



Sunday, February 15, Matthew 17: Listen to Jesus

Moments That Change Everything

Some moments change everything.

They don't last long, and they don't happen often, but once we experience them, we are never the same. Matthew 17 gives us one of those moments. On a high mountain, heaven briefly breaks into the ordinary. Jesus takes Peter, James, and John with Him, and there He is transfigured before them. His face shines like the sun, and His clothes become white as light (Matthew 17:2). Then the voice of God declares: "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him." (Matthew 17:5) This is not just a dramatic scene. It is a word spoken by God to the disciples then, and to us now.

Jesus Is Transfigured: Glory Revealed

By this point, the disciples had already walked with Jesus. They had heard His teaching. They had seen miracles. They believed He was the Messiah (Matthew 16:16), but on this mountain, they see something deeper. Jesus does not become someone new; He reveals who He has always been. The glory that was hidden beneath ordinary flesh now shines through. As John would later write: "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory..." (John 1:14)

Faith often struggles when Jesus does not look impressive, especially when He looks tired, rejected, or weak. Just six days earlier, Jesus had told them plainly that He must suffer and be killed (Matthew 16:21). The cross was coming. His disciples were confused and afraid.

Therefore, God gives them this moment, not to help them avoid the cross, but to prepare them for it. Hebrews reminds us that Jesus endured the cross "for the joy set before him" (Hebrews 12:2). Glory does not cancel suffering. But it gives suffering a meaning.

Glory and Suffering

The Transfiguration reminds us that glory sometimes comes before suffering and always comes after it. Paul writes: "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us." (Romans 8:18) When obedience feels costly, when faith feels heavy, and when God seems silent, remember the mountain. The same Jesus who walks with us in weakness is the Lord of glory. Philippians 2 tells us that though He was God, He humbled Himself, even to death on a cross, therefore God exalted Him (Philippians 2:6-11). The path of Jesus is humility before exaltation, and suffering before resurrection. And if we follow Him, it will be the same for us (2 Timothy 2:12).

The Law, the Prophets, and Jesus at the Center: Moses and Elijah appear beside Jesus; Moses represents the Law and Elijah represents the Prophets. Together, they represent the entire story of Israel, God's covenant, God's promises, and hope of redemption. **Moreover,** on this mountain they stand with Jesus. This shows us something profound: Jesus is not merely another teacher alongside Moses and Elijah. But He is the fulfillment of everything they pointed toward. Jesus Himself said: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets, I have come to fulfill them." (Matthew 5:17) **The conversation on the mountain:** Luke tells us they were speaking with Him about His "departure," which He was about to bring to fulfillment in Jerusalem (Luke 9:31). Even the Law and the Prophets point toward the cross. And Jesus stands at the center of God's redemptive plan.

"Listen to Him" When Peter suggests building shelters, the voice of God interrupts: "This is my Son, Listen to him." Not Moses, Not Elijah. Not even your own understanding. Listen to Jesus.

In the previous chapter, Jesus had said hard things: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.” (Matthew 16:24)

Listening to Jesus means more than admiring Him. It means giving His words final authority over our fears, opinions, and desires. As James writes: “Do not merely listen to the word... Do what it says.” (James 1:22) When faith is confusing, when obedience is costly, when fear overwhelms, and even when the world feels unstable listen to Jesus. Jesus says, “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me” (John 10:27).

The Invitation: Listen to Him The invitation is simple, but not easy. Listen to Him. When we hear rumors of war (Matthew 24:6), listen to Jesus. When our health fails, listen to Jesus. When finances are uncertain, listen to Jesus. When our security or the safety of our neighbors feels threatened, listen to Jesus.

Why do we listen to Jesus?

Because He is the One who shines with glory. He is the One who walks beside us.

He touches us in our fear. He leads us through the cross and into resurrection.

He leads us ultimately into eternity. And once we have truly seen Him, even for a moment, we are never the same.

Amen.

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