

Who's In The Picture?

“...they saw no one, except Jesus”
Matthew 17:8 (NIV)

I have some family photos taken in the late 1800's. I received them from my grandmother when she was alive and I was living with her. I know they are relatives but I have no idea who they were.

How I regret the fact that I didn't ask my grandmother at the time so I could have written their names on the back of the photos. All I can do now is look at them and wonder who's in the picture.

The verse today speaks of a remarkable incident in the lives of Peter, James and John. In the preceding chapter (Matthew 16) Peter had received a stinging rebuke from the Saviour because he tried to tell the Lord that He would not go to Jerusalem and be crucified. Jesus had spoken to the disciples about the cross and His crucifixion that was going to take place in a few months time. Peter had rejected the very idea.

The wonderful grace of our Lord is seen in the fact that a few days after He rebuked Peter He gave Peter the privilege of going with Him to the Mount of Transfiguration. The scene in Matthew 17 is of Jesus being transformed. Peter and the two other disciples witnessed the appearance of Jesus

becoming luminous or shining like the sun. They were frightened by the change in Jesus' appearance.

Then they saw Moses and Elijah and heard them talking to Jesus about His coming death in Jerusalem (Luke 9:31). Jesus was very concerned that Peter be fully restored to Him after the rebuke recorded in Matthew 16, and also that Peter would come to accept what Jesus had said about his death.

There is a lesson we can take from this action of Jesus helping Peter accept the truth of the cross. We learn here that sometimes when sorrow comes our way and we rebel against the Lord's sovereign will, we may rest assured that the Lord will give us further opportunity to submit to what He is doing in our lives.

Peter tried to change Jesus' mind about the cross and insisted that Jesus would not go through with the crucifixion. It was clearly an act of rebellion on Peter's part. Although Jesus did rebuke Peter immediately, He did not reject Peter.

When the Lord rebukes one of his children it is always with the intention of producing positive change. However the Lord also encourages us for

the same reason and Peter's privilege of attending with the others on the Mount of Transfiguration was just such an encouragement.

The scene in Matthew 17 was obviously frightening for the disciples at first, but it became a restorative action to Peter. When the vision ended they all heard the voice from heaven telling them to listen to Jesus (Matthew 17:5). Thus Peter had it reaffirmed to him that what Jesus said was to be accepted and not rejected as he had done a few days earlier.

What every weary child of God needs is to have a clear vision of Jesus without anything or any one else in the picture. Pray for yourself today that you will have a clear vision of Jesus and that something of His glory will be seen by you. Pray that you will have a submissive spirit to what the Lord brings into your life whether you like it or not.

As long as you see the glory of our Lord, you will find it much easier to cope with the problems you face in life.

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