

The Transfiguration

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[0 : 00] Our sermon today is from Matthew chapter 17. If you'll look there in your Bibles, Matthew 17. We're continuing our study through the book of Matthew and last week we ended, well, with chapter 16, the very last verse of chapter 16.

We ended verse 28. If you look back at verse 28 of Matthew 16, what you'll see is Jesus' words, Truly I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.

Now, what I somewhat argued last week was, I mentioned there are several different views of what did Jesus mean by some not tasting death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom. And then I argued, maybe somewhat noncommittally, but argued that all three of the synoptic gospels, what we see is that immediately following Jesus' words there is what happens with the transfiguration.

And it was roughly seven to eight days later that this happens, or six to eight days later. Matthew says six, the way he's counting days. I think Mark or Luke say eight days, but they may be counting, including the day of the transfiguration as well as the day of Jesus saying those words, not a six-day gap.

[1 : 30] But either way, it's sometime in that period. Basically a week later, Jesus takes the disciples up onto this mountain. And so, but in all the gospels, immediately following Jesus' words there is the account of the transfiguration.

Whatever transpired in that week, there was nothing else of account to be included. And they all immediately go to the transfiguration. And so what I argued was that what we see is Jesus giving the disciples a foretaste of the coming of the kingdom.

They get to see Jesus as he will come in the consummation of the kingdom, in his glory. They get to witness that. And so the kingdom of God was revealed to them before they died and witnessed it in heaven, we might say.

When we die, what I'm arguing in this passage even is what they see of Jesus is a taste of what we'll see in heaven. They see Jesus in all his glory. And so Jesus is saying some of you will not taste death before you'll see that.

Well, that's unusual because most of us will have to taste death. We'll have to experience death before we see Jesus in his glory. And so they get to witness Jesus in his glory as it will be when he returns for the consummation of the kingdom.

[2 : 38] And so they receive a foretaste of Christ at his return and how he is, we could say, eternally with the Father. Now we know that for roughly 33 years, Jesus was on earth in human flesh.

And he's now gone and he still has a human body. But he veiled his glory, as it were, in this flesh. But what they get a taste of, what they see a glimpse of is what Jesus always is in his glory in heaven.

What he always, it's so difficult, I say always is. What he always has been, what he always will be, what he is now, they get to see Jesus in his glory. Now I've said this already, but Jesus has come. And his coming was the inauguration of the kingdom. He's ushered in the kingdom. We've seen certain aspects of the kingdom, such as the binding of Satan, the advance of the gospel to the ends of the earth. They're happening now.

And so the kingdom has begun, started. But we're still awaiting the final consummation of that kingdom. So even now, we don't see Jesus the way that they got to see Jesus.

[3 : 45] So this is a unique experience, and I think this is what Jesus is speaking of at the end of chapter 16. So I want us to look at this. In the transfiguration, we really have a unique moment in Christ's earthly ministry.

Only a few of the disciples were able to witness it. Three, maybe the inner circle of the disciples. We think of the three and the 12, and then moving outward to the 70. And we look at this, and it clearly points back to God's Shekinah glory.

This whole experience of the transfiguration, this cloud that they have. They're on top of a mountain, which probably points to Sinai in some ways, where Moses went up on the mountain, and he met God in his glory.

And he held God, and remember, he walked away from there glowing. So there's probably some reference back to that. And we have this unique experience of the transfiguration.

Now I want us to look at what the transfiguration was, what it entailed, and then I want us to consider how did the disciples respond to that, and then make some application. So first, the transfiguration itself.

[4 : 55] Jesus took with him the three disciples, Peter, James, and John. We see that in verse 1. And I think what we have here is a continuing of the greater revelation of what it means to be the Messiah.

What is the Messiah? We saw that they have confessed in chapter 16 that Jesus is the Messiah. They're understanding more. And now that they've reached this point, and remember, Jesus said, you didn't come to this understanding on your own, but the Father has revealed this to you.

Now that the Father has revealed to them that Jesus is the Messiah, well, what does that mean to be Messiah? And we've seen already that their conception of the Messiah was wrong. And so where chapter 16 ended was Jesus explaining that what it means to be the Messiah is suffering and death, and that all those who follow him will likewise suffer.

