

Wil Owens
Seeing the Son of Man; Matt 17:1-13
GPBC
7.19.20

Introduction – In the last portion of Matt 16 Jesus corrects Simon Peter for setting his mind on the things of man rather than the things of God. The suffering and death of Jesus is necessary to secure eternal salvation for the people of God. But not only will the Savior suffer, all who follow Him will suffer to one degree or another in this life as we walk in His steps. Yes, Jesus is going to suffer, but in the end it will be worth it. Yes, we will suffer too, but in the end it will be worth it.

Listen to how the writer of Hebrews expresses this in Heb 12:1-2. “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”

That’s the joy – being with the Father. Yes, the cross was excruciating. Yes, it was humiliating. But everlasting joy awaited Christ on the other side of the cross.

Yes, we too will have to pick up our own cross to follow Jesus. At times it will be difficult, it will be painful, we will be shamed – but the joy waiting for us for eternity will be more than worth it. The presence of God will far outweigh any cost we had to pay. Jesus promised in Matt 16:25, “If you lose your life for My sake, you will find a greater life than you can imagine and that you can never lose!”

Then in v28 He issues this promise to undergird the promise of life eternal. Just so the disciples, and by extension, we as disciples today, just so all disciples will know these promises are sure and guaranteed, Jesus is going to show some of those disciples who were with Him right then who He truly is before they die. They will see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom, and they then will know with all assurance that He is the King, His kingdom is coming and is forever, for He is the Son of Man. And the first glimpse of the King coming in His kingdom is the Transfiguration that occurred just six days later.

- I. A Vision of Glory (vv1-3)
 - a. “He was transfigured before them” His appearance, His figure, took on a new appearance, trans.
 - i. Ill. Transformers. They looked like cars, but they could transform into robots. Transformers, robots in disguise. Transformers, more than meets the eye.
 - ii. That was Jesus. To the eye He appeared to be just another man. But He was more than just a man.
 - iii. He was transfigured before the disciples. His eternal divinity shone through the veil of His humanity.
 - b. “His face shone like the sun” –
 - i. The sun is 93 million miles away from the earth. And yet it is so bright and massive and shines with such illuminating power that even standing 93 million miles away, the human eye cannot withstand gazing directly into the sun.
 - ii. Matthew says the face of Jesus shone like that. The sun was the closest illustration available to convey just how brilliant and radiant and blinding and piercing was the glory of Christ when the veil of flesh was temporarily removed.
 - c. “His clothes became white as light” – the effusion of the glory of the Son of God was so saturating and pervasive that even His clothing seemed to disappear into light.
 - i. The transfiguration was a glimpse at the glory of God. A brief view of the effulgent, wondrous, brilliant deity. A glimmer of the beautiful vision. A small caption of what is to come when the Son of Man returns, and we are glorified and raised with Him, to stand spellbound and speechless, as we marvel at the sight of the face of God.
 - d. And as if that was not enough to convince any eyewitness, behold, Moses and Elijah appeared and were talking with Jesus. What is that about? I believe 2 things.
 - i. (Theological Level) Moses represented the Law. The first 5 books of the OT. Elijah represents the Prophets being the first major prophet appearing in the Prophet books of the OT. The third section of the OT is the Wisdom writing, but since they are based on the Law and Prophets, often the Bible will refer to the entire OT as the Law and the Prophets.

1. By appearing and conversing with Jesus before the disciples, the message was clear. He is who we were writing about. The Law was pointing to Him. The Prophets were speaking of Him. This is the One. See Him.
 - ii. (Practical Level) But there is a secondary message I believe this communicated to the disciples. When Jesus speaks of an eternal life to come if you follow Him, He speaks the truth. Moses is alive. Elijah is alive. And they've been dead for 1000 years.
 - e. His kingdom truly is forever.
- II. The Voice of the Father (vv4-8)
 - a. Moments like this one would leave you speechless unless you are Simon Peter! You can't depend on him to say the right thing all the time but you can depend on him to say something all the time!
 - b. Even though he spoke too soon, he had good intentions. He had just witnessed something remarkable and he wanted to do something. He couldn't sit still. I've got to do something. I know, I'll build some tents. I'll memorialize this wondrous occasion. I leave a monument behind for all who come after us to see. I'll do something great to mark this spot.
 - i. Notice neither Jesus nor the Father even acknowledged Peter's abrupt interruption.
 - c. You see though, it wasn't time for Peter to work. It was time for him to listen. It wasn't time for him to build something great. It was time for Him to watch something great. It wasn't time for Peter to speak. It was time for Someone greater than Peter to speak. It wasn't time for Peter to offer his great words of contribution. It was time to hear words of greater confirmation.
 - d. The Father had actually spoken from heaven about His Son like this before – 3:16-17.
 - i. The Father spoke at the Son's baptism, just as He heads towards the wilderness to go and face the devil of hell. And He drew Him close with these words of comfort and confirmation. I love you Son. I am pleased with You. I am proud of You. I delight in You.

- e. And then the Father spoke again at the Son's transfiguration, just as He heads towards Jerusalem to go and face the cross and death and the grave. And He drew him close with these words of comfort and confirmation. I love My Son. I am pleased with Him. I am proud of him. I delight in Him.
 - i. Sinclair Ferguson once said that if the Father ever spoke the words of one of our hymns, it was at the cross the Father would say, "If ever I loved Thee, My Jesus tis now."
 - f. The disciples have now seen the Son and heard the Father. Whatever it may cost to follow Him, it will be worth it all.
- III. The Coming of the Kingdom (vv9-13)
- a. One of the arguments the scribes were using to discredit that Jesus was the Messiah was to refer to the OT prophecy in Malachi 4:5 that Elijah would come before the Messiah.
 - b. Jesus instructed the disciples that yes the scribes are correct about the prophecy. Elijah would come. But the scribes are incorrect about Elijah's appearance. He's already come, and they couldn't see Him, and so neither will they see Me.
 - c. But the disciples, they understood that John the Baptist was Elijah to come. And they, they had seen the Son.
 - d. So it is true. It is true. The prophecies are true. The promises are true. The Scripture is true. The King is coming in His kingdom!

Conclusion – all we need is to see the Son of Man. How do we see Him today? We see Him in Scripture when the Father opens our eyes to behold Him in His glory. Then we know, as they knew, the King is coming in His kingdom. And then we can sing as they could sing...

The King is coming. The King is coming. I just heard the trumpet sounding and now His face I see. The King is coming. The King is coming. Praise God. He's coming for me!