

Exploring True Faith (1 of 2)

by Art Katz

Art Katz explores the profound implications of the Mount of Transfiguration, emphasizing the necessity of true faith and understanding Jesus' divine identity amidst human struggles.

Duration: 1:05:41

Scripture: Matthew 17:1-21, Mark 9:2, Mark 9:19, Luke 9:28, Luke 9:41

Topics: "True Faith"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher examines a critical text found in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, which recounts the episode of the Mount of Transfiguration and the Valley of Despair. The preacher ponders whether the conjunction of these two events is accidental or intentional and explores the significance of this conjunction. The sermon focuses on the encounter between Jesus and a crowd arguing with his disciples, where a man brings his son who is possessed by a spirit. Jesus rebukes the faithless generation and heals the boy, highlighting the disappointment and depression Jesus experiences when his disciples fail him. The preacher encourages the audience to consider their appetite for valley experiences in their faith journey and emphasizes the allegorical significance of the boy's affliction.

Transcript

is to examine a critical text in the three versions that are given in Matthew, Mark and Luke. The fact that the Holy Spirit reiterates these episodes in three Gospels is reason enough to consider them. It's a remarkable conjunction of the Mount of Transfiguration and the Valley of Despair, all in the same text.

And so we need right away to ask, is this just an accidental conjunction or an intentional one? And why this conjunction? And so there's much to draw out from these episodes. And I share this in every place. If you've not heard it from me, you need to hear it at least once.

That in my old age and the years of the Lord, I finally have come to the place where every episode of Jesus is given of the Father for our last day's consideration. It is something in itself. It serves purposes at that time.

And at the same time, it is calculated for our consideration upon whom the ends of the age have come. So it's loaded with end time implications and often eschatological significance, as I hope to show you today, even in the issue of the boy that was cast into the fire and into the water, of who I think he represents. So we're called to interpret why the disciples could not succeed in casting out that demon, but only Jesus.

And why in this text is there the strongest rebuke of Jesus to his disciples to be found anywhere in all of the New Testament. How long must I be with you? How long must I suffer you? You faithless and perverse generation. If there was no other reason to study the text, but to find out what prompted Jesus to so explosive a statement of that kind, as if he's come to the end of his tether, that he had every right to believe that the disciples should have been at a place of faith and were not, that when they were tested by this demonic expression, they completely collapsed, all of them, even those who had been on the Mount of Transfiguration with him.

So Lord, instruct us in the implications for ourselves, and lest we would hear such a rebuke in our own time as they heard in theirs, that we would be faithless, that we should know better and have a better reality to confront, especially the supposed reality, the unreality of the powers of darkness that keep men in bondage. So Lord, thank you for three texts, help us to go from the one to the other. There are significant differences in each account that we don't want to miss, and why one says this, the other omits it, but to put it together, it's like a faceted jewel that needs to be held up to the light and to catch the glimpse here and the glimpse there to get the full statement of what God is wanting us to consider and for which reason he's given it.

So your blessing, Lord, we pray, as we explore and teach us even how to examine a text so that we'll take away from this examination this morning a certain skill and ability of how to peruse, how to draw forth from text the meanings that are deposited there, because our reading is altogether too casual. This is more than reading, this is study. So bless our study, Lord, we thank you and give you praise in Jesus' name.

So I'm going to read from Mark 9. Somebody turn to Matthew 17 and read the corresponding text. Someone turn to Luke 9 and see there, and maybe when we come to points of difference as I'm reading, raise your hand if you see that in your text there's something spoken that's not in the one that I'm reading or that it offers a glimpse of something that would give us a more incisive grasp of what's being depicted. So chapter 9 of Mark verse 2 begins with, six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John and led them up to a high mountain apart by themselves.

Why these three? Because there's an inner circle. There's three and then there's 12 and then there's 21 and then there's 500 or 120 in the upper room. They're like concentric circles of a radius of influence and intimacy that Jesus had with some.

And of the three, who was the most intimate? John. So even this deserves our attention, that the Lord reserves revelation of a particular kind for those with whom he is in the closest communion and even there we're going to see a failure in what is revealed. Six days later, what's the significance of six? Because in one of the accounts it says eight days later and I don't know how to explain that discrepancy.

Two of the gospel accounts say six days later, one says eight. Eight is a favorite number for me. What does eight designate? You know? Huh? New beginnings, resurrection.

Eight, because it's the first day of the new week or the eighth day when Jesus rose. Day of new beginnings, day of resurrection. What does the number six denote? Six, six, six and more.

It is man, man, man. Six is man. He took them up on the sixth day to a mountain apart by themselves and he was transfigured before them and his clothes became dazzling white such as no one on earth could bleach them.

Who has a version that says something about his face? His face shone like the sun. Anybody in the, what is that Matthew or Luke? Okay, in the Luke version does it say anything different than what we've just read? Okay, is that an important little tidbit? It just went boom, he was transfigured. As he prayed, his face shone.

