

## When Glory Comes Down

Matthew 17:14-23 - NCBC, October 18, 2020

Main Point: **The Lord of glory enters our brokenness to make us whole.**

- **You are never too broken for Jesus (14-17)**
  - Sin's consequences are tragic
  - But His mercy is more
- **Jesus has the power to deliver you (18-20)**
  - No obstacle is too great
  - Only believe that God is able
- **Jesus has done everything to deliver you (21-23)**
  - He died your death
  - He was raised for your life

Application: **Lord, please help me to believe in You! (Mark 9:24)**

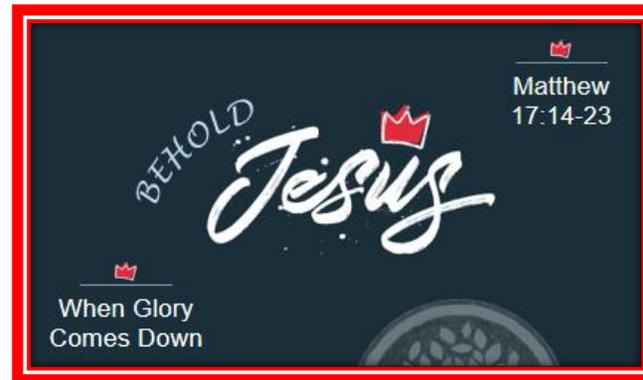
- For my own wholeness
- For others' wholeness

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### Opening Announcements:

- **Remember to visit [mynCBC.org](http://mynCBC.org)** and follow our NCBC Facebook page to stay informed on all ministry/event updates during this season of careful regathering.
- **Women's Refresh Event – November 6<sup>th</sup> 6:30pm.** Ladies, please mark your calendars and plan to attend this refreshing fall event!

<<His Mercy is More>>



**How good it is to sing about God's mercy.** When Jesus gave us eternal life, it wasn't because we did something right to deserve it. No – we are a forgiven and redeemed people simply by the mercy of God alone.

So let's continue worshipping our merciful God by opening our Bibles to **Matthew chapter 17** where we consider what happens *When Glory Comes Down*.

I want to especially welcome those who worshipping in our Extra Precautions Chapel or online. For those online, please use the links alongside the livestream for fill-in-the-blank sermon notes, the preaching manuscript, and children's coloring pages. At anytime you may pause this video, print those files, and then rejoin our worship with those notes in front of you.

Last week we looked at Jesus' transfiguration on the mountain-top in the first 13 verses of this chapter. We learned how God reveals Himself to us so that we might die to ourselves. We saw a vision of Jesus as He truly is, in the glory of His Father – affirmed by Moses and Elijah to be the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets, and affirmed by the Father's voice to be the authoritative revelation of God to man: so then "Listen to Him."

But as they started back down the mountain in **verse 9**, Jesus explained that the fullest revelation of His glory to the world was going to be delayed ...until after His death. Jesus must suffer and die in the place of sinners before others will behold His divine glory. The cross must come before the crown. Suffering before splendor.

The disciples were struggling to understand all of this. A Messiah who was a suffering servant... who was purposefully delaying His right to reign as King, was so different from how they had been taught. Jesus helped them understand that the prophet Malachi's prophecy of a Messianic forerunner<sup>1</sup> had already been fulfilled through John the Baptist's ministry, and so indeed the time was now for the Messiah to reveal Himself...but not in reigning glory but first as a submissive sacrifice for the sins of all His people.

This all brings us to consider **verses 14-23** today. And this scene is so fascinating. Last week we were on the mountaintop of glory...today we descend into the valley of brokenness, and need, and Satanic oppression. This scene reminds us of what happened when Moses received the law from God in all of His glory at the top of Mt. Sinai, only to come down from the mountain and find the people in wicked turmoil in the valley below.<sup>2</sup>

So if you're able, I'd invite you to stand for the public reading of God's Word, as I read from the ESV, starting in **Matthew 17 verse 14**:

*14 And when they came to the crowd, a man came up to him and, kneeling before him, 15 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. 16 And I brought him to your disciples, and they could not heal him." 17 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." 18 And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him, and the boy was healed instantly.*

*19 Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" 20 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."*

*22 As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men, 23 and they will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day." And they were greatly distressed.*

This is the reading of God's Word. **Let's Pray Together.**

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Please hear the tenderness in my voice as I ask you this morning, Are you broken? Is your soul aching inside due to something that just isn't right? Do you feel like you're just trying to hold all the pieces together so others won't know just how truly broken you are?

