

GLORY AND GRACE

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MATTHEW 17:5

Have you ever tried to keep a secret? When you're young, it's almost impossible! And when you're older, it's still hard but maybe you've learned some self control, or maybe it's hard because you have to keep secrets like someone's having a baby! It's a secret soon to be discovered, if all goes according to plan, right? And some secrets you've been privy to are secrets that belong to others to tell. Jesus told Peter, James, and John not to tell anyone about the vision they saw "until the Son of Man is raised from the dead" (Matt. 17:9, ESV). Do you ever wonder why Jesus said that? I have, but I usually just skim that part of the verse and don't think much about it. Recently, however, I heard a sermon on this very passage from Dr. Richard Joe, the new Professor of Missions at Covenant Theological Seminary.

Matthew 17:2 (CSB) says, "he was transfigured in front of them." The Greek metamorpho (transfigured) is where we get metamorphosis, which means "a change of physical form, structure or substance; a striking alteration in appearance." I wonder how Jesus changed and why. Do you? Dr. Joe offered a clear gospel explanation. Jesus was revealing himself in his heavenly glory to his three closest disciples. "His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light" (v. 2) while he prayed. "Like" and "as" are used in similes describing his face and clothes in the best way possible. Can you imagine what descriptives you'd use if you were there?

The point was—and is—Jesus revealed a shadow of his glory in Matthew 17, but it wasn't the right time to reveal more. Moses and Elijah revealed the reflective glory of Jesus as shown in the parallel passage in Luke 9. But what Peter didn't understand was that the full glory of Jesus wasn't this appearance—it was yet to come.

What Peter, James, and John saw was like seeing a reflection in a mirror. What was to come was going to be the true source. If we prepare him room, he'll reveal his true glory and grace. In Matthew 17:9 (ESV) Jesus says, "Tell no one," and in Matthew 28:19 he says, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations..." In this passage we see the reflection, which is still valuable, but "go deeper to the source" and "seek the greater treasure" (Dr. Richard Joe).

Advent is a time that starts the adventure of the gospel that is the death and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus kept hidden a temporary glory to a few on a mountainside and revealed a glorious love to the world on a cross! Prepare him room, for his glory is his grace! Prepare him room for his reflective glory to be revealed in you as you reflect his love and grace to the world. The secret is ready to be told! The "Son of Man" is risen and will come again! His revealed glory to the world—God's "beloved Son"—"listen to him!"

PRAYER

Jesus, you have revealed who you are to the world to us. May we be your light to the world, your anchor to the storm tossed, your grace to the weary, and your hope to hopeless. By your sufficient and powerful grace, strengthen our ears that we may truly hear your voice, and strengthen our voice that we may clearly tell of your gracious love. For your glory we pray in Jesus's name. Amen.



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