

A Glimpse of His Glory (Matthew 17:1-27)

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- [0 : 0 0] Matthew chapter 17. 17. Peter said to Jesus,
When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.
As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, Don't tell anyone what you have seen until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead. The disciples asked them, Why then do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?
Jesus replied, To be sure, Elijah comes and will restore all things. But I tell you, Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but have done to him everything they wished.
In the same way, the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands. Then the disciples understood that he was talking to them about John the Baptist.
- [1 : 5 9] When they came to the crowd, a man approached Jesus and knelt before him. Lord, have mercy on my son, he said. He has seizures and is suffering greatly.
He often falls into the fire or into the water. I brought him to the fire.
He replied, Because you have so little faith. Truly, I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, Move from here to there, and it will move.
Nothing will be impossible for you. When they come together in Galilee, he said to them, The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of man.
They will kill him, and on the third day he will rise to life. And the disciple was filled with grief. After Jesus and his disciples arrived in Capernaum, the collectors of the two drachma temple tax came to Peter and asked, Doesn't your teacher pay the temple tax?
- [3 : 3 4] Yes, he does. He replied, When Peter came into the house, Jesus was the first to speak. What do you think, Simon? He asked. From whom do the kings of the earth collect duty and taxes?
From their own children, or from others? From others, Peter answered. Then the children are exempt, Jesus said to him. But so that we may not cause offense, Go to the lake and throw out your line.
Take the first fish you catch, Open its mouth, and you will find a four drachma corn. Take it and give it to them for my tax and yours. Thank you so much for reading that part of God's Word for us so well.
It's a nice and short one, so we won't take long. Well, kia'o to everyone. As you already know, my name is Dave. I'm Pastor Dave from Mount Roscoe Baptist. It's such a joy to be here.
I've heard some of the stories from Pastor William about PCBC English. It's so good to be with you and to open God's Word to hear what he has to say to us about his son Jesus today.
- [4 : 4 1] Me karakia tatu. Let's pray together, and then we'll explore this beautiful part of God's Word. Father God, we are so thankful that you are a God who speaks.

You're the God who has spoken through your Son. You speak to us as your Word, the Bible, is read. Father, would you help us now as we dwell in these verses.

Father, would your love and grace and mercy sink deeper into our hearts. May the words of my mouth in this meditation of all of our hearts be pleasing in your sight.

Lord, my rock and my redeemer. Amen. Well, catching a glimpse of the end, it really helps, doesn't it?

A few years ago, our oldest tamariki, Theo, so he's just about to turn 11, but he got this Lego monstrosity for his birthday. It's the International Space Station.

[5 : 39] And this thing is complex, right? So what is it that's going to keep us going as we journey through building it? You know, you get this thing. It's in a box, and it's hundreds of pieces of Lego, hundreds of pieces of little pieces of plastic, and across multiple different bags.

And there's a book, and this thing's like this thick, I think, with all the instructions. In fact, this didn't fit in one book. It had instructions across two different books. And if you've ever made one of these kind of Lego models before, then you know what happens, right?

Is you get kind of three quarters of the way through, and then you're like, you're looking at the pictures in the book, and you're looking at the thing that you've made, and you're like, what? Oh, I put this bit together wrong, upside down, 15 steps ago, and so you've then got to pull it all apart.

And so what keeps you going as you do that? It's a glimpse of the end. So that's when you hold the box in your hands. Well, it's just a box, right?

It's got 746 pieces of plastic in it, across five different bags, and a book. But it's not just a box, because on the box is this image, this image that we see, and it's glorious, because it shows you where you're heading.

[6 : 56] And that glimpse, that glimpse right at the beginning of the glory of what you're about to finish making, it's enough to carry you through to the end.

And as we pick up in Matthew's Gospel, well, as we've already heard, over February and March, PCBC English is going on a journey, a journey through this wonderful section of Matthew's Gospel, this wonderful section where the Lord Jesus and Matthew, as he writes it down for us, he's painting a picture.

He's painting a picture about what his kingdom looks like. And it's a beautiful kingdom, can I say? It's a radical kingdom.