We experience life's brokenness in so many different ways. Disease or physical weaknesses. Financial debts or loss. Relationships failing. Divorce, prodigal children, a distant or abusive spouse or parent.

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<sup>1</sup> Malachi 4:5-6  
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<sup>2</sup> Exodus 32:7-10ff

Sometimes we experience this world's brokenness through the profound grief of death. An accident. Or a suicide. Or a child taken from us outside of our control.

Or sometimes we encounter this world's brokenness whenever we look in the mirror. When we count the cost of all the consequences of our own decisions... or we listen again to those voices that tell us we are nothing but a failure or a freak.

Loved ones... the longer you live on this earth the more you will travel deep and dark valleys of brokenness. No one gets a hall-pass. Every person living on this sin-cursed planet will eventually have their heart broken. Sin and suffering do not discriminate, and their shattering blows fall on every soul.

So, today as we've gathered to worship King Jesus... are you conscious of your brokenness? Is your soul crying out for help and hope? Do you long to be made whole?

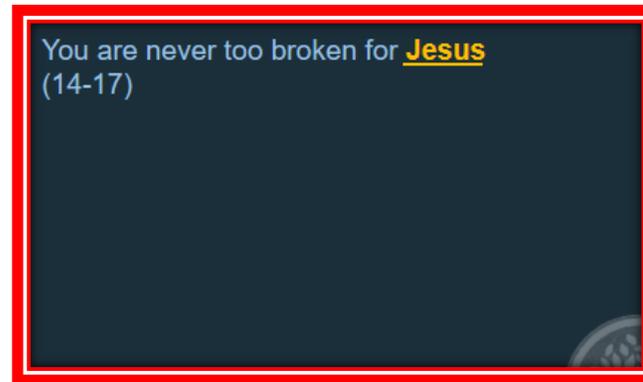
You see, there's some really good news for us in **Matthew 17**. In these brief verses, we learn that,



The Lord of glory enters our brokenness to make us whole.

Here Jesus descends from the Mount of Transfiguration into the valley of brokenness, and mercifully gives life, freedom, and resurrection hope.

So please, hear the word of the Lord as we first consider **verses 14-17** which teach that,



You are never too broken for Jesus.

It doesn't matter what other people may say. It doesn't even matter what you are telling yourself. Listen friends... no matter what you've done, or who you've become...or what you have experienced... You are never too broken for Jesus.

Picture this scene in **verse 14**.

Remember Jesus and His disciples didn't attend the Feast of Tabernacles at Jerusalem this year. Instead,

they were far North – outside Caesarea Philippi,<sup>3</sup> where Jesus had invited Peter, James, and John to do a prayer retreat with Him up on Mount Hermon.<sup>4</sup>

The remaining 9 disciples were left to continue ministering to the people while Jesus and the other 3 were away.

Now, the immediate biblical context hints that this “show of favoritism” may have excited some jealousy, or bitterness, or selfish posturing among the 9 disciples who were NOT invited to go with Jesus on his mountain-top retreat.<sup>5</sup>

If we use some sanctified imagination, it’s not hard to imagine how the 9 disciples may have started to struggle, especially as they were left behind with the needy crowds as one day turned into another<sup>6</sup> and Jesus and Peter, James, and John continued their retreat.

But remember, one year earlier in **Matthew 10**, Jesus had given these disciples the supernatural power to *heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, and cast out demons*.<sup>7</sup> So the ministry was left in good hands while he was away, right?

