

SUNDAY HANDOUT FOR DISCUSSION AND APPLICATION - Sept. 27

Listen to Him (Matthew 17:1-20)

It's as if a curtain has been pulled back. A few of Jesus' disciples are given a glimpse of his radiant glory and hear a voice saying, "Listen to him." It's an encounter with Jesus that puts them on their faces. But in Matthew 17:1-20, this mountaintop revelation gives way to a frustrating experience with human suffering and ineffective faith. Jesus transforms the whole scene into a classroom on the kind of faith that actually moves mountains – and he wants you to have it.

1. A mountaintop revelation of Jesus (Matthew 17:1-13)

2. A frustrating experience with ineffective faith (Matthew 17:14-18)

3. Faith that moves mountains (Matthew 17:19-20)

QUESTIONS (Pray, read the passage and pick 4-5 questions to discuss. Trust the Holy Spirit to guide.)

1. Read Matthew 17:1-20. What does the Transfiguration reveal about who Jesus is? What do you notice about his appearance, Moses and Elijah, the cloud, and the Father's words?
2. The Father says, "Listen to him." (V 5) What does it mean to "listen to Jesus" rather than simply believe things about Jesus? How have his words directed or corrected you in the past?
3. In verses 6-8, the disciples are terrified, and Jesus comes to them and touches them.
What does this reveal about Jesus - not only of his glory and authority, but also his compassion?
4. The disciples had previously been given authority to cast out demons (Matthew 10:8), yet now they couldn't. (Matthew 17:16, 19) What does their failure teach us about the danger of relying on past experiences, abilities, or successes rather than continually depending on God?
5. Jesus says faith "like a grain of mustard seed" can move mountains (V 20). Why is the point not the size of our faith but the object of our faith? What would "practical reliance on the living God" look like in a situation you're facing?
6. The disciples move from the mountaintop to a scene of suffering and apparent failure. What helps you keep Jesus' glory in sight and continue to trust him when your experience is frustrating, confusing, or painful?
7. Jesus doesn't promise every mountain will be removed in the way we want. How does the gospel give us confidence to pray boldly while still surrendering the outcome to God? How does Jesus' death and resurrection help us trust God when his answer is different from what we hoped?
8. What does Jesus want his apprentices to believe when they encounter the impossible? What do you need to remember about Jesus when you face something difficult or beyond your control?

Take a few moments to be quiet before Jesus. Ask him to show you where you need to "listen to him" and trust him more deeply. Bring him a situation where you're tempted to rely on yourself or control the outcome. Ask Jesus for mustard-seed faith - not faith in your faith, but practical reliance on him: his glory, his character, his power, and what he has accomplished for you through his death and resurrection.