As he prayed, the radiance of God came forth. You think that that's in any way coincidental or significant? Huh? Because his prayer is communion and beyond petition and that's the moment that the Father sees to bring this remarkable radiance. Someone said the remarkable thing is not the great shining, the radiance of Jesus.

The remarkable thing is that he always shone like that but that in every, up till now, that radiance has been withheld or concealed. Here's a moment when it's revealed. It's not just that in this moment it comes upon him.

He's always the radiant son of God but for the sake of mankind not able to receive that light and would not serve the purpose of the Father so to publicly reveal it, it was concealed until this mountaintop experience. Okay, hey, so long as we're on this subject of radiance, what about ours? If radiance is becoming the son of God and is appropriate to his person and is continually his condition though it is concealed from the view until now, what ought our condition to be? To what degree should we rightly expect certain transfiguration in our own being, in our own person, certain radiance, a certain glow and have you had occasion to see it? Not likely in yourself, of course, but in any other? If you see it, it's rare and when you see it, you know what I have always observed on the very rare occasions, the person through whom this radiance and glow is expressed is never himself conscious of it. The moment that he becomes conscious of it, boom, it's gone.

It's the total unselfconsciousness in that union with God and the natural effervescence of a spirit-filled personality that we see that radiance. But I would covet, I would desire that it ought to be more visible in the saints. And if it's not, probably we're at fault somewhere.

So we're allowing something into our thought, life, speech and consideration that dulls that radiance or even makes it to retreat. But I think that would be a right part of our witness unto him as it was for Jesus. So interesting that the whole account should begin that way.

Could be that Jesus himself was taken by surprise. He never expected to come into this remarkable glow. And I don't know what his object was in bringing these men up to the high mountain, the park, whether he anticipated what would be revealed there and has something to do with the subsequent coming down from the mountain to the valley.

But at any rate, there appeared to him in verse 4, Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. Now one of the other accounts says why they're talking with Jesus and what they're talking with Jesus about. Who's got that? The deceased.

They are rehearsing with Jesus. You're approaching the climax of your earthly tenure, which is your crucifixion death. In fact, coming down from the mountain, he speaks of it.

I'm going to suffer and be killed and rise again the third day. He's been reminded by his conversation with both Elijah and Moses, of course, who have been come down from glory and appearing in that radiance with him. What's the significance of these two figures? Why of all of the patriarchal great heroes of the Old

Testament faith, does the father bring Elijah and Moses to converse with Jesus? So we need not look upon Jesus as some kind of innovation, but something coming right out of the whole grit and content of Old Testament prophecy and law.

He is the consummation, even the fulfillment, the telos, the Greek word for the object and end of everything that had preceded him. So it's very appropriate that these two men should appear with him. And what are they talking about? His decease and his departure? I don't think that it would be improper to see Moses as an apostle receiving a call, the revelation of God in the burning bush, a deliverer of Israel through the wilderness, the establishing of the law, very foundational to the whole of Israel.

So though the word is a New Testament term, the reality that Moses can express in his own conduct is an everywit apostolic, a real father, deep and one who bears up with the intransigence of his own people, their terrible burden and has to intercede in their behalf, lest God blot them out for their idolatry and their faithlessness. What that man bore in moral anguish, let alone the physical demand of 40 years in the wilderness is incalculable. So that God, that the father would honor him to have this pre-crucifixion time of communion with Jesus, who himself is very God, is altogether fitting.

Did they bring a dimension of something that was for him a solace, a comfort, an assurance, like go get him tiger and listen, you're going to suffer something extraordinary, both physically and morally. You're going to experience the absence of the father. You'll cry out, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? While here he's going to come and hover over you in a cloud.

You would have loved to have even a faint portion of that at the cross. But no, it's at the mount, but not at your time of suffering. So hang in there, fulfill your destiny, your calling.

This is the fulfillment of all the things for which we have labored and suffered and sacrificed throughout the whole history of Israel. You are the consummation and we're upholding you and girding you. Even as my arms were held up in the times of my trial, we will be upholding you in the time of yours.

We don't know what that conversation was, but we know this, it was more than chitchat. So that such a conversation was necessary and came at this time is something that we need to assess, that in the wisdom of the father, it was not an exaggerated or an extravagant provision, but altogether appropriate for the son at the threshold of his greatest suffering. And is that an encouragement for you? Like, what will he do for you at the threshold of your greatest suffering? I'm not saying you're going to get a visitation of Moses or Elijah, but maybe myself coming down from glory, because I would have preceded you to give you a little pat on the back and remind you, remember that school in 2005? Remember I said that, that, that, that? Well, now you're going to face it.

I don't know, I'm joking of course, but if the Lord will do that for this son, what will he do for all of his sons? Will he not give a special provision, this is right off the top of my head, this is completely unpremeditated, it's not that profound, but can we take encouragement by seeing this provision for Jesus, that we can also surmise that when we will face ultimate extremity and requirement, that there will be a provision for us that comes down from above that enables us to bear it. I'm encouraged by this. And what he did for the one son, he'll do for others.

