

**26<sup>th</sup> February 2023**

**Exodus 34:29-35**

### **The Radiant Face of Moses**

<sup>29</sup> When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the covenant law in his hands, he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the LORD. <sup>30</sup> When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, his face was radiant, and they were afraid to come near him. <sup>31</sup> But Moses called to them; so Aaron and all the leaders of the community came back to him, and he spoke to them. <sup>32</sup> Afterward all the Israelites came near him, and he gave them all the commands the LORD had given him on Mount Sinai.

<sup>33</sup> When Moses finished speaking to them, he put a veil over his face. <sup>34</sup> But whenever he entered the LORD's presence to speak with him, he removed the veil until he came out. And when he came out and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, <sup>35</sup> they saw that his face was radiant. Then Moses would put the veil back over his face until he went in to speak with the LORD.

**Matthew 17:1-13**

### **The Transfiguration**

**17** After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. <sup>2</sup> There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. <sup>3</sup> Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.

<sup>4</sup> Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah."

<sup>5</sup> While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"

<sup>6</sup> When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. <sup>7</sup> But Jesus came and touched them. "Get up," he said. "Don't be afraid." <sup>8</sup> When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.

<sup>9</sup> As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, "Don't tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

<sup>10</sup> The disciples asked him, "Why then do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?"

<sup>11</sup> Jesus replied, "To be sure, Elijah comes and will restore all things. <sup>12</sup> But I tell you, Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but have done to him everything they wished. In the same way the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands." <sup>13</sup> Then the disciples understood that he was talking to them about John the Baptist.

### The King in His Glory (Exodus 34:29-35 & Matthew 17:1-13)

26-Feb-2023

G'Day Church Family

Please have your Bibles in front of you – opened at Matthew 17:1-13 – that will be our focus.

There's the usual **outline** for you to **take notes** – if that helps you **concentrate**.

Let me ask **God** for His **help** and **guidance** first – let's **pray**...

## Context (Matthew 16:13-17:2 and Exodus 34:29-35)

Just before we look at our passage from Matthew 17 – let's get the **context**

In the previous chapter

### [Slide 1-Context]

- Peter has **declared Jesus is the Messiah (Matt 16:16)** and he's been **commended by Jesus** for making this statement – and Jesus told **Peter** he **would play a big part** in the establishing of Jesus' **church**
- **Jesus has told His disciples he must die** – and **Peter says** “NO that can't happen” – and he gets a **severe rebuke** from Jesus – for talking and **thinking like Jesus' adversary Satan**
- Then at the end of chapter 16 – v28 – **Jesus says some of His disciples will get to see Him in His Kingdom** – before they die
- And that's exactly what will happen – they will see King Jesus in His glory as we pick up the story in chapter 17 – verse 1
- **Jesus** goes up a high **mountain** with **3 of His disciples** – Peter, James and John
- There are **few reasons** why Jesus only took three disciples:
  - If only a few disciples know about the event they are about to see – then it's **less likely to cause confusion or be misunderstood**. The **disciples will understand better** after **Jesus** has **rose** from the dead
  - **Peter, James and John** are often referred to as Jesus' '**inner circle**' – they had been with him from the start of His ministry
  - As well as what they witness here in chapter 17 - they also witnessed the **raising of Jairus' daughter from the dead** and were with **Jesus** in

the **Garden of Gethsemane** before his arrest and death – all  
incidents which involve death in some way

As we hit v2 – we see **King Jesus in all His Glory**

V2 reads - *There he [Jesus] was **transfigured** before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light.*

[Slide 2 - transfigure]

The word **transfigure** in **Greek** is the word **metamorphosis** – it literally means ***changing to a higher form!***

A good definition for **transfigure** would be: *a complete change of form or appearance into something more beautiful or spiritual*

A good example of something changing to a more beautiful form – would be **a caterpillar metamorphizing into a butterfly**

For Jesus – we're told – **His face shone like the sun** – and his **clothes became white as light** – showing His beauty, majesty and heavenly glory!

You'd probably **need sunglasses** to look at Jesus

What we have here is **Jesus in His true heavenly divine glory** – this is who He **really is.**

You see – whilst He's on Earth with His disciples – He is continually performing a miracle of **hiding His divine glory** – otherwise no one would be able to look at Him.

In our **Old Testament** passage – from **Exodus 34:29-35**

**Moses** also goes up a **mountain** into the **presence of God**

**Moses'** appearance also changed – Like Jesus – **Moses' face shone too** – and he **had to put a veil over his face** when talking to the people.

