

Luke 9:28-48

Verses 28-31:

--*Now it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, that He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening. And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.*

--**(28) about eight days after these sayings.** . . Links this section back to what Jesus said in **23-27**. Clearly, here is visual evidence of His own glory, which the Son of Man would come in. Also, the glory of the kingdom of God, which Jesus promised, was to be seen by some.

--Luke again tells us Jesus took these three disciples up into a mountain to pray. It is a fitting response to so much popularity, rejection, and misunderstanding. He needed to be with His Father as the cross drew nearer.

--**(29)** As Jesus is praying (and the disciples are apparently snoozing) His is transfigured. The glory that was His, and would be His once more, began to shine through.

John 17:24: Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

--What type of encouragement was this for Jesus as the cross was before Him? I think it is easy to overlook something like that.

Hebrews 12:2: looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

--**(30-31)** Moses and Elijah appear! And begin to speak with Jesus about His **decease**, or *exodus*. What are we to learn from this?

--First, Peter and the others can intuitively recognize Moses and Elijah. ***You will be able to recognize people in heaven.***

--Second, they are still *them*. Same names. Same persons. Our loved ones are still our loved ones.

--Third, they are *alive*! No such thing as soul sleep. God is the God of the living.

--Fourth, in speaking about the *exodus* Jesus would accomplish, we find that heaven is still interested in earth, just differently from the sentimental and sinful ways people typically imagine. Heaven sees earth through God's eyes and focuses on God's purposes.

--(I would also add that heaven and its inhabitants do not relate to earth with the "eternal present" theory some people suggest. Time is evident. Jesus' *exodus* is in the future. Angels rejoice when one sinner is saved, not all at once. The souls under the altar (**Rev. 6:10**) ask *How long?* Etc.)

--Why is it that Moses and Elijah are present?

--I believe it is because they are representative of all those who have died in faith (Moses) and those who escape death, such as Enoch, the raptured church, or those alive on earth at the Lord's second coming (Elijah).

--Also, they represent the fullness of the prophetic word about Jesus Christ in the law (Moses) and the prophets (Elijah). They stand for all that Jesus Christ fulfills. No doubt, that is what they are speaking about (**Mt. 5:17; Lk. 24:27+44**).

--I think Peter takes up this point in **2 Peter 1:16-21**.

Verses 32-33:

--But Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep; and when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him. Then it happened, as they were parting from Him, that Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah"—not knowing what he said.

--Peter wakes up, sees the end of this conversation, and notices that Moses and Elijah seem to be leaving. No doubt, he desperately wants to prolong the unforgettable moment. How could he not?

--There are two types of people in the world. People who *say nothing* when they don't know what to say, and people who *say anything* when they don't know what to say. Peter is part of the *say anything* crew.

--He was wrong then. He will be right when we stand in glory together with Jesus, Moses, Elijah, him, and all the saints!

Verses 34-36:

--While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were fearful as they entered the cloud. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!" When the voice had ceased, Jesus was found alone. But they kept quiet, and told no one in those days any of the things they had seen.

--(34) The presence of God appears in a cloud, which is a familiar OT reality (**Ex. 13:21; 16:10; 40:35; 1 Kings 8:10-11; Neh. 9:19; Ps. 78:14**).

--It seems like the disciples begin to fear as Jesus, Moses, and Elijah are enveloped by the cloud—***they were fearful as they***. The voice then speaks to the disciples who are outside the cloud.

--(35) The Father declares His love for the Son.

--The Father also declares the preeminence of Jesus Christ and His Word over even that of Moses and Elijah!

****Deuteronomy 18:15: The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear.****

****Hebrews 1:1-2: God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;****

--Peter earns the infamous distinction of being the only person God the Father had to tell to be quiet! But both he and John never forgot that glory or that voice (**2 Peter 1:16-18; Jn. 1:14; 1 Jn. 1:1-4**).

--Matthew tells us that they fell on their faces (**Mt. 17:6-8**) until Jesus came over and lifted them up. Then they saw Him alone. The crowds had their opinions of Jesus, Peter had declared his own belief, but now they heard from heaven.

--**(36)** On the way back down the mountain, Jesus tells them to remain silent about what they had seen and heard (**Mt. 17:9; Mk. 9:9**). Mostly, no doubt, still because of their ignorance. Also, I would think, to avoid stirring up jealousy among the other disciples.

--There is something to be said here for Peter. Even talkers can be silent from time to time!

Verses 37-40:

--Now it happened on the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, that a great multitude met Him. Suddenly a man from the multitude cried out, saying, "Teacher, I implore You, look on my son, for he is my only child. And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out; it convulses him so that he foams at the mouth; and it departs from him with great difficulty, bruising him. So I implored Your disciples to cast it out, but they could not."

--**(37)** Jesus comes back down the mountain. As the Son of Man, Christ was encouraged by the transfiguration to return to service. As the Son of God, we see Him and Him alone, bearing sin and overcoming all our evil with His good.

--In like manner, our transfiguration or "mountain top" experiences are meant to be passing, not permanent. They are meant to infuse us with needed encouragement to face daily life, not transform daily life into heaven. *Spiritual "highs" are helpful if they are held with the proper weight and their function is understood.*

--There is such a great contrast here as Jesus comes down the mountain. Glory and sin, light and darkness, recognition and faithlessness, etc.

