

The Transfiguration

Matthew 17:1-13

MEMORY VERSE

MATTHEW 17:5b

"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!"

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A tape player and some beautiful instrumental music.

As many pre-cut cardstock bookmarkers as the number of children in your class, markers and crayons, contact paper and a hole punch. For younger children, pre-write the words, "I Only Need Jesus" on the bookmark.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

Metamorphosis

Bring a tape of some beautiful instrumental music to class. Begin to play the music and explain to your class that you want some volunteers to act out the phenomenon of the metamorphosis of a butterfly.

Talk the child through it like this, "You start as a tiny egg, so crunch up small and round. Then, you hatch into a caterpillar, so stretch out long and squirm around. You eat some leaves and you begin to spin your cocoon; roll over and over. Now, it's time to break carefully out of your cocoon. Stretch your wings out to dry. Next, stand up and fly away!"

Have several children give it a try!

Optional for older children: Simply explain or draw a diagram on the chalkboard to illustrate the process of metamorphosis.

LESSON TIME!

Have any of you ever seen a caterpillar go through the incredible change to become a butterfly? Some of us might have watched the process as a caterpillar spins a cocoon and later emerges as a butterfly; it is an absolutely amazing thing! We call this process metamorphosis. A metamorphosis is a change on the outside that comes from the inside. It means to be changed from one form to another. A caterpillar changes from the inside out into a butterfly. It goes through metamorphosis.

Today we will read about the greatest metamorphosis that human eyes have ever beheld! Jesus changes to reveal His glory to His disciples. This event is called the transfiguration. It was a pretty amazing thing for the disciples to see. And we will get a glimpse of Jesus' glory as we study our story today and learn that **Jesus is all we need**.

MATTHEW 17:1-2

Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves;

and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.

We find Jesus in verse one taking three of His close disciples on a special mission up to a high mountain place, away from the crowds of people and the other disciples. While they were in this private place together Jesus allowed them to watch something very special. He was transfigured, which means He went through a change of form (kind of like a metamorphosis)! Can you imagine how they felt to see this?

I'm sure being with Jesus every day was wonderful enough, but here they watched Him change right before their eyes. How does this verse describe Him? His face shone like the sun and His clothes became as white as the light. You can also read a very similar description of Jesus in His glory in Revelation chapter 1. Maybe you can take a few moments to notice the similarities between the two Bible passages.

For the disciples it must have been almost blinding for them to look upon Him. What was happening here? Jesus, who was God in human flesh, was allowing His glory as God to radiate from within in such a way that He changed on the outside to the majestic, shining, glorious King that He is.

Jesus wanted Peter, James, and John to see this happen. Why did He want them to see this? He wanted to strengthen their faith in Him. He wanted them to have this precious moment to remember and to look back on forever. Jesus knew He was going to the cross and that His death would be difficult for His disciples. He knew that in all the years to follow they would look back on this time when they saw Him transfigured in His glory and they would be encouraged in their faith to hang in there no matter what.

Peter later wrote about this event in 2 Peter 1:12, "We were eyewitness of His majesty...And so we have the prophetic word made more sure." John wrote years later in John 1:14, "And we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Jesus knew that each of these disciples would need to remember this moment on the mountain, because they would face great hardship and persecution in the years to come.

James would be the first to die for his faith and John would be the last, but he would go through heavy persecution in his lifetime. Peter would in the end give his life for Christ. But they would never forget that they saw Christ in His glory and they, too, would join Him in that glory one day.

Like Jesus, we too will go through a metamorphosis one day. Because Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead He has conquered death. And when we believe upon Him He gives us eternal life. When we die we will go to be with Him forever and one day receive a brand new body which will radiate God's glory. The Bible says that we will be like Him for we shall see Him as He is (1 John 3:2).

MATTHEW 17:3-5

And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.

Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!"

Why were Moses and Elijah there talking to Jesus? These two men were great men of the Old Testament. Moses represents the Law and Elijah represents the Prophets. One of the things this tells us is that the Old Testament (the law and the prophets) testify to the fact that Jesus is the messiah or chosen one of God.

The Pointing Game

Ask for a volunteer. Explain that they only have one job; to point to what you say.

Say things like "Where's the door?", "Where's the chalkboard?", "Where's the clock?" Have the child point out each and every item you say.

Let several children have a turn. Each time emphasize that they only have one job, to point the way to each thing you call out.

Both the law and the prophets only had one job to do, point the way to Jesus. Now Jesus was here and all that Moses and Elijah had written would be completely fulfilled in Jesus, the Savior of the world. So Peter, James, and John were to see that Moses and Elijah had pointed the way to Jesus. In verse four we see Peter doing something he often tried to do.