But there is a **difference** – **Moses’ glory was reflected glory**; it did not originate in Himself but in God, and it faded in time. [a bit like the moon reflects the light of the sun]. Whereas when Jesus’ face shone like the sun it was His own glory!

(pause)

As we read the rest of the verses – verses 3 to 13

We start to **get an understanding of the purpose of Jesus’ transfiguration**

Let’s see...

### The Purpose of Jesus’ Transfiguration (Matthew 17:3-13)

[Slide 3-Purpose]

- 1<sup>st</sup> The transfiguration - **fulfils Jesus’ promise** from last week – in Matthew 16:28 Jesus says - *“Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”*. As the disciples witness – **Jesus’ changing appearance** – and the **appearance of Moses and Elijah** – and the **voice of God the Father** – **they get a glimpse of Jesus’ Kingdom!**
- 2<sup>nd</sup> – the appearance of Moses and Elijah at the transfiguration – **confirms Jesus truly is the Messiah**. Peter had said to Jesus back in chapter 16:16 – *“You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God”*. Now here’s the confirmation.  
**Moses** had lived some 1400 years before; **Elijah** some 900 years before; yet they were alive and in some sort of resurrected, glorified state.  
**Moses represents the Old Testament Law** and **Elijah represents the Old Testament prophets**.

So basically, the **whole of the Old Testament** came to meet Jesus – the Messiah - on the Mountain – just like Moses came to meet God on the Mountain in our Old Testament reading!

Remember Jesus said that *He came to fulfil the Law and the Prophets* (Matthew 5:17) – and here as he meets Moses and Elijah – Jesus confirms He fulfils the Law and prophets!

**Moses and Elijah** are the link between the Old and the New Testament.

Just as an aside – it's kind of neat that **Moses does appear in the Promised Land**, after all!

- 3<sup>rd</sup> – V3 says **Moses and Elijah** were talking to Jesus at the transfiguration – in Luke's version of the transfiguration – he tells us - **Moses and Elijah talk to Jesus about Jesus' departure to Jerusalem which He is about to undertake (and the word used for departure is Exodus=a way out)**  
Remember Jesus has just told the disciples He has to die – and here Moses and Elijah are **confirming His mission** – and **it's a kind of exodus!**  
Just like the ancient Israelites made an exodus out of slavery/bondage from Egypt and were rescued from the Promised Land. **Jesus is making an exodus of out of this sinful world and going back to His heavenly glory (the ultimate promised Land) – but in the process – He will die on a cruel for sins to be forgiven!**  
 And because He is willing to do this – **we too can have an exodus** (a way out) from our slavery/bondage to sin in this wicked world – and **we too can go to the Promised Land of Heaven.**

**The disciples and us need to learn that suffering and glory go together.**

Peter wanted to prevent Jesus from going to Jerusalem; but the disciples had to learn that **without Jesus' suffering and death; there would be no glory.**

Surrendering our lives to Jesus, taking up our cross and following Him, **always leads to glory.** First the cross and **then the crown.**

- 4<sup>th</sup> – God the Father **confirms who Jesus is – Jesus is the Son of God** – and by the Father saying – *He is well pleased with Him and they are to listen to Him* – shows Jesus has **the total authority of God.**

This would have been a **great encouragement and assurance** to the disciples with him. Jesus has just told them He will suffer and die – and He knows how they are feeling about this. But with the transfiguration – they **get a glimpse of what lies beyond death.** They see that **Jesus is deity and He is eternal** – and **they also see two guys who have been dead long ago.**

- 5<sup>th</sup> – the transfiguration also **prepares the three disciples** – Peter, James and John - **for what lies ahead.** As they will be prominent in the early church – they would know that even if they are killed for following Jesus – **they know what lies beyond death** – and that is eternal life in Heavenly glory.

For Peter, he would be **so pleased to be included in this trip up the mountain** – after being told off severely by Jesus last week.

And Peter – **would die for Jesus** (as predicted by Jesus in John 21:18-19) -

And James and John – will later say they are willing to die for Jesus (Matthew 20:22). In fact – **James was the first of the twelve to be martyred** (Acts 12:1-2)

And John – he suffered **persecution and exile** on the island of Patmos (Rev 1:9).

