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LaTAM

Two Sermons preached by Pastor J.W.Tyler

On Sunday September 23, 1973.

Morning Lesson. Matthew 16.

And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, and James, and John his brother and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with ~~them~~^{him}. Matthew 17. 1-3.

The subject is divine, heavenly and blissful, and full of sacred importance to the living family of God, and the ground is so holy that it needs an especial anointing of the Spirit to even stand on the fringe of it. It is obviously a most attractive, glorious truth in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ in the days of His humiliation to all His beloved people, and we shall, by the help of God, seek to expound the word to you this day and see how relevant it is to the people of God in the teaching of Christ on the holy Mount.

Let us begin the discourse here. In the same narrative in St Luke the terminology is: "And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings." In our text it is: "And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart." I want to focus your attention on this: "And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings." So what is referred to? "These sayings" You have already ~~heard~~^{heard} in the lesson. The whole of the glorious transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ is the context to these sayings. This was the context for Christ Himself and for His disciples, and it is consequently for us. So what are 'these sayings'? and how is the wondrous transformation and transfiguration of the Son of God incarnate relevant to 'these sayings'?

I want to be concise and lucid. 'These sayings' first of all are the noble confession of faith at Caesarea Philippi by Peter concerning the Person and glory of Christ. 'These sayings' therefore, include the basic

fundamental, spiritual inquiry directed to the disciples after the Lord had asked concerning the general concourse of people who saw Him; "But whom say ye that I am?" Let the question be put this morning to the congregation. We shall either stand or fall on this matter. If we are wrong or deficient in these vital, glorious truths we are lacking in everything. Let me now therefore propose a question to us now assembled in His Name. "But whom say ye that I am?" What is your response? It would be profitable to leave you in meditation for half an hour and come back to find your response,- unless you have the immediate witness of the Spirit with your spirit as we propose the question. "Whom say ye that I am?" What is your answer concerning this holy, divine Person? What have you to say? It is not a matter of what is written as doctrine in your booklet, it is not what you have subscribed to in confession verbally; it is your own personal knowledge in communion with this sacred, divine Person. This will involve you in a close examination of all your religious life, your spiritual experience. You will be searching over fifty or sixty years of godly experience to find the first time when God by His sole method revealed His Son to you and in you and made you a believer, and so, coherently, correctly, spiritually, blessedly you are able to give your own potent confession concerning Christ. "Whom say ye that I am?" How many years ago was it when you were able to respond to the question? and afterwards, on how many occasions have you seen His glory and beauty in various parts of His precious life, His Incarnation, baptism, temptation in the wilderness, in His ministry, healing, His entrance into Gethsemane, His crucifixion and His glorious Resurrection,- your risen Lord? "Whom say ye that I am?" You know well Peter gave that very noble, beautiful, blessed, monumental confession of faith, and the Lord responded to it and defined it perfectly. He told him exactly the nature of it in the view of heaven. So Peter says spontaneously: "Thou art the Christ,- the Messiah, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee,- it is not a matter of flesh and blood; it is not something projected by a father to his son; it does not belong to the traditions of men or the human mind,- but my Father which is in heaven." 'These sayings.

So first this beautiful confession of faith from the lips of Peter concerning his Lord. What else? 'These sayings'. Jesus then proceeded to reveal to His disciples that which had been concealed from them. 'Reveal' means something is shown you which had been hidden, or you were ignorant of. He commenced to reveal to them that which astonished them, and the same man, Peter, the leader of the disciples, the spokesman for them, that great man of love and faith yet so ignorant, and Satan tempted him on this point,- Peter said: "Be it far from thee, Lord." So what did He reveal? That He must go to Jerusalem, "and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." So He revealed to them the doctrine of the cross, His sufferings, crucifixion and death. "These sayings".- and they were so disturbed and agitated by them. You will remember how the Lord turned and said to Peter: "Get thee behind me, Satan". It was the voice of Satan that said: "Be it far from thee". What is your response to the question? You would surely never say concerning His cross, "Be it far from thee, Lord", because your salvation is dependant on His substitutionary death. All the blessings of eternal life flow from His cross. He was on the way to unparalleled sufferings, the death of the cross. What it meant to the Son of God incarnate, to the Man Christ Jesus we can never tell,- His unfathomed sea of suffering and His bitter death.

Then the application of it. I wanted to bring to you to day the application of all this to them. He must go to the cross, and via the cross to the skies, to His exaltation in heaven, and all this glory they saw when He was transfigured. The application is in verse 24. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me". If you are seeking eternal life you certainly come after Him. This is unknown in the beginning. "If any man will come after me". You must go the same way, via the cross to the crown. Let me sum it up and say the whole of your life will be a cross. You find you have got a cross in every facet of life and teaching, The application of it is, you must pass this way via the cross to the crown. There is no merit in a child of God bearing his cross to salvation, but there is fellowship with the Saviour. I do not hesitate to suggest to your minds you will find in every avenue of life, every section of life you have a cross. So life on earth becomes

a cross,- suffering. But the beautiful application of it is: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross,- take it up, not shirk it,- and follow me," and this is the way to the crown.

