

Small Group Guide BEHOLD OUR GOD!

The Church at Brook Hills

Dr. David Platt

April 22, 2012

Matthew 17

This guide is a tool to help you lead your group into spiritual transformation. Use it as a resource to train your group into potential disciple-makers and lead your group in discovering, owning, and applying the truths of God's Word. There may be aspects you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on an aspect of their relationship with God. Your role is to help facilitate this encounter with God in His Word with His Body, not just to complete the guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid group task list.

Relate . . .

Begin your group time by engaging in relational conversations and prayer that may include the following elements:

Welcome—a simple, brief time to greet one another (especially new friends), enjoy refreshments, and make announcements.

Review—a time to review the truths discussed last week and report on how members have had success or frustrations in applying those truths during the week. (The leader will want to provide encouragement and shepherding during this time.) Periodically, the leader will also want to review the gospel and allow members to share reports about opportunities they've had to share the gospel. Occasionally, the leader will want to review the vision for the group and discuss ways to accomplish that vision better.

Prayer—a time of general prayer with the whole group praying for struggles regarding the application of truths, for those with whom the group is sharing the gospel, and for understanding of today's truths.

Reflect . . .

Use the following summary and questions to review this week's message and reflect on its implications for our lives. (As a training tool, leaders might want to have various members summarize the teachings in their own words each week sharing how they think the Scripture applied to the original hearers and how the principles apply to us today.)

Message Outline

BEHOLD OUR GOD!

Matthew 17

We will become like what we behold.

“And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”
2 Corinthians 3:18

- Behold the divine glory of the Son.
 - Moses (the Law) had reflected divine glory.
 - Elijah (the Prophets) had proclaimed divine glory.
 - Jesus (the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets) now reveals divine glory.
 - He radiates the splendor of God.
 - He unveils the presence of God.
 - He embodies the pleasure of God.
 - He speaks the Word of God.
 - He is the prophet promised by Moses.
 - The Father used Moses to deliver His people from slavery.

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- The Father sent Jesus to deliver His people from sin.
- He is the messenger preceded by Elijah.
 - John the Baptist's ministry of restoration was accomplished through his suffering and death.
 - Jesus' ministry of redemption would be accomplished through His suffering and death.
 - The cross of Christ must come before the crown of Christ.
- Behold the patient power of the Son.
 - Jesus endures our unbelief.
 - Jesus meets our need.
 - Jesus enables our ministry.
- Behold the willing sacrifice of the Son.
- Behold the certain victory of the Son.
- Behold the humble authority of the Son.
 - Jesus is greater than the temple, yet He still pays the tax.
 - Jesus is sovereign over the sea, yet He graciously stoops for our salvation.

How shall we respond?

- Let us look to His worth.
- Let us listen to His Word.
- Let us live for His renown.
 - Let's proclaim the One we praise.
 - Let's embrace suffering as we follow our Savior.
 - Let's live as responsible citizens of this kingdom for the eventual coming of His kingdom.
- Let us long for His return.

“Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.”

1 John 3:2-3

Message Summary

Today’s message from Matthew 17 focuses on Christ’s Transfiguration and healing of a boy with a demon—and the portraits we see about Christ through these events. The main emphasis of the message is that we will become like what we behold. This challenges us to behold Christ continually through His Word.

At the Transfiguration, we behold the divine glory of Jesus. Present with Him were Moses, who represents the Law, who saw God and reflected divine glory; and Elijah, who represents the Prophets in the Old Testament, who saw God and proclaimed divine glory. Christ alone reveals divine glory! He is God’s glory as He radiates God’s splendor, unveils God’s presence, embodies God’s pleasure, and speaks God’s Word. Moses and Elijah are two very significant figures in the Old Testament, so their presence with Jesus at the Transfiguration teaches us more about Christ. Moses prophesied about Christ. God chose Moses to lead the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt during the Exodus, yet Jesus is greater because He will deliver people of every nation out of slavery to sin through an unexpected means—His own suffering and death. The cross of Christ must come before the crown of Christ.

Also in this passage, we see Jesus’ power as He healed a boy with the demon, His willing sacrifice predicted, the certain victory He would win, and His humble authority as he taught Peter to pay taxes and divinely ordered the details of the coin in the fish’s mouth.