And so he's explained that. And now I think we have here in chapter 17 continuing revelation of what it means to be the Messiah. And so Jesus has spoken of his death, and now he's going to reveal to them the glory that he has.

And I think also revealed to them his own deity more clearly. I think they've confessed already that you are the Son of God, but now they're going to hear God confess that, that God the Father confessed that from the cloud.

[6 : 09] So he brings three up on the mountaintop with him. Why three? Why the center circle? Well, undoubtedly, there's a close relationship that Jesus has with these disciples. One possibility as well is that in Israel and Jewish society, it bears the burden of proof to have three witnesses.

And so we read, for example, 2 Corinthians 13.1, every charge must be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. And so Jesus commands them not to speak of this, and then until after he's died and resurrected.

And so when they testify to this, is their testimony believable? Well, even by the Israel standards of court, their testimony would be believable.

They're three witnesses to this. And so there's greater validity to their recounting of this. And so he brings the three up.

In addition, we see that Moses and Elijah appear with Jesus. And no explanation is given to why. I mean, we're kind of, why Moses, why Elijah? But Moses and Elijah appear with Jesus.

[7 : 16] If we think about who they are, we could say that Moses is the giver of the law. He really represents the law. The books of Moses are really the books of the laws. It's often used interchangeably. Likewise, we could think of Elijah as the first or the greatest of the prophets.

And so when we think of that division, that Moses represents the law and Elijah the prophets, then we also understand that the Old Testament is often referred to as the law and the prophets. And so we have a representative of the law.

We have a representative. Maybe we could say the greatest representative of the law, the greatest representative of the prophets, are both here with Jesus. And so I think this is speaking to us of the fulfillment of the Old Testament.

That Jesus is fulfilling what Moses spoke of, what Elijah spoke of, what the law spoke of, and what the prophets spoke of. Jesus is the fulfillment of it. And they're witnessing him and his glory in terms of the fulfillment of it.

In Matthew 5.17, Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount, Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets.

[8 : 20] I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them. And maybe we can see this as a visual affirmation of Jesus' words there in the Sermon on the Mount. They get to see, yes, the law and the prophets are supporting Jesus.

They're speaking of Jesus. He is the fulfillment of what they prophesied and spoke of. Just on a side note, I think it's important that we see that their presence here is another affirmation that those who die in Christ do not perish, but they live on his presence.

Moses and Elijah are still alive in a sense. They're continued on. Even after death, they're still there, and they're able to return and be with Jesus in that moment. And so, likewise, we're encouraged that for the Christian that dies in the Lord, we continue on in the presence of God.

Now, there are two parts, really, to the transfiguration. Similar, but it says, that his face shone like the sun in verse 2.

So, Jesus actually emits light. I mean, he's radiating light from his skin, from his very presence. And so, Matthew Henry writes, God is light, in 1 John 1, 5.

[9 : 35] He dwells in light, 1 Timothy 16. He covers himself with light, Psalm 104, 2. And therefore, when Christ would appear in the form of God, he appears in light.

And I think that's a great explanation for understanding, why is he shining the way he is? Why does he appear in light? It's a radiance of his glory. You may remember, I said already, that this is like Sinai.

And when Moses went up on Mount Sinai, he got to behold the backside glory of God the Father, as he passes by the Shekinah glory. He sees his glory, and he sees just a glimpse of it.

And the result of that is, Moses shines, his face shone, so that he comes down the mountain. No one can bear to look at him, they had to make him veil his face, to cover his face.

But here's what I want you to see, is that Moses is shining, Moses' glory, if we want to call it that, was a reflected glory. He's reflecting what he has seen of God the Father. What we see with Jesus is, in this transfiguration, he, basically, he pulls off the veil that he's been wearing.

[10 : 47] The humility that he's veiled him, he's clothed himself with, of this flesh, is pulled away. And it's not as though he becomes spirit. He doesn't change into spirit, but his glory is revealed.

And he emits light. He's not reflecting light. It's the difference between the sun and the moon. And he even says here, his face shone like the sun. And we could picture Moses as the moon.

