saved you from.
- And then thank Him for taking all that away and preparing a place for you in the glory of heaven.
- And if you are in a time of suffering, ask Him to help you persevere to the end of it.
- Please hold the elements and we will partake together.
- Partake of Communion!
- Worship Team comes up to play the last song!