By the help of God I will show the connecting link. The transfiguration of Christ on the holy Mount is the context to all referred to in relation to the disciples and to the Son of God incarnate Himself. Let us look at the particulars of the transfiguration. St Luke tells us "it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James," the favoured trio who would witness a little of His agony in Gethsemane. And one of them would bring out in his second Epistle concerning witnessing His glory,- "and went up into a mountain to pray". He was in the blessed exercise and ^{upheld} of prayer with the three favoured disciples. There is tremendous significance here. I will cite a portion from the Old Testament and one from the New to show you the beauty and blessedness and fulness of it. The first is in Isaiah 42. "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth." That is to say, the Man Christ Jesus was upheld by His divine Father. He needed the strength and support His divine Father constantly gave Him to accomplish His work, and He prayed for it. This is something we are prone to lose sight of. I look in my own mind and find myself saying, He is the Son of God and so He is not like me. A part of His condescension was that His holy humanity was completely held up by His divine Father, so there was constant prayer to His divine Father to hold Him up and to bring Him through. Your burden becomes so heavy, your trials so great, you beg and pray the dear Lord to uphold you and bring you through every day of your life. This is where your blessed Lord was, my friends. How wonderful this is! Here is a part of blissful communion. We sing sometimes:

"When that great God to whom I go
For help, amazed I view,
By sin and sorrow sunk as low
As I, and lower too". (105)

-upheld by the Father, and you will be upheld by the Father.

The other Scripture I want to refer to is in Hebrews. Listen: "Who in

the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears,"- your Saviour there.- "with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered".(Heb.5, 7.8)

Now you see the force of it. He went to the mountain to pray to His divine Father. And why in particular? Because His face was set to the cross. Before Him was the sea of all the agony He must pass through to accomplish the work of our redemption, and He went to the mountain to pray. His face was set to the cross, and He was praying to be brought through "with strength enough, and none to spare."(153)- to be brought through that great sea of suffering. He went to pray for you. O the wonder of it! From the mountain His face was set to His cross, His Passion. It had been from the beginning but He had just revealed it to His disciples. I feel the ground is so sacred and words are wholly inadequate to express what I feel. I am sure although the curse is removed, some of you begin to realise the deep waters of affliction you must pass through to reach the crown, and you go up to the mount to pray that He will bring you through and glorify you.

I will seek to make the application. "And as he prayed,"- remember they had seen Him,- nearly all men saw Him in His humiliation a poor Man,"A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." They despised and rejected Him, and the dear disciples although they saw Him, His glory was considerably veiled. They saw the Man of sorrows, but as He prayed a remarkable thing took place. "The fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering." His very form and appearance changed: and how shall we try to spell out 'transfiguration'? He appeared before them as He is enthroned in heaven; as He was when He arose from the tomb; as all the glorified saints see Him now. How wondrous!

I want to be very clear here, because the glory of Christ is a wonderful subject to the people of God. His transfiguration did not take place by a beam from heaven shining down on Him. It was the divine radiancy of His Deity beaming forth from within,- the glory of the Son of God shining forth from within. So they saw His glory. It is difficult to find words

to express the two-fold application. How wondrously this confirmed the faith of the dear disciples in His glorious Person! Peter speaks of beholding His glory and the voice which came to Him from the excellent glory when they were eyewitnesses of His majesty. What a confirmation of their faith in His divine Person! Do you know it? As I stand here I recognise one thing. The most vital thing ever in my ministry is to present Christ as I know something of beholding His glory, or my ministry is a shadow, vapid. The greatest need in the ministry is to behold the glory of Christ and for that glory to irradiate our souls. You may have sound doctrine: without His glory it is like a skeleton. It is the life and soul of everything to behold His glory. O that the Lord would confirm our faith in His divine Person! Moses said: "I beseech thee, show me thy glory". (Exod.33.18)

To come to the second point: I use a word that really sounds unique as it relates to the Son of Man. This transfiguration, this shining forth in all His glory and the voice of the Father was a very powerful encouragement the Father gave to His dear Son incarnate, to the Son of Man to go forward to His crown. Do you see? It was a blessed evidence and proof that when He had passed through Gethsemane and come to Calvary and yielded His precious life and died and was buried, He would rise to His exaltation. I believe this falls in the category of the word in Hebrews. "Who for the joy that was set before him,"- it was a foretaste as it were. Here you see the King, the Son of God in all His glory.- "Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Amen.