And even that was a little creepy, and freaked people out, and they couldn't look upon it. But now they behold, Jesus shining like the sun. His glory unveiled, amazes them.

And then we also are told his clothes became white as light. So, he was transformed, and the result is, his clothes could not veil to glory.

And we get this impression of, of Jesus' glory shining through his clothing. It changes his clothing so that it's white as light. Maybe we could even get scientific and speak of how color is really just a reflection of light, a reflection of light, different bandwidths.

[11 : 51] God's glory shining through Christ, and through his clothing, resulted in his clothing having no more color. It shines bright as white. I think we have to understand as well that this speaks of the brightness of his holiness.

We see pictures in Revelation even of, uh, Christians being clothed in white garments. And speaking of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, his holiness.

And so, likewise, we see a purity in this, but his clothes shine forth, um, and become white as light. So, when we think back to Moses as well, Moses veiled his face.

He, he put something over his face, and so that, it wouldn't shine through. It didn't bother anybody around him because they couldn't see the shining. And what we see here is that there is no such veil for Jesus Christ.

His clothing cannot cover it. He shines through his clothing so that his clothes shine white as light. And so, I think, again, we see a, a differing degree of this with Jesus.

[12 : 55] There's this internal glory that he has, that he's revealing to his disciples, that is really quite amazing. Now, as I said, he was not changed into spirit, but, the humility, the weakness, the dishonor that was there in his flesh, his body was, that was there in his flesh and body, was taken away, not that his body was.

And they saw him, uh, as was right, and fitting for his divinity. They saw him as, he should be seen, without the veil of, the humility that he put on, in the incarnation.

I just explained a little bit of that humility. Philippians 2, 6 through 8 says, though he, Jesus, was in the form of God, he did not count equality with God, a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men, and being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

And so we see the way that it's spoken of, in Jesus' incarnation. For Jesus to, take on flesh is to, in some way step down, it's to humble himself.

And he humbled himself, and he took on flesh, emptied himself is what it says, by taking the form of a servant, and being born in the likeness of men. That's the emptying of him. And so if we can imagine for a second, if that's true of the incarnation, what do we see happening in the transfiguration?

[14 : 20] They get a glimpse of Jesus, when he's not empty, when he doesn't take the form of a servant, without the humility of taking on human flesh. They get to see a glimpse of Jesus in his glory.

I don't think they saw the fullness of his glory, because I don't think they could have stood it. In their sinful flesh, they probably would have perished. They might have ceased to exist right there on the mountain.

But they get a glimpse into Jesus in all his glory, without the humility of taking on human flesh. And then what's added to this is, the voice of the Father then speaks to them out of a bright cloud. And we think again of the Shekinah glory, God appearing in a cloud. And when it happened in the Old Testament, it was a dark cloud, and then a pillar of fire at night. But what we see here is a bright cloud.

Just imagine what that looks like for a second. I mean, we saw some clouds yesterday, when we had a little bit of rain come through, and there's these dark gray clouds coming through. Or even, we see white cumulus, you know, the big puffy cotton ball clouds up in the sky.

[15 : 26] But a bright cloud almost seems contrary. Clouds veil the sun. They bring shadows over the earth. They oftentimes are dark.

And we have here a bright cloud. And so Jesus, excuse me, God the Father appears to them in this theophany through a bright cloud. And I said already, it's reminiscent of Mount Sinai in Exodus 19.9. The Lord said to Moses, Behold, I am coming to you in a thick cloud that the people may hear when I speak with you and may also believe you forever. And so again, we see God now in a situation very similar to Sinai, appearing in a cloud, but this time not a thick cloud, a cloud of darkness, but a cloud of brightness.

And then the words the Father speak are actually the exact same words that God the Father spoke from heaven when Jesus was baptized. So we see the words here in Matthew 17.6.

We saw them before in Matthew 3.17. It says, This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased. And so God has already declared this at Jesus' baptism, but it takes on a whole new light now with the disciples having come to a saving knowledge of who Jesus is, believing that he's the Messiah, seeing him in his glory, and now they hear it again from God the Father.