--**(38-40)** A father emerges from the crowd pleading for his only child. He begs that Jesus look upon his son with favor. *Good example for every parent with a hurting child who still has life!*

--The child is horribly enslaved by an evil spirit. A demon that even the other apostles couldn't deal with. *How helpless everyone must have felt watching this child suffer under the control of something so evil!*

Verses 41-42:

--Then Jesus answered and said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here." And as he was still coming, the demon threw him down and convulsed him. Then Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the child, and gave him back to his father.

--(41) What an interesting expression of Christ's longsuffering! Was this a small view into what it was like to leave glory for earth? For Him to bear all our evil in action until He bore all our sin on the cross? We have no idea what it was for Jesus, in all His perfection, to endure sinful humanity.

--For a moment, we feel heaven's heart reacting to the constant chill of earth's perverse atmosphere. Life down the mountain is so different from the Father's voice and the conversation of heaven's citizens, like Moses and Elijah! Jesus seems literally pained by the lack of faith surrounding Him: the selfish crowd, the helpless disciples, the hard religious leaders, the broken father, etc.

--And yet, what if He didn't endure us? What if He hadn't come down from heaven, and come down from the mountain? This child would have been destroyed, and we all would have died in our sin.

*MacDuff (Heavenly Aspirations! Pg. 34-35): *"This {the transfiguration} is usually regarded as a wonderful occurrence; but it is, in truth, the least marvelous in the whole of the Redeemer's history. To see an earthly monarch engaged in some menial employment, would be a far stranger sight than to behold him adorned with royal pomp and majesty. So, to view the Lord of life and glory as the carpenter's son; to contemplate his poverty, his deep abasement, his ignominious sufferings—these are the things which should fill us with profoundest amazement; and not such a sight as that which was now witnessed, when he appeared in his true character, and was invested with some of those outward tokens which befit his inconceivable dignity."**

--(42) The demon reacts instantly to Jesus' presence, but the Lord authoritatively casts out the evil spirit, and beautifully, we are told He ***gave him back to his father***. The boy was back, and given back, so that the beauty, goodness, and heart expressed in the life of a father and son could be known as He would have it to be known. What a wonderful Savior!

Verses 43-45:

--And they were all amazed at the majesty of God.

But while everyone marveled at all the things which Jesus did, He said to His disciples, "Let these words sink down into your ears, for the Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men."

But they did not understand this saying, and it was hidden from them so that they did not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this saying.

--The people are astonished, but amazement alone is not enough. Jesus makes sure His disciples have their expectations and emotions guided by truth.

--Luke tells us that they were without spiritual understanding regarding the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We shouldn't be too hard on them. We would have been just as ignorant in their position.

--It was such a shocking word from someone who commanded storms, diseases, demons, and souls to return to dead bodies!

--Maybe part of their fear was a result of the stern rebuke Jesus gave Peter (**Mt. 16:22-23**)? They knew this was a serious matter that they didn't fully comprehend.

Verses 46-48:

--Then a dispute arose among them as to which of them would be greatest. And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a little child and set him by Him, and said to them, "Whoever receives this little child in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me. For he who is least among you all will be great."

--(46) This moment is also mentioned in **Mt. 18:1-5** and **Mk. 9:33-37**. This was a very important lesson coming on the heels of Jesus' more open teaching on His need to take up the cross as well as His followers, and the glory revealed at His transfiguration.

--What caused this dispute among the disciples? Maybe the confluence of the differences in their works on their previous missions, the three taken to the mountain with Jesus, and the inability of the others to cast out the demon?

--Whatever the cause, Jesus knows what they are thinking and discussing. *He always does!*

--I find it very important to notice that Jesus does not rebuke their ambition to be great in the kingdom of heaven. Instead, He directs it. It was a good desire they were seeking in immature, ignorant, and sinful ways.

--(47-48) Jesus gives them an object lesson. He took up a child and sat the child next to Himself. A childlike character determines two things:

--First, how we relate to others.

--The worldly great are too important to deal with children. But in the kingdom of heaven, everyone matters. *Think of how patient Jesus was with people!*

--Also, this child didn't care anything about which of them was "the greatest". The child was just freely responding to Jesus.

--Do we remember what it was like to be a child? We have grown old, and feel the truth that our innocence, life, and freedom are no longer the same.

*Buechner (The Magnificent Defeat, pg. 133): *"But to be a child is to be all of one piece, to respond to life, to love, as totally and unthinkingly as even we, who are no longer children, can still respond to the sound of our own name if someone shouts it out suddenly."**

--The great in the kingdom of heaven live with a childlike responsive simplicity in the reception of others.

--Second, how we relate to God.

--We are told by Matthew that Jesus called the little child to Him (**Mt. 18:2**). The child received Him, not in His glory of transfiguration, but in a childlike faith came to Him in His humility.

--The worldly great are not childlike in faith, obedience, or dependence. There is no humility in their response to the humble Jesus.

--The great in this world will never take pride in the Son of Man. The more I desire to be great in the eyes of the world, the further I go from greatness in the kingdom of God.

--Just think of how this worked in Jesus' day! *John the Baptist, Peter and the rest of the disciples leaving all to follow Him, Nicodemus needing to be born again, Zacchaeus and his tree, so many that cast themselves at His feet Vs. The religious leaders, Herod, Pilate, the rich young ruler, etc.

--The great in the kingdom of heaven live with a childlike responsive simplicity in the reception of God.