But as Jesus, Peter, James, and John come down the mountain they see a large crowd<sup>8</sup> in quite a commotion around the 9 disciples. **Mark 9** says explicitly that the disciples were in the middle of an argument with some scribes! What a mess. The disciples who were supposed to represent kingdom righteousness were now just slinging verbal mud back and forth with the religious leaders. *Their sinful hearts had wrongly convinced them that kingdom ministry consisted of winning an argument, rather than humbly depending on the power of God!*

As soon as the crowd spots Jesus,<sup>9</sup> they run to Jesus with ecstatic relief. And when Jesus asks, “What are you arguing about?”<sup>10</sup> one desperate, broken father falls on his knees before Jesus and cries out,

*Lord, have mercy on my only son<sup>11</sup>...*

And then this tragic picture of brokenness gets unpacked:

If we combine everything from the parallel Gospel accounts in **Mark 9** and **Luke 9**, we discover that this little boy – the only son of this desperate father – was possessed by a demon since childhood.<sup>12</sup> This demonic spirit made the boy deaf and mute<sup>13</sup> and often tried to

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<sup>3</sup> Compare Matthew 16:13 with 17:1

<sup>4</sup> While the mountain isn’t named in Scripture, I believe Mount Hermon is the mostly likely location for Jesus’ transfiguration since it is very close to Caesarea Philippi and it is the only mountain in that area which could be called “a high mountain” (Mt Hermon is ~9300’ elevation) in 17:1.

<sup>5</sup> C.f. Matthew 18:1; Mark 9:33-35; Luke 9:46. Perhaps these sins of the heart were partly to blame for their failure to connect with God’s power in casting out the demon? C.f. James 3:13-18

<sup>6</sup> We don’t know how many days Jesus and his disciples were away. But Luke 9:37 tells us that they were at least gone for one-overnight, and Luke’s

reference to 8 days in Luke 9:28 (rather than the 6 days referenced in Matthew 17:1 and Mark 9:2) *may* hint that they were up on the mountain for a couple of days.

<sup>7</sup> Matthew 10:8

<sup>8</sup> Mark 9:14

<sup>9</sup> Mark 9:15

<sup>10</sup> Mark 9:16

<sup>11</sup> Luke 9:38

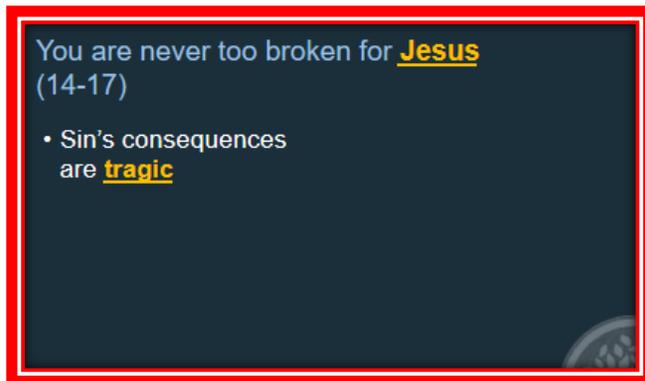
<sup>12</sup> Mark 9:21

<sup>13</sup> Mark 9:17, 25

destroy him through violent seizures.<sup>14</sup> Many times the demon caused him to have a seizure while he was standing near a fire... so we can imagine the burns and the scars on this little boy's body—which only added to his social isolation and bullying. At other times, the demon tried to destroy him by making him seize while he was next to water... trying to drown the boy by starving him of life-giving oxygen.

So please don't read **verses 15** too quickly. Allow your soul to feel the pain of this father as he cries out for God's mercy. If you've ever seen one of your loved ones have a seizure... you know how scary and helpless you feel in that moment.

Figuratively, I believe this little boy pictures our own broken souls in slavery to sin. This little boy personifies the tragic suffering that is now present in our lives due to Satan's evil ministry of lies and death.



You might write this down: **Sin's consequences are tragic.** The Bible isn't saying that all seizures are caused by demonic forces, but in this case they were. And *it is true* to understand that all sin and suffering in this world is a tragic consequence of Satan's influence. There was no suffering or death before sin,<sup>15</sup> and Adam and Eve's sin<sup>16</sup> caused a tragic amount of brokenness and evil to enter into human experience.