[16 : 49] A reaffirmation of what he said before, that this is his Son, his beloved Son, in whom he's well pleased. And we have the added line, Listen to him.

And so that's the one change from what we see at the baptism is they're commanded to listen to him. Now again, as we think of the connection to the Old Testament, you may remember Deuteronomy 18.5.

Moses speaks of prophecy. I'm sorry, Deuteronomy 18.15. Moses said, The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers.

It is to him you shall listen. And so Moses prophesies of this great prophet that would be greater than him that they're to listen to. And of course, Jesus is the fulfillment of that prophecy.

And so, Moses commanded them to listen to them. God, the Father reaffirms this. Listen to Jesus. Even his words of Jesus being the Son is a divine affirmation of Jesus' deity.

[17 : 48] God the Father affirms that God the Son is God indeed. Even the fact that he says he's well pleased with him, just consider that God can never be well pleased with sinful man apart from Christ.

God can't be pleased with us if it's not for Christ. Christ alone is what enables us to be pleased. Even Moses and Elijah were not well pleasing to God apart from Jesus Christ.

I see this also as an affirmation of Jesus' work that in Christ he was reconciling the world to himself. 2 Corinthians 5.19.

And so, God the Father say he's well, that he's well pleased with Jesus is an affirmation of Jesus' work. That his atoning work that he's doing even now in terms of his acts of obedience and obeying the Father and living out for for us a righteousness that will be ours given to us.

God's pleased with him. And so that's great news for us. Likewise, it's great news for us that in Christ God sees the Christian as pleasing to him.

[18:59] Hebrews 11 says without faith it is impossible to please God. There's no hope apart from faith. And in faith we're united in Jesus Christ who's well pleasing to the Father. And so God looks on us as well pleasing as well.

Now I want you to consider the response that we have from the disciples that are there. As has been typically the case, it's Peter that speaks up again. He's kind of the spokesperson. And what he says is that it's good to be here. Now some have been really hard on Peter about this. Many of the commentaries I read were kind of harsh on Peter about saying this.

I want to take a different approach in this sermon. Let me just say why have people been harsh on Peter? Well I think it's partly because of what the synoptic gospels say. In Matthew we don't really get a clue to this necessarily.

We see his response. Verse 4 Peter said Lord it is good that we are here. If you wish I will make three tents here one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.

[20:11] Well in Luke 9:33 we have the following. It says right after that not knowing what he said. So Peter said this not knowing what he said. Now there's a lot of ways we could take this.

It could be that Peter's just running off at the mouth. It's obvious that Peter is not the quiet one of the disciples. He's the first one to speak up. And so it may just be saying he spoke out of turn and that's how some people have viewed this.

Mark 9 verse 6 says for he did not know what to say for they were terrified. So this is what he says because he didn't know what to say because he was terrified. And so again that kind of sounds like well he just spoke because he was nervous or terrified and didn't really know what to say.

But I want to take another approach to what Peter has said. Rather than a buke, a rebuke, I see this as an expression of Peter's natural outpouring of feeling.

He sees Jesus in his glory. He doesn't know what to say. I mean who would? Right? Who would know what to say if they beheld Jesus in his glory? And along with that there's this terror.

[21:27] But his response is Master, Rabbi, it's good for us to be here. And then he wants to set up these tents. And so what I see is though it's terrifying, he acknowledges that it's also good for them to be there.

He sees the goodness of seeing the glory of God. Maybe I could say it this way. In terms even of application for us, we could say the soul that loves Christ will love to see him in his glory.

If we really love Christ and to behold Christ in his glory is a good thing. We would love to have that experience. Likewise, it's a thankfulness to Christ for being allowed to be there.

It's good for us to be here. not if we take it in this sense, he's not saying it's right for us to be here. He's saying it's a blessing for us to be here. It is good of you to allow us to be here.

It is good that we're here. What a blessing it is for us to be here. And again, I see this as a very good and a very natural response to seeing the glory of God. Maybe again in broadening this out in application, it's good for us to be where Christ is.

[22:39] We want to be in the presence of Christ. That's good. And I think it's good for Peter to express that. And then Peter adds, if you wish, he's seeking permission, if this is what you would want according to your will, if you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.

