



## Life Group Study Notes

### “Great Faith: ”

Sr. Ps. James Lowe - January 13, 2019

#### Warm Up (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question to answer, or ask another. No right or wrong answers.

- What was a high point of your past year?
- Did you have a low point during this past year? If so, what was it?
- What is one important life lesson that you learned this past year?

#### Word (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at [www.bethelworld.org](http://www.bethelworld.org)

Matthew 17:1-9, 14-20 ESV

*And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. And Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and have no fear." And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only. And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, "Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead."*

*And when they came to the crowd, a man came up to him and, kneeling before him, said, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he has seizures and he suffers terribly. For often he falls into the fire, and often into the water. And I brought him to your disciples, and they could not heal him." And Jesus answered, "O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him here to me." And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him, and the boy was healed instantly. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" He said to them, "Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you."*

The disciples had an extraordinary spiritual experience with Jesus on the mountain. Peter's response was typical of most of us. He wanted to stay there. But Jesus had a bigger purpose in mind than merely blessing Peter, James, and John. He was intent on fulfilling God's mission to redeem and save people.

This experience was granted to Peter, James, and John by God in order to affirm Jesus' identity and to strengthen them in light of Jesus' imminent crucifixion, so that they might engage more confidently in Jesus' mission. Jesus was especially determined to go to the cross to secure eternal redemption for lost, sinful humanity and to make possible the multiplication of his ministry to people through the work his disciples would carry on.

The very next encounter that Jesus and the three disciples experienced underscores all of this. Human pain and suffering confronted them immediately. The disciples who had been left behind were not able to address and help those who were hurting. Jesus, on the other hand, was able to deliver and help them immediately. He is the ultimate solution to all of humanity's problems, all of which directly or indirectly stem from our collective and individual sin.

Knowing who Jesus is and understanding what his sinless life and crucifixion have accomplished is essential to our being able to effectively work with him to advance God's mission. Jesus wanted his disciples to help him extend his redemptive mission. Their inability to do so on this occasion arose from their lack of faith. Hence, knowing and experiencing Jesus is crucial to being able to do the works of God.

Jesus pointed out that prayer was necessary to engender the faith needed to deliver the boy from his demonic suffering and torment. Prayer is not an impersonal spiritual exercise. Rather, it is the cultivation of a real personal relationship with our Creator-Redeemer. Through prayer we can encounter Jesus and consequently grow in our confidence regarding his mission and our authorization to extend his redemptive work to others.

Mountain top spiritual experiences are meant to propel us into a hurting world, armed with the knowledge of Jesus as the one who comes to deliver and redeem people, and that Jesus wants to do this through us. Let us therefore seek him and thank him whenever he blesses us with special moments in his presence. But let us then go on to reach out to others with the truth of the Gospel and the power of the Holy Spirit to set them free!

### **Discussion (10-15 minutes)**

**Choose one of the points below, and discuss how the lesson applies to our lives.**

- What are some benefits you've experienced from special encounters with Jesus?
- How have special encounters with Jesus helped you minister to others?
- What is the most difficult ministry challenge you are currently facing?

### **Prayer (10-15 minutes)**

**Pray any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.**

- Thank God for special encounters with Jesus.
- Ask God to increase your confidence in ministering to others.
- Ask God to open your eyes to the spiritual needs of others and to use you to help them.