

“The Follow Jesus Project”

Monday, July 20

Scriptures to read: Matthew 16:21-23, Mark 8:31-33, Luke 9:21-22

Thoughts to consider:

After the “high” of Peter’s confession, Jesus described the “low” that would come. Peter, the impetuous one, impulsively rebuked the Master. He still “didn’t get it.” In Matthew’s account, notice that Jesus used the word “must” concerning His upcoming death. Peter replied, “Never.” After Peter rebuked Jesus, Jesus gave him a more stinging rebuke. Satan (through Peter) was offering another temptation to Jesus similar to the ones at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry. Satan is so subtle that he sometimes tempts us through our dearest friends. We must listen only to the voice of the Holy Spirit living within us.

Tuesday, July 21

Scriptures to read: Matthew 16:24-28, Mark 8:34-38, Luke 9:23-27

Thoughts to consider:

We have the requirements of being a disciple—then and now. We must recognize Jesus as Lord and follow where He leads. If we “Think Kingdom” we realize that as loyal subjects we must be totally obedient. We cease to make self the object of our life and our actions. Peter overstepped the laws of discipleship. When we think we have the answers, we are overstepping them also. Jesus reminded His disciples of the whole world in comparison with the rewards of the true kingdom of God. We are reminded that it is foolish to forfeit one’s soul for the pleasures of this world, which will be utterly destroyed. Jim Eliot, a missionary to South America who was martyred by the Indians, recapped it, “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he can never lose.”

Wednesday, July 22

Scriptures to read: Matthew 17:1-2, Mark 9:2-3, Luke 9:28-29
Romans 12:1-2, 2 Corinthians 3:18

Thoughts to consider:

A good reporter asks and answers the questions, “who, what, when, where, and why.” Matthew and Mark say that the transfiguration occurred six days after Peter’s confession. Luke apparently includes the starting and ending days. Mount Hermon is the logical location of the event. It is 9,400 feet high and is located 10 miles north of Caesarea Philippi. The disciples were feeling despondent after Jesus’ prediction of His suffering and death. The transfiguration served as an encouragement. Peter, James, and John are known as the “inner circle.” Peter was obviously the leader of the Twelve. John calls himself, “the apostle whom Jesus loved” and to whom Jesus gave the care of His mother at His death. James was put to death by Herod, probably the first apostle to be martyred. Jesus’ transfiguration (metamorphosis) was an awe-inspiring experience. Both His face and clothing began to shine brilliantly. He was not a spirit but was still in human form. Our spirits are transformed when we belong to Jesus.

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Thursday, July 23

Scriptures to read: Matthew 17:3-4, Mark 9:4-6, Luke 9:30-33

Thoughts to consider:

Added to the group of three apostles and Jesus, Moses and Elijah appeared at the transfiguration. Moses represented the law and Elijah represented the prophets. The apostles had been considering the death of Jesus as a tragedy about to happen. When Jesus spoke of His death with Moses and Elijah, it appears that His upcoming death is in

complete harmony with the law and the prophets. Peter wanted this wonderful experience to continue. He made an inappropriate proposal which would elevate Moses and Elijah to an equal position with Jesus. Sometimes we have “mountaintop experiences”—maybe at a retreat, a convention, a church camp. We would like to perpetuate it. However we must “come down” and with Jesus walk in the paths of everyday service. There is a time for private communion with God; there is also a time for public usefulness.

Friday, July 24

Scriptures to read: Matthew 17:5-8, Mark 9:7-8, Luke 9:34-36

Thoughts to consider:

The cloud represented the presence of God. Then the voice of God informed the apostles of His approval of His Son. “This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.” God had spoken the same words at Jesus’ baptism. Peter was being rebuked for equating Moses and Elijah with Jesus. The law and the prophets pointed to God’s Son. He is the only one to whom they must listen. He is superior! The disciples then made the only appropriate response that can be made in the presence of Almighty God. Moses and Elijah disappeared; only Jesus remained. Do you ever wonder if some of our attempts at worship may be inappropriate and distasteful to God? May we see Jesus only.

Saturday, July 25

Scriptures to read: Matthew 17: 9-13, Mark 9: 9-13, 2 Peter 1:16-18

Thoughts to consider:

On the way down the mountain, Jesus and the three apostles had a “debriefing.” The transfiguration undoubtedly had a strong influence on the men and helped sustain them for the months to follow. By this event, God reaffirmed for the apostles who witnessed it that Jesus was indeed God’s Son. It is interesting that John was the only one of the four gospel writers who witnessed the transfiguration, yet he did not include it in his gospel. Peter mentioned it in his second epistle. Jesus is going to return in His glory and this time not just three apostles will be witnesses. Every eye will see Him coming in the clouds. “We shall behold Him, face to face, in all of His glory..our Savior and Lord.” –Perhaps today, Lord?

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Monday, July 27

Scriptures to read: Matthew 17:24-27, Nehemiah 10:32-33

Thoughts to consider:

The temple tax was paid by all Jewish men annually. Jesus, as the son of God, was exempt from the tax, as a king would not tax his own son. But Jesus, as an obedient Jew, paid the tax. We are shown a miracle of omniscience as Jesus knew the fish Peter would catch had swallowed a coin.

Tuesday, July 28

Scriptures to read: Matthew 18:1-5, Mark 9:33-37, Luke 9:46-48

Thoughts to consider:

What would have caused this argument about being the greatest? Three of the disciples had been selected by Jesus to go up on the mountain (at the transfiguration.) Could that have caused jealousy among the group? A team has more success when each know his role, whether a “starter” or “coming off the bench.” This is true in sports, business, the family, and the church. Envy only causes discord.

Wednesday, July 29

Scriptures to read: Mark 9:33-37

Thoughts to consider:

The disciples tried to keep their discussion hidden from Jesus, knowing He would not have approved. Are there things you are trying to keep hidden, knowing they wouldn't be approved? What should you do about that?

Thursday, July 30

Scriptures to Read: Matthew 18:2-5

Thoughts to consider:

Christians are to be like children: humble, trusting, willing to learn with no pride or arrogance. How childlike are you?

Friday, July 31

Scriptures to read: Matthew 18:6-14, Mark 9:42-50

Thoughts to consider:

Does Jesus really want us to cut off our hands and feet? No, of course not. Body mutilation does not remove temptations or make us more spiritual. He does want us to realize that avoiding temptations and resisting temptations can be painful, but must be done to avoid sin and its punishment, Hell. Note Jesus talks about Hell, affirming its reality.

Saturday, August 1

Scriptures to read:

Matthew 18:15-35

Matthew 6:15

Thoughts to consider:

Jesus gives instructions on how to handle problems between Christians. And He emphasizes the need of forgiveness. Not just our need of it from God, but our need to give it to others no matter how many times. It can't be lip service forgiveness, but must come from the heart. God knows which you are doing.

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