And I think we readily understand that to make tents is an expression of a desire for permanence. He doesn't want this moment to end. He wants them to stay here. He wants it to remain like this. Maybe some of you have experienced this. It's kind of like a vacation. If you've ever been on a vacation that you really didn't want to end. I know sometimes after being on vacation, you're ready to get back home, but you ever been somewhere and it was so good that you think, I don't really want to go back home.

I don't want to go back to work. I don't want to go back to life as it normally is. I just want to stay here. Now, I imagine that there would be a diminishing value to that.

As time went on, we would probably at some point get tired of it and be ready to come home. But in that moment, you don't want to leave. Maybe you've been somewhere and you have this view, you picture it.

[23:53] It's great and you think, I want a house right here. I want to set up a place right here. I remember we had the opportunity a few years ago to, we actually got to camp in the Yosemite

Valley.

And you'd wake up, I mean, the camping experience isn't all that in terms of housing, but it was setting up a tent, but we would walk out and you have this view and you look to this side and there's Half Dome.

And you look over here, you can see Yosemite Falls. And it's great that you think, I want a house right here. I just want to stay with this view. And I think this is an expression of what Peter is saying here.

He sees Jesus and it's better than the vacation at the beach. It's better than Yosemite Valley. This is the most beautiful thing he's ever seen.

The greatest glory he's ever beheld. All those other things that we speak of that we think, I don't want to leave this, are veiled expressions of the glory of God.

[24 : 51] They're meant to point us to God in all his glory, but they're not God. Jesus is. And that's part of the point of the transfiguration. They see God's glory in the person of Jesus Christ and they don't want to leave there.

They don't want Jesus to go. This is the greatest moment of their life. They don't want anything else to happen. This is where they want to stay forever. And so I think this is a beautiful expression by Peter.

And I think this gets to the heart of what I want us to see in the transfiguration. and the application of that for us. I think what they experience is a foretaste of what heaven will be like.

And their response is an expression of worship. They want to remain in the presence of Jesus and his glory forever. Peter really is expressing what we see in Psalm 27 4.

One thing have I asked of the Lord. That will I seek after. That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life. to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple.

[26 : 16] So the psalmist here is saying there's one thing. It doesn't mean he hasn't asked lots of things. He's saying there's one ultimate thing. There's one primary thing. There's one thing above all others that I've asked of the Lord. This is what I would desire.

That I can dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life. I want to be in God's house. But why? To gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple.

One primary reason. This is why I want to be in the temple all the days of my life. That I may behold the beauty of the Lord. This is what Peter's experiencing.

And this I think is what he's expressing. Let's set up tents here. Let's just make it in the tabernacle. Let's be here. Let's not leave here. One thing do I desire from you.

If it would be your desire. If it's your wish. That we never leave this moment. That I behold the beauty of the Lord all the days of my life. And I think.

[27 : 20] This is an incomplete foretaste of heaven. Incomplete. This is not as good as it's going to be in heaven. They could not in their flesh. In their sin.

Experience. The glory. Of what heaven will be like. And so they get a taste of it. It's like Moses on Mount Sinai where he gets to see with God's hand covering it for a second.

Just the backside glory. A little bit. A glimpse of glory. They get a glimpse of the glory of Christ. And they never want it to end. The response is they don't want to leave it.

And I think we're taught here about heaven and what it's going to be like. And you may remember from the series we did in heaven that what I argued then and I will continue to argue today is that the greatest aspect of heaven.

heaven. The most glorious thing about heaven will not be our glorified bodies. It will not be the mansion that we're going to have in heaven. I know a lot of people like to talk about what size mansion they're going to have or what this is going to look like.

[28 : 31] It won't even be the new earth and the new skies. I just imagine all the things we talked about that were beautiful that beach, that Yosemite Valley, whatever it is that we have seen God's beauty in.

And the new earth will be created without being tainted by sin. The fallenness of the world. Without the briars and everything that makes it bad. All the rottenness.

A perfected earth and all its glory will not be the greatest thing about heaven. As I said, it won't be our glorified bodies.