It's a kingdom. It's a kingdom where we care about our own sin, and also the sin of others. It's a kingdom where, as people loved for and cared for by God, by the Lord Jesus, we love each other.

It's a kingdom where we forgive each other from the heart. It's a kingdom where everyone, married or single, everyone is treasured and nurtured.

[8 : 13] It's a radical kingdom. It's a radical kingdom because Jesus is a radical king. I hope you can see. He's the servant king. That's what you're going to be exploring at PCBC English in the coming weeks and months.

But it all starts here in Matthew 17, and it starts by catching a glimpse. Just like that glimpse of the International Space Station carries you all the way through, this all starts with a glimpse of Jesus' glory.

That's what the disciples need. At this moment, as we pick up in chapter 17, their heads, they're swimming. You see, they've come face to face with Jesus the Messiah, Messiah, but not like they expected.

Because this Messiah, this king, he's heading to his death. And he says, that's what I've come to do. He's heading to his death, and then he will rise again.

Because he's the servant king. But the disciples, the disciples are starting to see that if they will follow this king Jesus, then they must deny themselves.

[9 : 31] For many, it will cost them their lives. So at this point in Matthew's Gospel, the disciples, they are lost and confused. They need a glimpse of the end.

And so today, in chapter 17 of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus, he takes his closest friends. And he says to them, let me show you. Let me show you a glimpse of my glory.

Because that's what will get them through as they deny themselves, as they take up their cross and as they follow Jesus. So let's join them. Let's take a glimpse of Jesus' glory.

As we join, well, we join Peter, James, and John on this little journey up a mountain. And as we join them up on top of this mountain, Jesus is transfigured in front of us.

Transfigured. We don't use that word very much, do we? Well, we don't use it ever, do we? It's not like I kind of take my car into the mechanic and say, oh, can you just kind of have a look at the transfigurator in this thing?

[10 : 38] It's not working quite right. Or we don't, you know, nip into the hairdressers and say, can you do some transfiguration on this? Although, you know, some of us might need that. That'd be nice.

But the idea here, this transfiguration, it's the idea of the total, the complete transformation that we see as a dull chrysalis hanging on the branch of a little plant will it open to reveal the dazzling color, the beauty, the majesty even of a butterfly's wings.

Peter, James, and John, as they watch this scene in front of them, they're seeing Jesus' true self as they catch a glimpse of his glory.

Let's read together from verse 1, Matthew 17, verse 1. After six days, Jesus took with him Peter, James, and John, the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves.

There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun and his clothes became as white as the light. You see, Jesus, he's giving his disciples a glimpse of his true self, his true and glorious self.

[12 : 03] This isn't a party trick. This isn't his new and improved look. This is who he really is. What he's doing is he's kind of, he's been veiled all this time.

He's been veiled and his glory has been hidden in his humanity. Because Jesus, the Son of God, he's become a man in the incarnation.

It's what we call the incarnation. And as we jump into Matthew's gospel, the disciples, they've figured out that Jesus is the Messiah, that he's the Son of God, that he's the chosen king of God's people.

But they still haven't got the full picture. They've journeyed alongside him. They've seen him heal and cast out demons. They've heard him teach with authority.

They've been there as Jesus has kind of seen into people's minds and hearts. They've seen him walk on water. They've seen him calm storms.

[13 : 12] They've watched as he's fed thousands. And now, now they catch a glimpse of his true self, of his glory, his purity, his holiness.

His face is closed. They're dazzling before him like the sun. They're starting to see who he really is, do you see? But they aren't there yet.

They aren't fully there yet. And so the picture for us and for them as we watch over their shoulders, the picture is filled in a little bit more as Moses and Elijah arrive on the scene.

Verses three and four, let's read them together. just then, there appeared before them Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus. Peter said to Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here.

If you wish, I will put up three shelters, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah. But this isn't just, you know, the reunion, the reunion of kind of three of the greatest hits from the Bible, Jesus, Moses and Elijah.

[14 : 21] Moses and Elijah are here for a very specific reason. They are here because many years before, they too have climbed to the top of mountains.

