

IV. Power in the Face of an Opposing Mountain (Matt. 17:24-27)

A. This scene involves a mountain because it is about the temple tax—the two-drachma tax.

B. In effect, Jesus is saying, “Pay the tax, but realize that we are a kingdom that is at work through another means! They are on the out... but we don’t mind letting them think they are still in charge!”

LIVE THE STORY

The Gospel is intended to be learned and lived in community. The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.

- How do all 4 stories in Matthew 17, in some sense, give us a glimpse of Jesus coming in His kingdom? What does this sequence of events reveal to us about how Jesus’ kingdom exercises power?
- What does the Transfiguration scene reveal to us about how Christians should view both Old and New Testaments? Explain.
- What similarity might there be between Peter’s rebuke of Jesus in 16:22 and his desire to build three tents?
- What is the one difference between what the Father says about Jesus in the Transfiguration scene and Jesus’ baptism scene? What might we learn from this?
- What do we learn from the story of the descent down the mountain about how God’s power restores all things?
- How does the story at the foot of the mountain picture the work we are called to do as believers in our own “neighborhoods”?

DISCIPLE 1.0 - Power Pictures in a Cruciform Kingdom

Jerry Cisar — February 2, 2020

Text: Matthew 17

Introduction (Matt. 16:28)

I. The Transfiguration: Power Viewed from Above (Matt. 17:1-8)

A. Why “after six days...”?

B. Jesus is the one radiating with light.

i. His radiance is emphatically described.

ii. Jesus shines light on Moses and Elijah.

iii. The OT is a vital part of Christian scripture and cannot be cast aside.

C. Peter’s suggestion reveals that he still prefers a kingdom exempt from suffering over a kingdom that embraces the cross.

i. Satan’s tactics don’t change. He still puts a lot of effort into convincing Christians that earthly power and glory, not sacrifice and suffering, are the way to kingdom conquest.

ii. *Listen to him!*”

a) Deuteronomy 18:15

- b) “Listen to Him” in Matthew’s Gospel
 - Between Baptism and Transfiguration
 - “Listen to Him” then refers to Jesus’ teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, which is the means by which we follow Him on the path to the cross.
 - Face shining like the sun: Matthew 13:43

Bonhoeffer: “[The disciples] want to remain in the world of transfiguration; they do not want to return to the real world of death. They want to abide in the world of Jesus’s visible splendor, his visible power, the visible fulfillment of the promise, want to abide in this view and not have to return to faith. We experience the same thing when we hear about the resurrection. We don’t want to go back. We want Jesus as the Resurrected whom we can see, the exalted, transfigured Jesus, with his visible power and majesty, and we do not want to have to go back to the cross, to faith against all appearances, to suffering... it is good ... let us make dwellings.” (lecture notes to his students at Finkenwalde)

- D. Jesus has embraced the cross as the means of power in His cruciform kingdom and calls all would-be disciples to get behind him and follow in the same.

II. Power Viewed on the Way Down (Matt. 17:9-13)

- A. What about Elijah?
 - i. Worldly power does as it wishes; cruciform power quite often doesn’t do as it wishes.
 - ii. God’s means of restoring all things is for Elijah (John the Baptist) to come and be killed, and for the Messiah to come and be killed. Make sense?
- B. This is a glimpse at power coming down from the mountain, coming down out of heaven, to earth... to suffer.

III. Power Viewed Below (Matt. 17:14-23)

- A. The other nine disciples are back in the valley experiencing ministry failure.
 - i. A man with a son who has epileptic seizures and a demon which regularly throws the boy into fire and water had come to the disciples for deliverance.
 - a) Isn’t this the essence of the gospel call—deliverance to the captives? (Luke 4:18-19)
 - b) Matthew 10:1, 8
 - ii. Why were they unable to drive out the demon?
 - a) Mark 9:29
 - b) Matthew 17:20
 - What is faith if it is not the vision of Christ in His glorious kingdom?
 - What is prayer but the language of faith that comes to Christ on His throne in our time of need (Heb. 4:16)?

If we are going to bring deliverance to a dying world, we must have a vision of Jesus by faith in all His radiant glory in the face of people crushed by the world’s forces.

- iii. The solution to the disciples’ dilemma is clear: “Bring the boy here to me!” (Matt. 17:17).
- B. Walking in obedience to Jesus will stretch us to our breaking points... and it is supposed to! We need to walk up the mountain with Jesus!