

Read: Matthew 17:1-9

In All His Brilliance

Matthew 17:1-4a EHV

Six days later Jesus took with him Peter, James, and John the brother of James; and he led them up onto a high mountain by themselves. There he was transfigured in front of them. His face was shining like the sun. His clothing became as white as the light. Just then, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Jesus.

Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here."

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

It wasn't all that long ago that maybe you heard or recited these words: "and the glory of the Lord shone around them..." (Luke 2). A shining angel announced to simple shepherds in the fields outside Bethlehem that Jesus was born. For a few seconds, they witnessed the brilliance of heavenly glory because the Holy One, the Messiah, our Savior, had come into the world.

Did you know something like that happened years later in Jesus' life? Jesus was a grown man when he began preaching and performing miracles. Even though he traveled the country doing miraculous things such as healing people and walking on water, he looked like a normal human being. His appearance was nothing even close to the glorious company of angels on the night of his birth.

One day, he took three of his followers (Peter, James, and John) up a mountain with him. There, Jesus' appearance changed. It's hard for us to imagine exactly what that would have looked like. Matthew tells us, "His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light." Our eyes can't even handle looking directly at a 60-watt lightbulb, let alone the brilliance of the sun. It's even dangerous! Yet here Jesus stood before them, glowing in abundant light. This was something extraordinary and his disciples knew it! That's why Peter exclaimed, "Lord, it is good for us to be here."

It was here on this mountain that Jesus revealed his perfection and holiness in his glory. For a few moments, it was like the door of heaven was left open a crack and Peter, James, and John saw Jesus in all his glory. It was here that God the Father put his stamp of approval on Jesus as his Son. It is here that we too can be assured that Jesus is indeed the glorious and true Son of God.

Being in the presence of brilliance and holiness made shepherds and disciples afraid. It's the same for us. In the face of such holiness, we ought to fall face down on the ground. Until Jesus taps us on the shoulder and says, "Get up. Don't be afraid." We don't need to be afraid of

Jesus. He would head down that mountain to do the difficult work of the cross so that someday, you could experience the full glory of his presence in heaven!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- What happened to Jesus when he went up the mountain?
- *Fill in the blank:* Jesus shining in brilliant glory shows us that he is true _____.

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Name three things that happened when Jesus, Peter, James, and John went up the mountain that day.
- How did that show that Jesus is true God?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Compare Jesus' transfiguration to Jesus' baptism. What was alike? What was different?
- Discuss why it was important for Jesus to come back down the mountain after his transfiguration.

Closing Prayer:

This brightness, Lord! What shall I say
to see your face outshine the day?
No greater gift could I receive;
I'll stay right here and never leave!

I'll soon exchange this mountain sight
for heaven's everlasting light;
your brightness, Lord, will then be mine,
and then my face, like yours, will shine!
(*Christian Worship* 392:1,6)

Thank you, Lord for your gift of heaven! Amen.