Then read **verse 16**,

*And I brought him to your disciples, and they could not heal him.*

This little boy was so broken that not even 9 disciples of Jesus could heal him! Even though these same disciples had cast out demons many times before when Jesus wasn't with them,<sup>17</sup> this time something was different. No matter how hard they tried, they couldn't give healing or freedom to this young boy. And so they resorted to arguing with the mocking scribes, ...all while a soul was dying in Satan's grasp before them.

Now listen dear friend. You are never too broken for Jesus. Yes, sin's consequences are tragic, and every attempt you've made at pursuing wholeness through religious efforts so far in your life may have failed...

<sup>14</sup> Mark 9:18, 20, 26; Luke 9:39, 42

<sup>15</sup> Genesis 2:16-17; 3:17, 19; Romans 5:12, 14, 17; c.f. Revelation 21:4

<sup>16</sup> C.f. the biblical account of mankind's fall into sin in Genesis 3

<sup>17</sup> Mark 6:13; cf. Luke 10:17-20 where they will again experience power over demons in the near future

You are never too broken for **Jesus**  
(14-17)

- Sin's consequences are **tragic**
- But His mercy is **more**

**But His mercy is more!** In **verse 17** Jesus groans and laments the lack of faith and distortion that exists all around him in this human valley of need. As the Lord of glory descends into the chaotic brokenness of sinners like you and me, He grieves deeply the broken perversion of unbelief all around Him.

But notice... Jesus doesn't condemn or judge or leave us in our broken and hopeless condition. Instead He invites,

*"Bring him here to me."*

Only mercy cries out, *Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*<sup>18</sup>

Not because the father or the boy deserved help...not because the disciples deserved help...but only because of His mercy and grace... Jesus invites broken people to find wholeness in Him.

Friend... the mercy of Jesus is more than Satan's power. His mercy is more than your present suffering. His mercy is more powerful than any of your religious efforts. His

mercy is more than anything you could expect or dream for. Although sin's consequences are tragic, you are never too broken for Jesus, because His mercy is more.

In other words,

Jesus has the **power** to deliver you  
(18-20)

**Jesus has the power to deliver you.** The Lord of glory enters our brokenness to bind Satan and give us freedom from sin!

**Verse 18** states it very "matter of fact:"

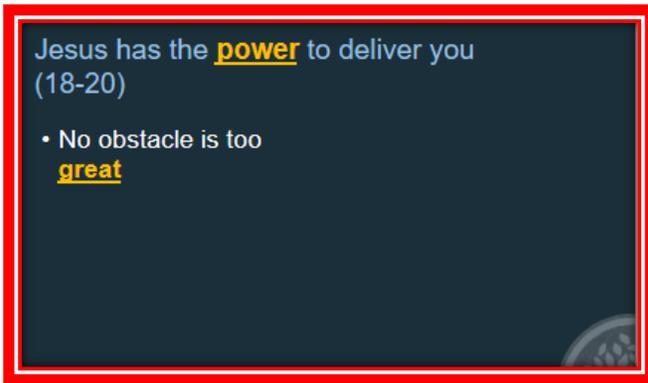
*And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him, and the boy was healed instantly.*

No more seizures, no more foaming at the mouth, no more grinding of teeth, or falling into fire or water.

Behold the glory of God which enters our brokenness to make us whole again!!

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<sup>18</sup> Matthew 11:28



No obstacle is too **great** for Jesus. If your marriage is falling apart, go to Jesus. If your child is enslaved with sinful addictions... go to Jesus. If disease is destroying your body, go to Jesus. If anger or depression is destroying your life, go to Jesus. If you are addicted to video gaming, or gambling, or pornography, or some mind-altering substance...go to Jesus! Jesus has the power to deliver you from Satan's deadly influence.

The Lord of glory enters our brokenness to make us whole, and Jesus can do what no one else can do... He can deliver you from the power and penalty of sin.

Now then this truth begs some serious questions, doesn't it? If Jesus has the power to deliver us, and no obstacle is too great for Jesus...then why is my life so hard? If Jesus has the power to deliver, then why do little boys still suffer seizures today? Why does evil seem to be winning on so many different fronts on earth today? Why do so many of my prayers go unanswered?