Not identically, but in measure, because there will be no suffering that will be required of us that anywhere begins to approach what he bore. Although we're told to take up our cross, and you can't enter the kingdom without tribulation. Okay, so now Peter comes into the act, and said to Jesus, Rabbi, now right

away like your alarm bells ought to be going off, is that to say that the use of the term Rabbi or teacher is erroneous? No, it's an identification, but it's not an ultimate identification.

It's lacking. Remember what we said at the prayer time? Every error in the church in the last analysis is the statement of an inadequate knowledge of God. Well, this is what Peter himself is now revealing.

Rabbi, teacher, he doesn't yet understand who this Jesus is, that God sees him as so significant that he's bringing the two great heroes of Old Testament faith from the law and the prophets to come and commune with Jesus. And so there's Peter sticking his neck out and blurting out a typical patron statement. Let us build for you, it's good for us to be here, let us build for you three booths, three tents.

Well, what's wrong with that? Here's the man who's the first to make this acknowledgement, and Peter, Jesus says, flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father which is in heaven, blessed art thou for this revelation. And here a short time after, it seems that the revelation has subsided. You know, maybe because the flesh and the humanity of Jesus is so apparent that it disposes you to move away from this supernatural acknowledgement and come again to a lesser and more respectable and acceptable kind of seeing that is expressed and revealed here by calling him Rabbi.

But what about what he says? Don't you think that this is honoring? Let us make, underline the us. There's two uses of us. It is good for us to be here.

Is that what your version says? What does that say about Peter? What is Peter's central point of consideration in anything and everything? Though he's the rock of the church and the initial apostle, it is good for us. He's still us-oriented, which is to say, me, me, me, and everything is to be interpreted, seen, and deciphered in terms of the benefit one receives. It is good for us.

And any man who still has that noxious, egocentric view is necessarily going to say, let us make. He's wanting to religionize. He's wanting to memorialize.

He's wanting to establish something that man would make. Let us make. It's good for us.

Let us make. Well, one for Elijah, one for Moses, one for you. What's wrong with that? What does that betray about this rock, this apostle, that he still has not yet got it together? That there's going to have to be a real betrayal of Jesus before the cock crows three times.

And the man is going to have to go out and weep bitterly in such broken hearted rejection because he's going to reject him with oaths and with cursings. I don't know the man. And that's true.

You don't. That's why you'll betray him. You don't know the man.

But it's going to take a broken heartedness to come to that knowledge. And when you go up in the open room, you're going to be pouting and licking your wounds and counting your condition. It'll take 10 days for you to assess the truth of Peter.

Though you're a big hotshot, though you're loud in your statement, though all the world deny you, yet will we deny you never. His was the loudest profession and his was the most disgraceful contradiction. Hey, listen guys.

If we're not instructed by this, then we're going to have to go through it. Then you'll have to suffer your own shame and your own betrayal if you'll not vicariously identify with Peter's. Because we're not made of any

better stuff than he.

We're flesh and blood just like him. And though we're saying Lord, you know what our spirit is saying? Teacher, Rabbi, Master. Don't fool yourself because you're using the right language that you have the right understanding and the right respect.

That's why this is given us for our instruction. But while he was yet speaking, not knowing it says what to say. Do you have that in your version? He didn't know what to say.

He was terrified. But then why say anything if you don't know? What is it with us? We have to open our mouths and blab and we can't take the silence. We've got to punctuate it by something from us.

Not knowing what to say, he said. But what he said is a dead giveaway. What's the dead giveaway? Three booths.

One for you, one for you, one for you. What's wrong with that? Here's what's wrong with that. In the mentality of Peter, Jesus is at a par with both Moses and Elijah.

Is that true? Or is he the greatest? Is he very God and very man? And the son of God and the very revelation of the father. But Peter has not yet seen that. So he thinks he's doing him justice by seeing him at a place of equality with these two great foundational Hebrew saints.

But he's still missing it. And so therefore while he's yet yapping like that, a great cloud of glory comes down over them and the voice of the father rings out. This is my beloved son.

This is not just someone at equality with the prophets and the law. This is my son. This is very God, very man.

My son. This is the epitome of all creation. In fact, he himself has established creation.

All things were made by him and for him. So hear ye him. What a response from the father that evidently was needful and corrective for a well-meaning apostle who's yet fallen short of the proper acknowledgement of who it is he's to celebrate and make known as the chief apostle of the church.

This is my beloved son, you dum-dum. This is not just number two, number three with two other personalities. This is thee.

This is very God, very man. And you need to shut up and hear him. The Lord your God will raise up from amongst your brethren one like as unto me and will put his words in his mouth that whosoever shall not hearken to what he shall speak in my name it shall be required of him.

That's Deuteronomy 18. And here the same father who inspired that scripture saying hear ye him. This is that one.

Greater than Moses would come out from the midst of the brethren. Hear ye him. Because the great tragedy of Israel is they have neither heard nor considered him and have suffered the consequence as Deuteronomy 18 warns.