They have met with God. And they're here on top of a mountain meeting with God, God the Son, the Lord Jesus. Jesus. And that's what God confirms, isn't it, as His voice speaks out of the cloud.

Verse 5, While He was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, This is my Son, whom I love.

With Him, I am well pleased. Listen to Him. Do you see? There's this confirmation here that Jesus, He is God's Son.

He is the Son that God loves. He's the Son that God is well pleased with. And just as He did at Jesus' baptism, God is saying, This is Him.

[15 : 29] Look, He's right here in front of you. This is the Messiah, the King, the Christ. The disciples, they're right about this. But this whole experience, it is breaking down everything they know about Jesus and putting it back together again with Jesus, the Son of God, in all of His glory, in all of His majesty, right at the center.

This is a glimpse of the end. This is the glimpse that the disciples need. It's what they need to get through everything that life is going to throw at them. We're going to read through it as we journey through, as you journey through the next few chapters.

As they follow Jesus, they need to see who the real Jesus is. And today, Peter, James, and John, they've caught a glimpse and us with them.

But have we? Have we caught a glimpse a clear enough glimpse of Jesus to get us through everything that God, that life will throw at us?

Well, let's keep going because there's more that Matthew wants us to see as we journey through this chapter together today. Because as well as giving us a glimpse of His glory, He's also giving us a peek into Jesus' purpose.

[16 : 57] Because as Matthew records these events, He puts these little kind of signposts that keep pointing, little pointers to say that this transfiguration, it's a glimpse of Jesus' glory.

That glory, it comes through suffering. It comes through death on a cross. And that suffering has a purpose. It has a purpose to bring rest and to bring rescue.

Individually, these signposts, we're going to look at a bunch of them in turn. Individually, they're easy to skip over as little segments of the story.

But if you put them together, it's like you are shooting a flare into the night sky. You know what happens? You shoot a flare, it goes, and it just, you see everything. The first two, we're going to see in verse one.

Let's look at them together. First up, Jesus is bringing rest in Matthew 17, verse one. After six days, Jesus took with him Peter, James, and John, the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves.

[18 : 07] You see, throughout Matthew's gospel, if you read through, Matthew's not particularly interested in the passage of time. Like, stuff happens across the kind of the arc of the gospel, doesn't it?

He kind of, you know, it ends with his death and resurrection and his ascension to heaven, and it starts with Jesus' birth, and in between it, we get the story of his life, but he's not giving a day-by-day, he doesn't say, you know, on the first day of whatever, and then, you know, three weeks later, this happens.

He's giving us the story of God's promised king, but then in chapter 17, he suddenly gets very concerned with time, you know, these six days that have passed.

Why? It's because God, since the very beginning, has baked in a pattern of six and one, of work and of rest.

Six days of creation and then rest. Six days of work and then Sabbath rest. Six days, six years and then the Sabbath year.

[19 : 18] Six Sabbath years and then the year of Jubilee. See, six and one, work and rest, and all that means after six days, rest is coming.

That's our first signpost. Jesus is bringing rest. Second, Jesus is mounting a rescue. So, why does, why does Jesus take Peter, James and John up a mountain?

I mean, why not all 12 of the disciples? Why not, you know, the crowds that have come to him? See, this isn't that just, you know, Jesus is ready for a road trip and so he picks his best buddies and off they go, you know, we're gonna drive down, go have a good road trip.

What's going on is mountains and witnesses. Mountains and witnesses mark key points in the Bible story and Matthew, he's looking both backwards and forwards at the same time.

Let me show you what I mean. He's looking backwards to Moses. Okay, in Exodus 24, Moses takes three witnesses up a mountain. Three witnesses up Mount Sinai.

[20 : 32] This is after the great rescue that God has staged to bring his people out of slavery. And after the Exodus, Moses takes these three witnesses up a mountain.

But Matthew's also looking forward. Matthew's looking to another mountain. A mountain where Jesus will hang on a cross.

because in Matthew 27 on a different hill on Golgotha, three witnesses, women this time, will watch Jesus die. Matthew's linking these two events.