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<sup>19</sup> Some manuscripts add, "and fasting." However, it seems the most reliable early manuscripts do not have this phrase. Therefore the best English translations omit this phrase from Mark 9:29. NOTE: Matthew 17:21 is also omitted in the most reliable and earliest manuscripts; therefore Page **7a** of 13

In fact, this is the question the nine disciples privately ask Jesus in **verse 19**,

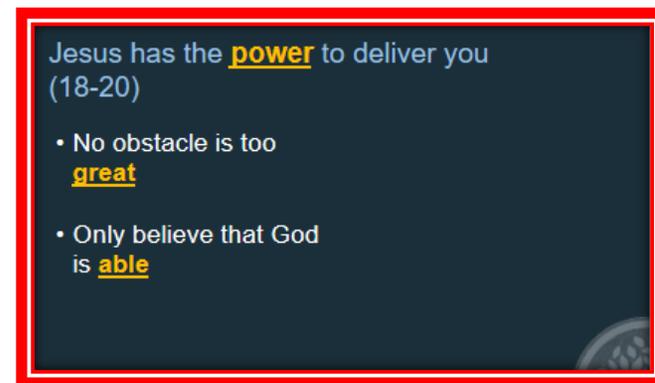
*Why couldn't we cast out the demon?*

And Jesus answers in **verse 20**,

*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.*

In **Mark 9:29**, Jesus adds, *This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.*<sup>19</sup>

So listen carefully friends. No obstacle is too great for Jesus...we must,



Only believe that God is **able**

the best English translations omit this verse with an explanatory footnote. While it is best to omit this verse from Matthew 17:21 due to its not being part of Matthew's original gospel text, its inclusion in Mark's gospel does give credibility to the truthfulness of the verse.

You see the problem for the 9 disciples, and with us today, is that we do not truly believe that Jesus is enough for us. We are a people of little faith and little prayer. We do not believe that God is able to do what is humanly impossible.

This is actually the fifth time in Matthew's gospel that Jesus rebukes his disciples for their "little faith."<sup>20</sup>

Now "little faith" means weak faith. The reason they couldn't cast out this demon was because their faith was such a poor *quality*.

Even if your faith was small in *quantity*, like a mustard seed, it can connect you with the greatest power of God in your life. After all, the living germ inside the smallest seed is able to produce a large plant.

But you disciples are trying to minister disconnected from my power. You say you believe in me, but your faith is of a poor quality. You are trusting more what you can see and touch here on this earth than eternal kingdom realities. You are trusting your ministry experience, your ministry methods, or even your own faith itself, more than you are trusting in the invisible power of God.

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<sup>20</sup> Technically, the other four times are in a different form than the word in Matthew 17:20, but all five uses are during Jesus' rebuke of His disciples for not trusting Him with their present needs on earth. C.f. Matthew 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; and 16:8.

<sup>21</sup> Isaiah 40:4; 1 Corinthians 13:2

<sup>22</sup> Here is a fuller biblical definition of faith, which I've taught before: Faith is believing the word of God (Romans 10:17), and acting upon it (Romans 1:5; 16:26; James 1:22-25), no matter how you feel (Hebrews 11),

Do you ever trust yourself to bring about God's kingdom on earth? You will pray whenever you recognize that only God has the power to raise the dead!

The power for transformation is in Jesus...not in the disciples. The power for restoration and rescue is in God, not in my faith or my ministry strategies.

"Able to move mountains" was a common figure of speech in the Ancient Near East for overcoming significant difficulties.<sup>21</sup> And so Jesus is teaching that there is no limit to God's power to bring wholeness to human brokenness on earth. Loved one – God is able to make you whole – you must only believe on Him!

However, don't misunderstand faith. Faith is not something that you do that puts God in your debt, or makes God serve you. Faith is humble dependence.<sup>22</sup> Letting go of your self-reliance...and humbly trusting God to bring about His eternal purposes<sup>23</sup> through you which you could never do yourself.

You see, the "Name it and claim it" heresy teaches that if we just deposit enough faith coins into heaven God will give us whatever we demand of Him. But Jesus is teaching His disciples to humble themselves, turn from their earth-bound thinking,<sup>24</sup> and truly believe that God is

trusting God to bring about a good result (Romans 5:2; 8:28-29) for His glory (1 Corinthians 10:31-33; 1 Peter 1:7) in His good time (1 Peter 5:6, 10-11).