Okay. When you read this can you visualize this phenomenon? A bright cloud coming down over them and the voice of the father. There's even other implications of the father audibly speaking that will affect

the church and that generation and all subsequent generations because Peter in chapter 1 of the second epistle says in verse 16 for we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty for he received honor and glory from God the father when that voice was conveyed to him by the majestic glory saying this is my son my beloved with whom I'm well pleased we also heard this voice come down from heaven when we were with him on the holy mountain.

So evidently God is inserting something into the apostolic testimony as Peter is the apostle to the circumcision that he's not just talking out of his hat and making compilations from a logic out of scripture and prophecy but we were witnesses to the voice of the father confirming the son on the holy mount of transfiguration and therefore that experience was necessary for you to hear to validate our testimony to you that you might receive this as being very God. God knowing the intransigence and the reluctance of his Jewish kinsmen gave Peter an experience of a kind that would serve his apostolic purposes in good stead. So it's an important visitation and he expresses it beautifully in his second epistle.

How about the word majestic in that out of the majestic glory. I turned to my dictionary this morning to see what the word majestic means. What would you say it means? Or do you think that it's not really that important? It's just a nice word to be thrown in in the effulgence of all those nice words.

Or is there any word that comes out of the mouth of God that is not calculated with divine intention? Well you don't read the word majesty very often. You might have talked about the glory the brightness but it was the majesty of the cloud the majesty of the father and you might have assumed the majesty of the son. What does majesty imply that is unique to that word that is not expressed in other complementary words like glory or beauty there's something in majesty that's unique to majesty and it behooves us to consider it.

Majesty, what do they say in the courts of kings and queens your majesty majesty is invariably used in conjunction with royalty so it's a term of recognition of highest office and the aura and the grandeur that accompanies that person who resides in it.

So they caught a glimpse of the majesty of the father they saw the lord in his governmental calling that's when you say lord that's in fact what it means having divine authority and what's the first thing that Jesus says to his disciples after his resurrection all authority is given unto me both in heaven and on earth go ye therefore he's already commanding he's already directing in this authority that has come to him in his exaltation out from suffering but Peter glimpsed it in advance and we need to glimpse it and what is it that Stephen sees in the moments before his martyrdom that precipitates his martyrdom and when his auditors hear that remark they gnash their teeth and fall upon him and stone him to death they couldn't bear to hear it what did he say I see the heavens opened and

Jesus the man standing at the right hand of power I see him in the place of authority I see him in his governmental position as king because who else can say the kingdom of heaven is at hand except him whose kingdom it is he's a king and a king is majestic and nowhere is that majesty more displayed than in his suffering if you have an eye to see it so this is a very significant vision in the cloud and the voice and what other occasions does the father speak out over Jesus that he's audibly heard where he honors his son every one of these utterances ought to be rightly chronicled because how often do you hear God speak out of heaven when God speaks out of heaven it has got to be an awesome event just by virtue of that speaking and there's got to be reason for it that should not evade us

we're here because the same God who spoke to Moses out of heaven over Jesus spoke to me at the head of the camp road 31 years ago when I just dropped by this property for curiosity having no attention living in a 17 room house in New Jersey but the moment I came out of that car and stepped over the chain across the road that said no trespassing and my foot came down on this piece of earth the same God that spoke over Moses said to me who had called me by name in Jerusalem earlier dominion, end time teaching center community, refuge those were the words and those words have set in motion remarkable things not the least of which is your presence here in this building on this grounds so when God speaks dear saints we need to be on tippy toe and our ear opened to hang on to every word that

comes down to us from the celestial heights because these are rare occasions and if the father thinks that it's appropriate in his wisdom so to express himself we need to be extremely mindful and heeding so I'm appreciating when the father has bestirred himself so to speak the word chosen is used in one of the three expressions of this text two of them is this is my son my beloved son hear ye him and one of them this is my chosen hear ye him so we need to ask how is it that in one gospel the word chosen is employed and the other two the word beloved is employed and is this is Luke is Luke taking the liberty to insert what the father had not spoken and the others were in error in hearing the word beloved is this a light question because this has got to do with veracity and the credibility

of scripture because the critics will say well look at the contradictions look it says in one place this it says in one place that how can you have any confidence that that is the real testimony it's subjective, it's interpretive these are men just writing out of their own savvy this is not an authoritative statement from God in which you can invest a complete confidence and I don't have an answer for the question but I think we need to consider it even if there's one departure from the other two and the choice of a word how do we understand it and I think it probably occurs other places in scripture in fact Paul himself takes the liberty of using the the Septuagint and the Greek version in making quotes in some of his statements and he even conflates scripture he'll take something out of

one text and something out of another and put it together as an apostolic statement and not once does God reprimand him so I don't think that the Lord's offended that of the three accounts one takes the pains to say the chosen son he's beloved and he's chosen he's beloved because he's chosen and he has chosen to be chosen so I'm glad that in one of the three accounts it exists, how to explain it, I don't know but can God say something with one speaking that is more than one statement I didn't mean dwell on that for us we say one thing at one time but can God speak in such a way that is like an echo of one thing even as he says the other and that both are compatible I wouldn't limit the Holy One of Israel that because we're limited to one statement out of one mouth at one time that he's