**You'd be willing to do anything** after seeing what they saw that day,  
wouldn't you?

(pause)

As they come down the mountain –

Wisely, in v9, Jesus told the disciples to **not speak of the transfiguration until after His resurrection**. The resurrection of Jesus was the **final confirmation of His ministry and glory**; until then, reports of the transfiguration **would be more likely to test the faith of those who did not see it rather than strengthen their faith.**

**Jesus also clarifies some confusion** the disciples have in v10.

They are puzzled that if Jesus is the Messiah – which the transfiguration clearly proves; **then shouldn't Elijah have come first, before the Messiah**; just as the prophet Malachi – in Malachi 4:5 – prophesied? But they have just seen Elijah on the mountain and it seems Elijah came after Jesus, the Messiah, not before?

Jesus explains that indeed **Elijah will come and has in fact already come.**

**This Elijah is actually John the Baptist**; who came before Jesus, the Messiah.

We know from Luke 1:17 that **John the Baptist came in the Spirit of Elijah** and that **Jesus already identified John as the Elijah to come** (Matthew 11:14).

And V12 tells us John and Jesus share something in common – **they both suffer terribly.**

All this is **great for those three disciples**

But what does Jesus' transfiguration mean for us today?

**What does Jesus' Transfiguration mean for us today?** (Matthew 17:3-13)

[Slide 4-Mean for us]

- **1<sup>st</sup> – by the disciples being with Jesus at the transfiguration - We have an eye witness account – That's why John can write in John 1:14 'We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.' and Peter can write in 2 Peter 1:16 – 'we were eye witnesses of His majesty'. They were there!**
- **2<sup>nd</sup> - We can learn a lesson from Peter here – In his enthusiasm he suggests in v4– to build 3 shelters for Jesus, Moses and Elijah.  
Poor Peter, according to Mark and Luke's versions of the story – **Peter didn't know what he was saying.** But what he inadvertently did was to put Jesus on equal terms with Moses and Elijah.  
For this faux-pas – v5 – Peter heard the booming voice of God the Father saying: – "This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased. Listen to Him"  
**We must not put anyone or anything on the same level as Jesus.****

And as we said last week – **we must not get ahead of ourselves like Peter did** – and think we can give God advice or instructions – or suggest **we know better than Him!**

- 3<sup>rd</sup> – **We can take on board God the Father’s words** – *“**This is my son, whom I love, with Him I am well pleased, listen to Him**”* – we have God’s Son – **and we need to listen to Him.**

In the original Greek – it means more than just hearing Jesus’ words – it means **considering what He says and understanding it.**

How can we do that today? By **reading our Bibles, meditating on the words we read, really studying Jesus’ words– asking questions – discussing with others.** Why not - **join one of our growth groups?**

- 4<sup>th</sup> – See v6 – when the disciples heard God the Father’s voice – **they were afraid.** But Jesus was with them v7 – and just touched them and told them not to be afraid. **We don’t have to be afraid of coming into the presence of God** – **we have Jesus as our mediator and intercessor.**
- 5<sup>th</sup> – See v8 – *when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.* They were left with only Jesus – **that’s all they needed** – they don’t need Moses and Elijah – **Jesus fulfils all Moses and Elijah stand for.** And - **Jesus is ALL we need** [there’s a song there]  
Remember in **Christ Alone** – **our hope is found [another song!]**

- 6<sup>th</sup> – From the transfiguration - We can be assured that we don't have to fear dying – we have a glimpse of Jesus' heavenly glory – and as Christians we know where we are going
- 7<sup>th</sup> - We too can enjoy a transfiguration – a metamorphosis – we too can go from a caterpillar to a butterfly – that same Greek Word used for **transfigured** in verse 2 - is also picked up by the Apostle Paul in two places – which we will finish with

### **Conclusion** (Romans 12:2 and 2 Corinthians 3:18)

[Slide 5-Romans 12:2]

Romans 12:2 - *Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be **transformed** by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

**Our minds are transformed by the reading of **God's Word** and by **His Spirit**.**

[Slide 6-2 Corinthians 3:18]

Then in 2 Corinthians 3:18 - *And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being **transformed** into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

Isn't that wonderful? We are continually being transformed into Jesus' image through the Holy Spirit.

Let's pray...

*Father God, thank you for the eye-witness account of the transfiguration.*

*Thank you that Jesus is all we need and that in Him alone our certain hope of Heaven is guaranteed.*

*Help us to “listen” to Jesus – in all we think and say and do.*

*Thank you that through your spirit you are transforming us into Jesus’ image with ever-increasing glory. To Him be the Glory. Amen.*