



GracePoint: A Weekly Sermon Discussion

86 – A Tale of Two Mountains

Announcements:

9/20 @7:30 -

Prayer

9/21 @6:30 -

Grace Group

9/24 @8:30 -

Sunday School

9/24 @6:00 -

FAMILY NIGHT

Small Groups

ICE BREAKER: Is there any moment in your life that you would call a “defining moment”? What makes it so important?

In the book of Matthew mountaintops are important. Jesus spends much time traveling from one mountain to another. His first major discourse is the “The Sermon on the MOUNT,” and the final one, the “OLIVET Discourse” is named after the mount of olives. But today I would like to look at two different events that happened in Jesus life that both happened on mountains, because together they give us a more full picture of Jesus. In both Jesus takes just a few of his disciples (in particular Peter, James and John) and in both the nature of Jesus is revealed. Specifically we are talking about the Transfiguration and Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane. We will start by remembering the Transfiguration.

READ: Matthew 17:1-8

It has been a long time since we were in this passage, and there is a whole bunch that we could cover, but importantly for today, what we should focus on is what this whole scene tells us about Jesus. When we covered this last time we looked at Moses and Elijah being representative of the whole Old testament. They were the “Law and Prophets” and Jesus was more important than both of them. The short answer to “why” is pretty easy: because Jesus is God! As we read in verse 2 that “his face shone like the sun” what Matthew is really saying is that his face shone with the glory that He had before the world was made. Here Peter, James and John saw Jesus glorified. When we think of “mountaintop experiences” this is really it. God who became man was here shining with the fullness of divine glory! It does not get much better than that!

DISCUSS: Why was it important for Jesus to have this moment? What does Jesus being God mean for us?

READ: Matthew 26:36-44

It will be helpful for us to contrast the transfiguration with Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane. If the Transfiguration is “mountaintop” truly the time in the garden here is “the valley of the shadow of death”. Instead of shining with glory and power, we read that Jesus was “sorrowful and troubled”. Instead of his face shining with glory we read in Luke that his face was covered in sweat like drops of blood. In other words, these two events tell us of the dual nature of Christ. If the transfiguration was a celebration and remembering of his divinity, here in the garden his humanity is what is highlighted. Jesus here is thrown into what are some of the most difficult parts of life. He faces pain and suffering in a physical, emotional and even spiritual sense. He faces what are surely his greatest fears and here feels powerless to stop it (though we should note, even if he could: not his will, but the Father’s be done!).

DISCUSS: Why is it important for Jesus to have this moment? What does Jesus being man mean for us?

While there are many thoughts and places and reasons that this is important, I would like to focus on just one for a moment. If Jesus was not BOTH god and man, he could not be our perfect high priest. We needed God, because no mere man could intercede for us. Only God could offer a sacrifice holy and pleasing to God. But he also had to be a man, for if he wasn’t he could not intercede for us (because he wouldn’t be like us). This is the main thrust of the whole book of Hebrews. Jesus Christ, the only one who was both God and Man, can bridge perfectly the gap BETWEEN God and man.

DISCUSS: What does it mean for Christ to be our intercessor? Can you think of any other ways the dual nature of Christ is important for us?

