

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 20 (May 14-20, 2017)

We will continue where we left off in the study of Simon Peter from Matthew and Luke.

Sunday, May 14 (read Matthew 17:1-4)

Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” (Matthew 17:4)

In today’s reading, Jesus chooses His closest three disciples and leads them up a high mountain for a special revelation (v. 1). In their presence, the Lord is transfigured, and they see Him in His glorified form. I like to say that as He stood there praying, God leaked out of Him. Moses and Elijah also appear and talk with the Lord about events to come (v. 2-3; see also Luke 9:30-31). They probably talk, not only about His coming death and resurrection, but also about the coming tribulation when these two men will be witnesses for Jesus (see Revelation 11:1-12). Peter suggests that the disciples should build a church to honor each of the three men (v. 4), but as we will see in tomorrow’s devotion, the church is to be built on Jesus Christ alone.

Monday, May 15 (read Matthew 17:5-6)

“This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased. Listen to Him!” (Matthew 17:5b)

God the Father sets the frightened disciples straight with a proclamation from Heaven, almost identical to the one He had made at the baptism of Jesus (v. 5; see Matthew 3:17). Moses and Elijah were both great men of God and they will have an important role to play during the tribulation, but the Church of Jesus Christ is to be built only on the Lord. “For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 3:11). Dr. Luke adds a detail to the story that Matthew and Mark omit: The disciples are sleeping on the job just like they will be in the Garden of Gethsemane, reminding us that the power of these special moments comes from the Lord and not from us (Luke 9:32; 22:45-46). We will conclude the story of The Transfiguration in tomorrow’s devotion.

Tuesday, May 16 (read Matthew 17:7-9)

When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus. (Matthew 17:8)

There’s nothing like the touch of Jesus to calm our fears (v. 7). In the Bible, you will find the words, “Don’t be afraid,” in one form or another, 365 times. In addition, Jesus tells us, “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:20b). What do we have to fear? The printed verse is my favorite for KLUFROG (Keep Looking Up! Fully Rely On God!). When we look around, we are afraid of the world events taking place in the lower story; however, when we look up, we can see prophecy being fulfilled in the Upper Story. Determine today that your eyes will be set on Him and His promises from this day forward (see Hebrews 12:1-2).

Wednesday, May 17 (read Matthew 17:24-27)

“But so that we may not offend them, go to the lake and throw out your line. Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth and you will find a four-drachma coin. Take it and give it to them for my tax and yours.” (Matthew 27:27)

As we studied from Luke 5:1-11, Jesus has already shown Peter one miracle out on the lake. Now He is about to show the proud fisherman that He can use his natural talent to take care of taxes. The tax collectors have set another trap for the Lord (v. 24), but the all-knowing Savior is ready for anything they can throw at Him. He questions Peter as to who is required to pay the temple tax (v. 25). The fisherman replies that sons are exempt from paying it; therefore, as the Son of God, Jesus is exempt from the tax, but, even so, to avoid offending them, He sends Peter to the lake to catch a fish that He has already prepared for this occasion (v. 27). The tax is paid and His critics are silenced, at least for a short time.

Thursday, May 18 (read Luke 22:19-24)

Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. (Luke 22:24)

You will recognize today's passage as the event that takes place in the Upper Room where Jesus transforms the Passover into the first communion. The Lord blesses the bread, breaks it and says, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me” (v. 19). He then blesses the cup (Matthew 26:27) and says, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you” (v. 20). He then prophesies that one of the disciples will betray Him, but they have no idea that it is Judas (v. 23). In that tense atmosphere, a dispute breaks out over who is the greatest (v. 24). You can be sure that Peter and John are right in the middle of this selfish discussion. They have come a long way from their days of fishing on the lake, but they still have a lot to surrender. We will complete this in the next devotion.

Friday, May 19 (read Luke 22:24-32)

“Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.” (Luke 22:31)

Jesus tips us off as to who is leading the dispute at the table by His response to Peter. First He gives an illustration to teach them that He and they are here to serve, not to be served. They will have powerful positions in the kingdom, where they will sit as judges over the twelve tribes of Israel (v. 24-30). Then Jesus turns directly to Peter and addresses him by his old, worldly name (Simon), because His disciple is not acting like Peter, the rock. Jesus tells Simon that Satan has asked for permission to test him. The great news is that Satan has to ask for permission to tempt **any** follower of Christ! Sustained by the intercessory prayers of the Lord, Peter's **faith** will not fail even though his actions will. After Jesus allows Peter's pride to be broken, he will become a powerful apostle for the cause of the gospel.

Saturday, May 20 (read Luke 22:33-38)

But he replied, “Lord I am ready to go with you to prison and to death.” (Luke 22:33)

Peter is so self-confident that he declares his readiness to die for Jesus, if that is necessary. The Lord gently predicts Peter's denial (v. 34), an event that will take place before the night is over. Then, the Lord tells His disciples that everything is about to change. Up until now, their mission has been peaceful, but in a few minutes, there will be violence initiated by those who are sent to arrest Jesus. He reminds His followers that the Scriptures have already foretold these events, just like all the other activities of the past three years or so (v. 37). They already have two swords among them (v. 38), one of which is by the side of Simon Peter, as we will see next week.