In response to this message, we are challenged to look to Christ’s worth above everything else in this world, to listen to His Word, to live for His renown as we proclaim the gospel, to embrace suffering when following

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Christ leads us to suffer, and to be responsible citizens for the sake of the gospel as we live in this world. Looking to Christ in these ways will always cause our hearts to long for His return, when our faith will be sight.

Group Discussion

Use the following questions to help review the application of God's Word to our Head (What does God want me to know?), to our Heart (What does God want me to desire/value?), and to our Hands (What does God want me to do?).

- This message opens with the truth that we will become like what we behold. In any given day, what kinds of things do you behold? How do you see yourself (and others) becoming like the various things you have spent time gazing at or thinking about over the course of your life?
- As you read about the Transfiguration in Matthew 17, imagine yourself in the disciples' shoes. Why would the disciples have valued Moses and Elijah as national heroes perhaps even equal with Jesus? How does their perception of these two men impact the way you understand their response to the event? How might we too be tempted to elevate men to a position that only the Son deserves?
- Why is it significant that Jesus reveals divine glory instead of merely reflecting or proclaiming it?
- Read Luke 9:30-31. Moses' mission was to deliver the Israelites from Egyptian slavery, yet Christ's greater mission was to deliver people from sin. How was Jesus going to accomplish this salvation? Why is it essential for Christ followers to value His suffering and potentially their own?
- Read Matthew 17:22-23. How do we know that the disciples did not truly understand Jesus' Kingdom mission? How do we respond to the truth that members of God's Kingdom will be led to suffer just as He did? Do you think we really understand what our mission is?
- Based on Matthew 17:16, 20-21, Pastor David said, "Nothing is impossible for the person who trusts God's power to accomplish God's will." He mentioned that Mark 9:29 might indicate that the disciples' ministry had become mechanical and self-dependent. What happens to our ministry when we focus more on tasks at hand than on the Object of our faith? What is the only fix for powerless ministry?
- Consider Jesus' response to the questions about the Temple tax in Matthew 17:24-27. Why did Jesus say it is important for Christians to live as responsible citizens in this world? What might some 21st Century applications of this principle look like?
- Read 2 Peter 1:16-21. Are you ever tempted to value mountaintop experiences like the disciples experienced above God's Word? Other than God's Word, what things are you tempted to look toward to see God's glory? How do you know those things can never truly lead you to see His glory? How does valuing God's Word more deeply lead you to forsake those things and daily see His Glory?
- As we seek Christ, we will suffer. Do we think life will always go easy for us? Why is it important to long for Christ's return as go through the sufferings and tribulations of this world?
- Read 1 John 3:2-3 at the bottom of the notes on the Worship Guide. What should the one who hopes in Christ do? What do you need to do this week in order to purify yourself? Can that be done apart from time spent beholding Christ's Glory through His Word? Why not?

Respond . . .

Encourage your group to break out into smaller, same-gender groups where they will respond to the truths of today's study. These groups will share with one another based on the following questions and then close in prayer:

- What are some of the main truths that God wants you to know from this study?
- How do your thoughts need to adjust to align with these truths?
- According to the truths from this study, what does God want you to desire/value?
- How do your values need to change to align with His values?
- What actions does God want you to take according to the truths of this study?
- What is an action that you can start to implement today or tomorrow?
- What is going to be the most difficult aspect of this study to personally apply?

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Close this time by praying for each other, specifically for strength to apply these truths, for personal needs, for the lost people with whom you are seeking to share the gospel, and for our weekly prayer focus as a church..

Weekly Prayer Focus ... (from our worship guide)

- *Church: Pray that God would show us the greatness of Jesus' Kingship through seeing His glory on the mountain. Pray that God would cause us to live in light of the fact that Jesus is coming back in that same glory to judge the living and the dead.*
- *Local: This week we are praying for Hopewell Missionary Baptist Church, Timothy J. Woods, Pastor. We are also praying for our Young Singles Ministry, consisting of 36 Small Groups including over 250 young adults in their 20s and early 30s.*
- *Global: This week we are praying for Brook Hills Mid-Termer, Kim S. Sent out in January, Kim has been engaging an unreached people group in the Horn by creating sustainable income generating projects for women in a remote village. Through these projects, Kim has been able to form relationships and engage women in gospel conversations.*