limited that he could say something that has a resonance of the truth of both things at the same time and that one of the gospel writers picks up the one statement and the other two pick up the other but that it's all out from the same source I've never said that before I've never seen that before and I'm not saying thus saith the Lord I'm just offering a possible way to understand the richness of scripture and why it seems on some instances to be variable but not contradictory okay let's not dwell too long on that so when they looked around in verse 8 they saw no man no one with them anymore but only Jesus I like that and I quoted that in the morning prayer time I think they saw no man they saw only Jesus I think it means technically Moses and Elijah are gone now but the spiritual

meaning of that statement needs to be pondered they saw no man but Jesus himself only they saw a true seeing they saw the central figure and to see that figure is to see all and what did one writer say they did

not even see their own seeing they were so taken up with this beloved chosen son that it even abolishes their own subjectivity because when we bring ourselves into seeing we are going unnecessarily to mar it or confuse it or adulterate it isn't that true who of us sees any one of each other objectively as we in fact are I mean you see me with horns right at least Inga does so we bring something our seeing is not objective we don't see the thing as it in fact is, we see it through the prism of our subjectivity the way we've been colored so that half my struggle in the history of Ben

Israel is dealing with immature sons who have had lousy fathering and have come with such a biased notion of all the men in a place of authority that they can't see you objectively they bring their unhappy histories onto you and you gotta bear the result of what they have passed through until somehow it works out but here's a seeing that is pure they saw no man, they did not even see themselves, they saw Jesus only, so I love that statement it's something that we ought to desire for ourselves and seek so what can we say about the phenomenon of a cloud why does God when he comes comes in or as a cloud, why doesn't he just come in himself, what's the cloud the cloud each time in the significant expression of himself, his voice comes out of a cloud, they're overshadowed it's a cloud of

glory, there's a brightness in the cloud it's not what you see, the cotton stuff floating around in the blue sky it's a cloud of deity so how do we understand that and why is it necessary and when the Lord comes at the end of the age, does he not come out of a cloud, or comes with a cloud of, and the phrase cloud of witnesses so the phenomenon of clouds deserves some examination some consideration, I'm not a cloud man myself but now that the Lord is showing that it's repeated in significant places, I want to understand that, and Chambers has a remark to make about clouds even dark clouds that somehow God the identity of the deity by necessity must accompany any revelation and extension of himself how would you like a cloud of glory over us today, what would your reaction be would you be

shouting amen, or would you get down on your faces would you be terrified or glad huh, a little terror never hurt anybody it won't be cotton, it will be clouds of saints who have gone to glory because when he appears to be coming to us out from the clouds, and the implication is, clouds of the saints will come to glory you know that just to consider that, God deserves an entourage you like that word I mean it's hard to think of him coming nakedly in his own person without being royal and being majestic without a company of those who are around the throne so likely that was the cloud out of which the father spoke and that they were privileged to accompany God and to hear that great utterance and to look upon Jesus so this is an event of world class significance and we mustn't just dismiss

it as some airy little spiritualizing or poetic allusion, this is remarkably actual graphic and significant and we could probably spend the rest of the morning just doting on these aspects and we often pray for the cloud of witnesses overhead and pray that my Jewish mother is there with other of the saints whom we have known in earlier years, who are identified with us and what we are about and are now quelling that's a Jewish word that you need to learn to quell is to like a cat purring with satisfaction inwardly Jewish mother quells when her son gets his diploma or becomes a doctor or a lawyer, or when he marries a shiksa, they stop quelling so cloud of witnesses overhead is more than just a little airy visitation they exert something they bring something with them in their coming

that's celestial and likely that was part of the event on that mount so it's the mount of transfiguration it's a glorious episode on the sixth day so we need to consider that this chapter includes both the mount of transfiguration and the valley of what do you want to call it the challenge, despair, confrontation the ugliness of what took place in that valley it's a demonic event a young man foaming at the mouth an

epileptic, one of the most horrible expressions of stunted, deformed humanity and continually ravaged by demonic spirit what a punctuation, what a way to end to follow the mount of transfiguration, you would have thought that the lord would have given them a weekend off and let them bask in the effulgence of the glory of what they had experienced but no, right from the mount

down into the valley to see this ugly exhibition of satan at his worst so we need to ask the question is this accidental conjunction or deliberate and what's these if it's deliberate, what is god saying to us, what is going to follow our cherished high moments with god, our mountaintop experiences and are they given in advance of a trial and demand that will be made of us that if we had not had that preliminary we would have collapsed in the thing that has now come so we mustn't doubt on the high mountain experiences as a thing in itself as if we are, what's the word like gourmets or esthetes but we can almost sense with an ominous what's the word, foreshadowing an ominous pre-sentiment thanks lord for the great blessing but what follows, somebody said what's the evidence of the baptism