Interruption Skit

Tell your aid or a responsible child ahead of time that you want them to keep trying to interrupt you when you start talking about Peter's actions in verse four.

As you begin to say something like "In verse 4 we see Peter doing something he often tried to do. He was trying..." Have them interrupt with things like "Boy, that Peter. Can you believe him?" And as you look at your aid and start all over, he continues to interrupt you until you shout out "You're doing exactly what Peter did!"

At this point continue with the lesson.

Peter was trying to tell Jesus what to do! He interrupts this magnificent scene with a suggestion of building three booths, one for Elijah, one for Moses, and one for Jesus so that all of them could remain there and enjoy the glory. But Peter gets interrupted too! Verse 5 says "while he was still speaking" the Father Himself interrupted Peter and told him to hear Jesus.

Peter was putting Jesus on the same level as Moses and Elijah. The Father would not permit His beloved Son to be put on the same level as men. Jesus is the supreme One. He is the one who fulfilled

the law and the prophets. There is no need for anyone or anything else. **Jesus is all we need.**

I Only Need Jesus

Tell the children you are going to go around and ask each of them a question and they only have to remember one answer, because there is only one answer.

Example: "Jenny, do you need to have a hundred friends?" She would answer "No, I only need Jesus." "Joe, do you need a lot of money?" "No, I only need Jesus." Think of a few more to ask the children.

MATTHEW 17:6-7

And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid.

But Jesus came and touched them and said, "Arise, and do not be afraid."

Have you ever been so afraid you fell on your face? It doesn't happen too often. When James, John, and Peter heard that voice out of heaven it scared them! I'm sure that it deeply impacted them. They never forgot what they saw or heard.

Verse 7 is beautiful. Jesus came and touched them and said "do not be afraid." Why shouldn't they be afraid? Because they were with Jesus. We don't need to be afraid when we are with Jesus. **Jesus is all we need.** He whispers to us too, "Don't be afraid, I'm here and I am all you need."

MATTHEW 17:8

And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

This is a very important verse even though it's short. They looked up and Elijah and Moses were gone and there was only Jesus with them. They did not need the law. They did not need a prophet. They did not need anything else now, only Jesus. The Old Testament pointed to Jesus and was and is very important. It is God's inspired word. But now the very fulfillment of those words was in their presence. **Jesus is all we need.** We only need our own personal relationship with Jesus. That's it. It's only Jesus. **Jesus is all we need.**

MATTHEW 17:9-13

Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, "Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead."

And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?"

Jesus answered and said to them, "Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things."

"But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands."

Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.

As they walked down the mountain, Jesus told them not to tell anyone what they saw up on the mountain until He had risen from the dead. These three disciples were still a little perplexed. They had heard that Elijah would come first to prepare things for Jesus to establish His kingdom and they wanted to know if seeing Elijah up there on the mountain was the coming they had heard about. Jesus answered their question.

Yes, Elijah would come; John the Baptist was the spiritual picture of Elijah when he came to prepare the way for Christ's ministry on earth. Both Elijah and John the Baptist had pointed the way to Jesus. They wanted to show all of mankind that **Jesus is all we need**.

Sometimes we can get a little confused like Peter did. Sometimes we think that we need more than Jesus. Maybe we think we need to be really, really good and then we can have Jesus as our Savior. Jesus lets us know that He is all we need, just the way we are. We can't clean ourselves up to be good enough. We must just come and say, "Jesus you are all I need." He did everything we need when He died on that cross as the total payment for our sins. **Jesus is all we need**.

No matter what we face in life, Jesus will be all we need, now and forever. Jesus Christ wants to encourage our faith to day just like He did when He took Peter, John, and James up onto that mountain with Him to behold His glory. We can remember how glorious He is and we can know that **Jesus is all we need**.

“I Only Need Jesus” Bookmarks

Pre-cut as many bookmark shaped pieces of cardstock as the number of children in your class. Have them write down on the marker, “I Only Need Jesus.” For younger children, have this pre-written on the markers.

Have your class color and draw situations that they can think of in which they need to be reminded that they only need Jesus on the markers.

Cut out pieces of contact paper to cover the bookmark. This will give it the feel of being laminated. Punch a hole in the top center using a hole-punch and then use a piece of ribbon or yarn to tie to the bookmark through the hole.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of their dependence on Jesus and ask the Lord to come and touch and say to each one, "Do not be afraid, I am all you need."