Exodus as God rescues his people from slavery in Egypt and the cross where Jesus rescues his people from slavery. slavery. Slavery to sin.

That's our second signpost. Jesus is mounting a rescue. The third signpost is that Jesus is dealing with our rebellion.

[21 : 37] Babylon. Jump down with me to verse 3. Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus.

We've already seen Moses and Elijah, their significance as people who have met with God. But Moses and Elijah, they're also figureheads of the Old Testament, of the law and the prophets.

So Moses, first up, he's kind of the law guy. If you think law, you think Moses. Moses is the one that God gives the law to in the Ten Commandments.

The law is how God shows his people this is how you live as my people. But it also points out their desperate state in sin.

Elijah, if you think Elijah then you think prophets. He's the prophet guy. Prophets, their job throughout the Old Testament is to speak for God, to tell God's people the messages that he's given them, to tell God's people to come back to him, to stop rebelling.

[22 : 51] But they also, they also point to when God himself would deal with the problem his people have, their rebellion, their sin.

Matthew's showing us that Jesus is the one that the law and the prophets point to. That's our third sign. Jesus is dealing with our sin, with our rebellion.

The fourth signpost is that Jesus is fixing our relationship with his Father. Skip down to verse 24 with me and let's read together.

After Jesus and his disciples arrived in Capernaum, the collectors of the two drachma temple tax came to Peter and asked, doesn't your teacher pay the temple tax?

Yes, he does, he replied. When Peter came into the house, Jesus was the first to speak. What do you think, Simon? He asked. From whom do the kings of the earth collect duty and taxes?

[23 : 58] From their own children or from others? From others, Peter answered. Then the children are exempt, Jesus said to him.

Now, this isn't financial advice, right, as we get closer to the end of the financial year, you know, straight off the lips of Jesus. This tax, it's used for the upkeep of the temple or, as Jesus knows it, dad's house.

The temple, my father's house. The point is, the point is that the kids don't pay for dad's place.

That's our fourth sign. Jesus is fixing our relationship with his father. The fifth, the fifth signpost is that Jesus is restoring us to know God.

That's what all of this kind of mustard seeds and throwing mountains into the sea is all about. You see, when the disciples, they come down, they come down from the mountain, the disciples are trying to throw out, cast out a demon and they can't do it.

[25 : 10] Let's read together. Jump back to verse 19. Then the disciples came to Jesus in private and asked, why couldn't we drive it out?

He replied, because you have so little faith. Truly, I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, move from here to there and it will move.

Nothing will be impossible for you. Is this a blank check from Jesus? You know, enough faith and we can do anything?

Even something as ridiculous and as pointless as taking a mountain, just pick one and throw it into the, like throw it away, move it. I've been told that before.

Have you? I've been told if I had enough faith, I would be healed. I have a condition called rheumatoid arthritis.

[26 : 12] I live in pain. Today, not so much. Most days, I live in pain and I've been told if I had enough faith, then I would be healed.

I've been told if I have enough faith, I will never be in financial need ever again. I've been told if I have enough faith, I'll never have sick family ever again.

Just, you know, name it and claim it or blab it and grab it as it's been called. Is this what Jesus is saying? No! Just no.

And if you've been told that, then can I just say, I'm so sorry. It's awful because hidden behind that message, if you just have enough faith, hidden behind that, it's saying that my lack of faith is the cause of all of my problems.

Do you see how that is a soul-crushing thing to say? Can you see how that's a faith-destroying thing to say? And the Bible actually has a name for this kind of teaching.

[27 : 26] Do you know what it is? Evil. Pure evil. So if you've been told that before, I'm so sorry. Because it isn't the teaching of the Bible, it isn't the way of Jesus, and it isn't a promise that we've been given.

Because this passage, in the light of the rest of the Bible and in the context of Matthew and what Matthew is writing about, Jesus isn't saying, just pick a mountain, like, look around, there's plenty to, and move it.

He has one specific mountain in mind. That's why this little story is sandwiched between the transfiguration on one side and the temple tax on the other.

Jesus is talking about the mountain that the temple is on. Why? Because, because the temple has served its purpose. Because Jesus, God's Son, the Son whom God is well pleased with.