of the holy spirit and the answer was trouble so whenever there's market blessing steal yourself and gird yourself what follows, something is coming for which this is a preparation and not a thing to be enjoyed in itself or to be sought for in itself in fact those things are delightful when they come of god unsuspectingly at moments that we would never have thought okay let's look at the valley experience and they were coming down he ordered them to tell no one what they had seen until after the son of man had risen from the dead so they kept the matter to themselves questioning what this rising from the dead could mean then they asked him why did the scribe say Elijah must come first he said Elijah is indeed coming to restore all things how then is it written about the son of man that he

is to go through many sufferings and be treated with contempt but I tell you that Elijah has come and they did to him whatever they pleased as it is written about him so that's a little insertion as they're coming down the mount this allusion to Elijah whose presence they had just seen and that John the Baptist is evidently the in figuring the the statement of the Elijah that must come that precedes that of the messiah and that he has come and that he has been rudely treated but not as badly as the messiah himself now is going to be treated that will require his death and a resurrection on the third day which they didn't understand okay in verse 14 when they came to the disciples they saw a great crowd around them and some scribes arguing with them when the whole crowd saw him they were

immediately overcome with awe I wonder why maybe something is still lingering of the glory that he had on the mount and they ran forward to greet him and he asked them what are you arguing about with them and someone from the crowd answered him teacher I brought you my son he has a spirit that makes him unable to speak and whenever it seizes him it dashes him down and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid and I asked you disciples to cast it out but they could not do so he answered them so he's not answering the father he answered them you faithless generation how much longer must I be among you and how much longer must I put up with you bring him to me so we've got to ponder this this is so unlike Jesus it is so what's the word rude and cutting that doesn't seem to be

compatible with the nature of the son and why is he brought to such a pitch of exasperation at the failure of disciples to cast out this demon that delivered his son evidently it's a deliverance he could rightly have expected but they were unable to perform it that the lord himself is down in the valley something like Elijah after the great success at Carmel has to run into the wilderness and go through a bout of depression and say I'm not better than my father's take my life already is this true after Jesus is exalted by being transfigured in the company of the two great Old Testament figures that he has got to come down and

suffer some kind of after play what do you call it backlash where he's going to be depressed and in fact he's so depressed that he speaks in a way that is totally

unbecoming to him that's how much he's this valley thing has affected him as a man so we mustn't forget we're not talking about some pristine spiritual entity that is unmoved and untouched in his emotion and in his humanity by the sufferings to which he passes in fact he's taking one shot after another one jolt after another not only from those that oppose him the Pharisees and Scribes but even in the disappointment of the failure of his own disciples and that failure and betrayal is going to be marked right up to the time of his death so he's absorbing remarkable shocks and trauma all the more in his perfect humanity and deity a son who is holy, holy, holy as the father is down in the valley with the grit and the reality of life as it in fact is and in fact as it is at its demonic worst

and he's not spared from that he's required to go into that from the mountaintop and if he's required to go from that into the mountaintop what shall we say? do they deserve that rebuke? and if they deserve the rebuke for what? and if they deserve it what do we deserve? what did they do or fail to do that would call them not only faithless but perverse hey that's strong language you guys and are they faithless because they're perverse or perverse because they're faithless and he says the whole generation lock, stock and barrel there's not an exception every one of you reflect Israel in its condition, you're human all to human Jewish all to Jewish, Israeli all to Israeli and you're perverse and faithless when you have every reason to be other than that because you were in continual

presence with me day and night for the years that have preceded this and yet it does not seem to have had any lasting and enduring effect upon you, it's as if you had not the benefit of my fellowship watching the miracles, hearing my speaking, seeing my character in life and being up on the mount with me and seeing how I'm honored of the father by the voice that rings out of glory and attended by the greatest figures of Old Testament and having seen all that and having been privileged for all that you face one trial and you collapse completely, you're deflated the air is out of you because you see one expression of demonic power do you think that he's justified in his reprimand to whom much is given, much is required much was given in personal fellowship with Jesus day and night that they

might see who he is and if they missed it they heard it from the father who he is, beloved and chosen and majestic meaning royal and kingly and now they come down to that scummy level and their one sight of the visible evil and the air is out from them he's not talking about you missed faith for believing for Cadillacs and faith for prosperity he's meaning you have missed the object of faith, namely the recognition of who I am as sent of the father and being very god and very man, you have your faith was not sufficient and adequate to perceive me and that's why you cannot bring that knowledge into confrontation with evil you don't know it well enough though you were exposed in a privileged way, so what's with you that there's a faith that should rightly have been expected of you and you

don't have it and your failure to cast out the demons is the evidence because you're perverse, what is it you're still calling me rabbi, you're still calling me master, you're still calling me teacher it's an inadequate recognition of who I am and the failure to recognize me as who I really am is revealed in that moment when you need to express that reality, that authority and the casting out of a defeated foe so we are all indicted, we are faithless and how will that be determined and revealed, by taking a test at the end of the class and filling in the right questions and true and false or shining at some coffee table conversation or are we going to be tested about the truth of our knowledge of him and the measure of our faith in the same way that they were by confrontation with evil at

