

- b) The only way to have unfailing faith is to have unfailing prayer!

Ole Hallesby: “Every time I meet with one of these unseen intercessors, I am reminded of a great electric power plant. They too, are often hidden away in some secluded valley. But they are, nevertheless, exceedingly important, a fact that we become aware of especially when they do not function. When that happens our homes are darkened and our factories are brought to a standstill.”

- C. Jesus explains that the only way to have unfailing faith as we carry the cross in the valley of death and dying is to bring the suffering, the hurting, the weak, the tempted, the sinning, etc. to Him in prayer.

### LIVE THE STORY

*The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.*

- How does the Transfiguration account show us both that the OT is a vital part of Christian Scripture and that the Gospel is necessary to understand the Law and the Prophets?
- What tendency did Peter show up on the mount of Transfiguration that all disciples share?
- What instruction (rebuke?) did the Father give Peter during the Transfiguration that disciples today must apply?
- How does the conversation with Jesus coming down the mountain prepare them (and us) for what we need learn in the next scene at the bottom of the mountain?
- Why should it be surprising that the disciples were unable to drive out the demon at the bottom of the mountain?
- Mark says that the problem was a lack of prayer (9:29) whereas Matthew says it has to do with faith (17:20). Why are these one thing and not two?
- What is the vital lesson for us as a church to learn from the account of the disciples’ inability to bring deliverance to the boy?
- What is this text calling you to do?

## A Little Bit of Faith is All We Need a.k.a. Bring the Boy to Jesus! Jerry Cisar — February 14, 2021

Text: Matthew 17:1-23

### Introduction

#### I. Mountain Top Faith (1-8)

- A. “After six days...”
  - i. Genesis 1
  - ii. Exodus 24
- B. Jesus is the source of light.
  - i. The text emphasizes His radiance.
  - ii. It is Jesus who shines light on Moses and Elijah (the Law and the Prophets), not the other way around.
  - iii. The OT is a vital part of Christian scripture and cannot be cast aside.
- C. Peter likes this Mountain Top view.
  - i. Peter desires to stay on the mountain of glory and doesn’t want to go down to the valley of suffering.
  - ii. There *is* something that Peter needs to do, but it does not involve building tents up on the high mountain.
    - a) This significance of this line, “*Listen to him,*” cannot be overstated.
      - Deuteronomy 18:15
    - b) *Listen to Him* is loaded with meaning.

Dietrich 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... 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.”

- D. Jesus has embraced the cross as the means of power, which means that He must leave the mountain top view and head down to the place of suffering.

## II. Descending to the Realm of Faith (9-13)

- A. The Transfiguration raises a question.
  - i. “What about Elijah coming first?”
  - ii. Jesus answers, “Yes... well, no... they killed him.”

Worldly power does as it wishes; in the upside-down kingdom, God’s agents often can’t do as they wish. Indeed, often the world does to Christ’s kingdom agents as it wishes. We need faith.

- iii. God’s way of restoring all things is unexpected.
- B. Jesus explains that God’s way of restoring the world is through the means of the cross and crosses... His and ours.

## III. Unfailing Faith (14-23)

- A. While Peter, James, and John are up on a mountain seeing Jesus in all his glory, the other nine disciples are back in the valley experiencing ministry failure.

*We see the glory of the mountain top more quickly than we see the glory of the cross. Especially when it is our own cross!*

- i. Isn’t this need the essence of the gospel call—deliverance to the captives? Or, setting the oppressed free?

John Calvin taught that the work of pastors is nothing less than “the edification of the church, the everlasting salvation of souls, the restoration of the world, and, in [the end], the kingdom of God and Christ.”

- a) Captivity is dehumanizing.
- b) The church is called to be a beacon of light in a dark world, offering Christ’s liberating power to people all around us.
- ii. The 9 disciples are merely trying to obey Jesus, but it isn’t working.
  - a) Matthew 10:1, 8
  - b) It was not for a lack of effort that the disciples were unable to change this difficult situation.
  - c) Why were they unable to drive out the demon?
    - Matthew 17:20
    - Mark 9:29

Mark and Matthew aren’t proposing two different things. 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)?

John Owen: “Prayerlessness is a sufficient evidence of atheism.”

- B. “Bring the boy here to me!” (Matt. 17:17).
  - i. We must ascend the mountain in prayer where we capture the vision of Christ in His glory!
    - a) What makes faith strong is not found in the faith itself but only in the object of our faith.