It won't even be the food we eat as glorious as I imagine that might be. Nor will it be how great the soccer matches are there. Although they too will probably be of the highest quality ever.

They will be the highest quality ever. It will be great. All those things will be great, but the best part of being in heaven will be seeing the glory of God. Being in the presence of Christ and God the Father and seeing them with unveiled faces in all their glory.

[29 : 35] And so Peter and the disciples get a taste of it, a glimpse of it, and they're overwhelmed and they never want it to end. Well, what is the time in which we will see the glory of God without a veil fully and it truly will never end?

this is what heaven will be. This is what it will be for the Christian when they die and ultimately with the new earth and the new heavens, we will dwell there in the presence of God. He will be our God. We will be his people and he will dwell amongst us. That's what makes heaven great. And so they get a foretaste of it and that's what we ought to be longing for.

And so does that delight your heart? When you think about here's what heaven will be like, we will be with the Lord. To me, that is the greatest summary of heaven. Heaven is being in the presence of God in all his glory.

Is that a delight to you? Is that something you want, you desire that you look forward to? Is that where you would want to set up your house all the days of your life?

[30 : 38] Again, it's not ultimately about how beautiful the world will be or the stars will be or how nice your house will be or how good the food will be or the recreation or whatever else. Your friends that will be there, your family members that have passed away that will be there.

What will make heaven great is that you will be in the presence of the Lord. You will see him in his glory. That's the glory of heaven. Years later, Peter reflects on this experience in 2 Peter 1, verses 16-18.

He writes, Let me stop there.

When we think again of the words that Jesus says at the end of chapter 16, he says, Some of you will not taste death until you see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.

Notice Peter's words. We didn't cling to myths. We didn't come up with this when we said this to you. But we were witnesses to the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[31 : 47] He's seen a taste of what it will be like in Jesus' second coming when he comes fully in his kingdom. We were eyewitnesses of his majesty. And then he goes on and he says, For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was born to him by the majestic glory, this is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased.

We ourselves heard this very voice born from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. So this is how Peter recounts it. This beautiful picture of we were on the holy mountain, the majesty of God revealed to us, or the majestic glory, it says.

What a picture. What a wonderful experience that they had. What a foretaste of heaven. Wouldn't it have been great to be there? Right?

You want to, when they do time travel and you can set up your trip on your time travel machine where you're going to go, wouldn't this be a great place to be? To behold and see the glory of God? Maybe I could ask you, wouldn't it make faith easier? Wouldn't it be easier to believe in Jesus and believe in God the Father if you had witnessed the transfiguration? Is that the point? Is that really what it's about?

[33 : 02] Well, I read to you 2 Peter 1, 16-18 where Peter recounts his experience on that mountain and how he remembers it and how they were with him in the majestic glory on the mountain.

Well, here's how 1 Peter 1, 16 continues. This is starting with verse 19, the very next verse it says, or Peter says, and we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

Knowing this, first of all, that no prophecy of scripture comes from someone's own interpretation for no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

So Peter recounts that he was there in the transfiguration and then he speaks to those he's writing to and he says, but you've got something even more sure, more definite, more clear. The word of God.

The prophetic word given to you. And so my first point of application really is to say to you all that we're not going to be there for the transfiguration. God's not going to reveal himself to us.

[34 : 13] Jesus won't reveal himself to us in his glory in this life to us unless he comes back and we all know it. We don't get special revelations of the glory of God, these special visions of how great and grand he is.

But we have something more sure that helps us to know Christ even in greater detail, the word of God given to us. And so we're encouraged this is better even than what Peter experienced. So know the prophetic word. And I think if we combine that with maybe the second point of application, the father commands us to hear or listen to the son. If we combine these true, if we have something more sure given to us in the word and God, the father commands us to hear Christ. How do we apply that? What does that mean for us? They have seen Christ. Peter and the other disciples saw Christ in his glory and yet they're commanded to hear him. Isn't it interesting they're not commanded? Now don't forget this. Remember it. Paint a picture of it. Reflect upon it often. Write a bestselling book about it.

[35 : 23] What they're told is not those things but they're told instead listen to Christ. This is meant to encourage you. This vision is meant to encourage you to listen to him. It's his words that matter.