its most vicious and vile form, in its ugliest expression, where the victim is cast into the fire and into the water in epileptic fits and foams at the mouth you know how you could pray for somebody with a sniffle and your faith is adequate to pray for their healing, of course it doesn't have to happen right then so you have to look but when someone comes in with a wheelchair or somebody has palsy and you're praying for them and they continue in that condition after your prayer you want to go back to square one, you want to go back to the workshop, you had not the faith your faith was tested but it was not adequate to the crisis your faith is okay for sniffles but it's not okay for palsy it's not okay for those that are in wheelchairs who have never walked as your faith is, so be it unto

you so what the Lord is implying is you have every reason to have had faith adequate to that challenge but you did not exhibit it and is that an indictment that could be made against us and how are we tested for faith where are we tested and is the constitution of our church life such that the test is never required that our life is so timid and so predictable, tame and religious that there's never a real requirement to go from faith to faith and to grow in faith and therefore we can settle on our lease and have a faith that subscribes to the correctness of doctrines but we don't have a faith that can cast out demons or deliver the oppressed as discouraging as it was for those disciples and we can share in that indictment as being faithless or not having the faith that we ought for our

history I appreciate that the scriptures do not polish Jesus up and give us a little shiny version that he never misses it, he's got it all together at all times and he's perfectly circumspect and it's one thing to lash out at the pharisees, you whiten sepulchers but with the disciples he would be much more gentle and fatherly I like it that his full humanity is being shown though I don't understand it, I still like it that we're reminded this is man, he can be disappointed, he's depressed his disciples have failed him even after the glorious visitation on the Mount of Transfiguration, all the more for that glorious visitation that the very first appearance of evil and boom, they collapse like the sack of potatoes so what is your appetite for valley experiences what is your tolerance

because the very word valley is a depression and are you willing for the valleys of the faith or you want only the mountain tops because Jesus asked the father how long has this been going on and the answer is since childhood right away you begin to get a sense, this is more than just a boy, this is a representative allegorical figure that has been harassed from his very inception not by powers of darkness that don't want just to molest but to destroy and they've come close because he's been thrown into fire he's been thrown into water and even now when Jesus commands the spirit to come out the demon takes this boy and rattles him like a rag dog and a doll in the mouth of a mad dog and okay, he'll come oh here he is, boom, as dead they said he's dead, he's not just thrown down, he's dead,

he's finished so the ventilation, the hatred of the demonic powers against his son is uncanny, this is more than just a chance victim for us, this is clearly that the son is Israel that has been tormented and opposed and cast into fires of persecution and suffering throughout its entire history because the powers of darkness are out not just to torment but to abolish and to annihilate, so the issue of the deliverance here is not just a little mercy for an individual and to gratify a father, it's to gratify the father for this son because this son has a destiny not just to recover but to commit to the fullness of God's intention or there'll be no kingdom, it's a messianic, it's a davidic thing, it's with this Israel it's with this son, that's why the powers are out to destroy him but we'll

talk more on that, but let me ask why does Jesus single out the issue of faith, oh you have little faith, why are you afraid oh you faithless generation, how long must I serve you, how is the issue of deliverance, the

issue of faith don't you know the formula in the name of Jesus I command you come out of him, didn't they know the formula, isn't that faith, isn't that the way we've been practicing but you know what, we've not seen powers of this magnitude, that's why later they asked why could we not cast him out, they said because this kind, this kind cometh not out but by fasting and prayer the word this kind implies you're not just dealing with your everyday demon here, this is the heart of the satanic demonic world, these are the powers of darkness, this is the ancient foe, both of

God and of Israel and this is not going to come out just by some formula this is going to take something of a kind that they are themselves compelled to recognize, how is it that Jesus could affect the deliverance but the disciples could not so here we come to the issue of incarnation what is being exercised here by Jesus that the disciples lacked is it because he had deity they recognize his deity you remember in another episode where the demons went into a herd of swine and they begged Jesus have you come to torment us before the time and they begged him if we have to come out of this demon ridden man, let us go into this herd of swine and he allowed them does that show that this is deity now that is being exercised but if that's true then why does he reprimand disciples who could not

exercise deity understand he has a special prerogative that they can't enjoy, so why is he blasting them, he's blasting them because evidently they should have been able to perform the act of deliverance as much as he not because he was exercising his deity he was exercising his faith he had the faith that they lacked and faith is more than just the ability to recite a little formula in the name of Jesus get out of him faith is, well what do you tell me what is the faith that delivers why is that deliverance the issue of faith, how is faith the issue of deliverance we have a charismatic sense of faith that is much less than other than what is being pointed to here our charismatic faith is something other than what Jesus was reprimanding the disciples for the lack of we might well be