He is the place we go to meet God. Not the temple. He is the sacrifice for sins once and for all. The temple and its mountain have served their purpose because Jesus is here.

[28 : 45] And he says, if you just have faith, if you have faith so small as a mustard seed, faith in Jesus, then you don't need the temple.

You can throw it away. In fact, why stop with the temple? Take the whole mountain. Because Jesus is here. See, holding on to the temple when Jesus is here is like holding on to a pencil sketch when you have a photo.

What would be the point? you don't need a sketch anymore if you have the photo in full and vibrant color. It's served its purpose. It's been replaced.

That's the fifth sign. Jesus is restoring us to know God because in Him we can know God personally. You've caught a glimpse of my glory, Jesus says.

And this is my purpose. I am the place that you meet God. I am God the Son. I am dealing with your sin. I am bringing rescue and I am bringing rest.

[29 : 59] But what do we make of all this? I'll ask again that question that I asked before. Have you caught a glimpse of the end? Have you seen Jesus in full and radiant color?

or are you holding on to a pencil sketch? Whether you've just started looking into Jesus or whether you've been following Him for years, this passage asks us have we really seen Him?

Have we caught a glimpse of Him in His full glory? You see Jesus, His miracle worker, crowd drawer, His prophet and preacher, He's cool headed and He's compassionate, He's gentle and lowly, He's witty and quick on His feet, He rebukes the leaders of the day and then turns and comforts the down and out.

Have you seen that? But have you missed that He's the glorious Son of God? He's the one who is bringing rescue and rest.

Or have you put Him down as a figure of history? Just kind of in the list, Moses, Elijah, Jesus. If we see nothing else today, we need to see that Jesus is more.

[31 : 20] Can you see that? He is God Himself in all of His glory, come to bring rescue and rest. Can you see that? Even maybe for the first time, as Jesus kind of pulls back the veil and lets us see beyond His humanity.

He's shown us His glory. It's just a glimpse. He still has work to do. He's still heading to the cross to lay down His life in my place and yours.

But what an amazing glimpse to see His glory and His purpose, His rest for you and for me.

Can I ask, what is stopping you from taking that step? the step of putting your faith in Him. Faith even so small as a mustard seed.

Because if we've seen Him, if we've seen this glimpse of His glory, this glimpse of the end, it will carry us through everything life throws at us. Do you see that? all the while listening to the words that came from that cloud as Jesus transfigured.

[32 : 40] What were they? Matthew 17 verse 5, it will come up on the screen. This is my Son whom I love. With Him I am well pleased.

But how does it finish? How does it finish? Listen, to Him. Listen to Him. So often we're like Peter, aren't we?

Maybe it's just me. Peter's up on top of the mountain, Moses and Elijah appear before and he goes, he wants to do something, doesn't he? He goes, I know, I know, let's build a tree house.

Three of them in fact. No! This is my Son whom I love. With Him I am well pleased.

Listen to Him. Listen to Him. Listen to Him about His path to Jerusalem. Listen to Him about His death for our sins.

[33 : 42] About His resurrection from the dead. Listen to Him in that final cry as He dies on the cross. It is finished as He pays the price fully, His life for my sin.

Listen to Him. After rising from the dead, He's received all authority on heaven and on earth. And He tells us to do what? Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.

With the good news of Jesus, our glorious Savior. Surely if we have caught even the slightest glimpse of Jesus and His glory today, surely that's enough to draw our ears.

Surely that's enough for us to listen to Him, to orient our whole lives around what He has to say. Shall we pray together that that would be the case for all of us?

Let's pray. Father, Father, thank You for inviting us on to the mountaintop today along with Peter, James, and John to catch a glimpse of the end, a glimpse of the majesty, the glory of Jesus, your precious Son whom You love, with whom You are well pleased, your precious Son who has brought rescue and rest.

[35 : 11] He's invited us to know You. He's dealt with my sin and He's bringing rescue and rest.

Father, would You help us to listen, to listen to Him, to orient our whole lives around what He says. Father, we ask all of this in His glorious name.

Amen.