It's what he says. It's what he teaches. And so they're encouraged in this way. In fact that when the cloud comes upon him it actually obscures their continuing sight of him. And so this vision, this sight of Jesus and the glory doesn't last all that long.

But they're instead encouraged to heed his words, to hear him. Second Corinthians 5, 7 encourages us that we walk by faith not by sight. And so even for Peter and the other disciples, they're not to walk by what they've seen but they're to walk by faith in Christ and what he says and what he teaches.

And so if we combine that with what Peter later says, which I would even argue is an application of this. Peter sees the glory of God, sees the glory of Christ. God the Father says, hear him. Peter then declares, you have something more sure than a vision of Christ. You have the word. And what is he doing? He's applying what God the Father said to him. Hear him. And so when we take these two together, I think we're encouraged how carefully we ought to be paying attention to the word of God.

[36 : 36] Do we want to see Christ? Do you want to behold Christ in all his glory? Read the words of scripture. Go to the Bible. Go to God's word and be encouraged as you see Christ there. 1 Thessalonians 2, 13.

And we also thank God constantly for this. That when you receive the word of God, which you heard from us, you received it not as a word of men, but as it really is the word of God, which is at work in you believers.

And so we have the very word of God and we ought to be students of that word of God, that it might be at work in us who are believers. Thirdly, I think the disciples were being prepared for the days ahead.

Seeing Christ prepares us for suffering. They're going to suffer. Jesus has just told them you're going to suffer. But look, here's what awaits us. Here's the glory. And so suffering or seeing Christ prepares us for suffering and it prepares us for eternity.

It prepares us for death. And so if we want to be prepared for suffering, if we want to be equipped to face suffering, if we want to be equipped to face death and enter into eternity, look at Christ.

[37 : 47] Behold Christ. Again, go to the word. The Bible is our opportunity to behold Jesus in his glory until we see him when we die or when he returns.

Fourthly, we also are being transfigured. Now, I know that sounds crazy for me to say that, that we're being transfigured. But the very same word is used two other times in the New Testament in reference to Christians.

So we have, for example, Romans 12, 2. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed. That's the same word as used here of Jesus was transformed, transfigured. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.

And so the Christians, likewise, are being transformed. We're being transfigured by the renewal of our mind. And so in Christ, we are being changed. We're being transfigured. And in the same way that we are now reflecting more of the glory of God.

The other instance is 2 Corinthians 3.18. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.

[39 : 00] For this comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. And so Paul there confirms that we are beholding with unveiled face the glory of God. How? We're not on top of the mountain.

We're not seeing Jesus transfigured. Well, again, Paul here is speaking of the word of God. As we believe in Christ and look at his word, we see the glory of the Lord with unveiled faces.

And in the process, we're being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. To the same image. Unveiled faces, even again, speaking to of Moses on Mount Sinai and of the transfiguration.

We're seeing that and we're being transformed into the same image. We're being transformed into the image of Christ in all his glory. From one degree of glory to another. So the idea of sanctification is partly that we're being made into the image of Christ.

And so we're becoming more and more and more glorious until one day we'll be glorified in heaven. And so we're being transformed in that image.

[40 : 04] And so I thought a fitting way for us to end is the encouragement that what a blessing is not just that Christ is transfigured, but as we look on Christ, we're changed. And so we're encouraged to be looking upon Christ here.

That's through the word. And there's coming a day that either we die or Christ returns when we'll see him in person. And when we do, we'll be transformed, we'll be glorified.

And so through the word and by the spirit, we behold the glory of the Lord unveiled and transformed. And we ourselves have changed in the process. Let's pray together. Dearly Father, we do thank you for your word and we thank you for Christ and his glory.

And we pray that we would behold that glory in your word. And Lord, as we think upon Christ, that we would see him as glorious and that we ourselves would be transformed from one degree of glory to another, even as your word says.

And Lord, we pray that our hearts would long for heaven, that we would see it as glorious. And that is where we would want to set up our tent, that we would dwell in your house all the days of our life. We pray in Christ's name.

[41 : 10] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[45 : 24] Amen. Amen.

Amen.