reprimanded if the Lord were here to speak that what we call faith today is not at all the New Testament apostolic kind that affects deliverance for Israel your charismatic faith is ok for a cadillac, it's ok for boyfriend girlfriend and health but it's not adequate to the extremity of demand of the last days as it will touch Israel's deliverance and restoration got that, and the longer you cling to the facsimile thereof and the inadequate counterpart the longer you will delay the coming in to the true thing you need to recognize that that to which you have subscribed is specious, questionable and less than the reality that you ought to have and must have in the last days to be Israel's savior in deliverance well we have to ask the question why is it one of the two things that Jesus said

this kind comes not out except by fasting and prayer what is fasting? a technique? a methodology? why does he cite that as being the companion piece with prayer we'll come to that but now we're on the subject of faith faith in the last analysis is the knowledge of God as he in fact is faith is a trust in God because of his character because you know it because it has been tested in your experience because you know that he's majestic, because you know that he's enthroned because you know that he's the creator of the heaven and earth that he has all power and that with him all things are possible faith in the scripture is spoken of under the emblem of all the senses it is sight look unto me and be you saved, it is hearing here in your soul shall live faith is smelling, all thy garments

smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia thy name is an ointment poured forth, faith is spiritual touch by this faith the woman came behind and touched the hem of Christ's garment faith is equally the spirit's taste, how sweet are thy words to my taste so the taste is faith, is one of the highest operations, one of the performances of faith is hearing so to hear Christ's voice as the sure voice of God in the soul will save us

but that which gives true enjoyment in the aspect of faith where Christ by holy taste is received into us and made inward and spiritual apprehension of the sweetness as food for our souls, then we sit under his shadow with great delight and find his fruit sweet to our taste so here's a really poetic statement of how all inclusive faith is, because it requires the

categories of hearing sight, taste and every aspect of our senses our spiritual senses brings a greater appropriation of God as he is which is in keeping with what I'm suggesting faith is the knowledge of God as he is the trust in God because you know what he is in his character unbelief raises questions about God's veracity and his integrity and that's why in the garden the serpent says to the woman, has God said even if he has said it, does he really mean it? and what did he mean by saying that? and you're not under obligation really to go along with that whole thing because God is jealously keeping you from the things that you should enjoy with him.

Has God said? is an aspersion a castigation upon the character of God who speaks that his word is not to be trusted and that is questionable so the attack of Satan is always against the character of God, but to have a sublime confidence in that character at a time when you least see the evidence for it is faith faith that, like the peace that passes understanding how do you come to it? is this automatic? are we all in the same place of faith? or is as your faith is, so be it unto you faith is relative and proportionate and in each believer the dimension, the quotient and the measure of it is different how come? why do some have greater faith than others and can believe and trust God in things that you would be terrified to consider they would go where angels fear to tread you yourself

would be terrified to consider such a requirement how is it they have the faith and actually do it and you hold back because you cannot believe God for that remember that statement in Romans 1, I'm not ashamed that the gospel is the power of God and the salvation of everyone who believes to the Jew first and also to the Greek, from faith to faith even as it is written that just shall live by their faith right at the first statement Paul brings in the necessary issue of faith and again in Ephesians he said and it's a gift lest any man boast, it's not your own, it's given and yet we can grow in it but if you balk at any point because you want to stay now at the place and level the plateau that you're enjoying you'll not grow in faith so we've got to go on from faith to faith and being

fitted for the ultimate confrontation when the issue of faith will be tested as it was here by the ultimate statement of the powers of darkness that are out to destroy Israel where if your faith fails they perish and if they perish God's consummate and eschatological intention of the kingdom and through their restoration is finished much is at stake and it rests with us because Jesus won't be there in his person to catch up where we fail, we ourselves have got to succeed where those disciples failed and right now we're in preparation for that climax so Lord who is sufficient for these things and we need my God grace mercy and that we need to recognize the trials through which we pass are not accidental they're calculated that we might grow thereby and be fitted for the next trial and the

next and the next Lord because this is growth and we suspect that Jesus went through the same thing he didn't come full blown he was a son who learned obedience by that through which he suffered and here he suffered disappointment and so he himself was brought to the final issue of faith to trust the father for his own resurrection after his cruel death so Lord we're called to be the sons and daughters of faith and we will be tested and the issues will be great the stakes will be ultimate and we're far from that readiness now but we're asking whatever we need to be fitted and to grow into it that you'll provide it and we'll not walk Lord we'll be terrified our hearts will be in our mouths we've not been this way here before we've not

crossed this Jordan we don't know about the security

how we're going to live with our families and how will this be made up and that made up but we trust you that if it's your call you'll give every enablement and every provision that as despairing as the church presently is however forlorn however lamentable that there will be a church that glorifies God there will be a church unto whom will be glory you will have a people for your name and you will succeed in this even with the kind of raw material that we ourselves are because our confidence is in you so bless us Lord give us grace to dwell on these things and receive the value of these things even vicariously we need to be staggered and suffer the reproach that you gave those disciples because we're made of exactly the same stuff and we're guilty of exactly the same failure thank you

Lord and we're shrinking from either fasting or prayer so come Lord and give us the whole balance of this this morning as an insertion that will sustain us in all of the days to come and we thank you and give you praise in Jesus name Amen

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