<sup>23</sup> 1 John 5:14-15

<sup>24</sup> I find it fascinating that worldliness (living for what I can physically experience here and now) is the opposite of faith (living for what God promises to do there and then).

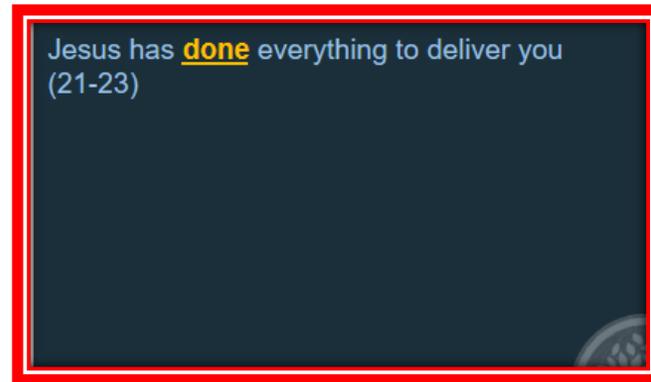
able to bring wholeness to any earthly brokenness for His greater glory and our eternal good.

This is why even the smallest amount of faith, or humble dependence upon God, first prays then obeys...for faith is the assurance of things hoped for, and the conviction of kingdom realities still unseen.<sup>25</sup>

So from the windshield of brokenness in your life,<sup>26</sup> I urge you to sincerely trust that God's power is able to ultimately deliver you from Satan's influence. To strengthen our faith, God will often make us wait before He shows us His power. There are definitely times when it will appear that evil is winning in our lives. But faith continues to believe that Jesus has the power to deliver you according to His good purposes, even while wait for Him through the storm and in the night.<sup>27</sup>

Jesus wants to make sure we understand His promises to deliver us are not just some speak-easy platitudes. And so, in **verses 22-23**, He again tells the disciples that His deliverance of His people requires that He first be delivered up Himself as their ultimate sacrifice.

For Jesus not only has the power to deliver you,



Jesus has done everything to deliver you.

As Jesus and His disciples are making their way back to their home base in Capernaum,<sup>28</sup> Jesus says in **verse 22**,

*The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day.*

And the disciples, who still didn't understand that Jesus' death and resurrection were the only way for them to be delivered from Satan's power, were greatly distressed. **Mark 9:32** says they were afraid to talk more about this.

But consider carefully how Jesus delivers Himself up in order to deliver you.

First,

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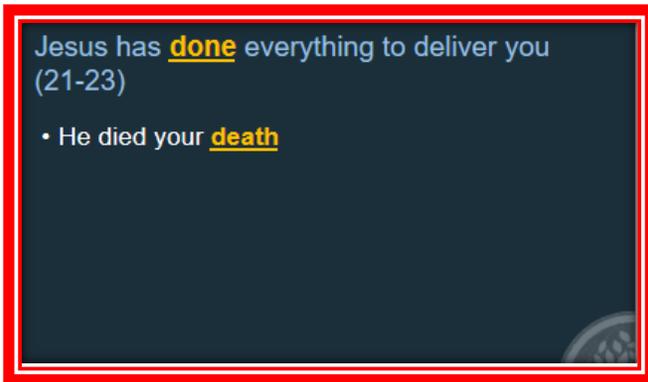
<sup>25</sup> Hebrews 11:1

<sup>26</sup> 1 Corinthians 13:12

<sup>27</sup> Psalm 130; Habakkuk 3:17-18. C.f. The Song "I will wait for You

(*Psalm 130*)" by Shane and Shane – [www.rb.gy/5up7oi](http://www.rb.gy/5up7oi)

<sup>28</sup> Matthew 17:24



He died your death.

Jesus was killed by Roman soldiers at the request of Israel's religious leaders. Jesus is preparing His disciples – He is going to die in Jerusalem!

But Jesus is God! His glory was just revealed on the mountain-top. No human being can stand before the fullest expression of His glory...how then is it possible for humans to murder the very Son of God?!

Because Jesus chose to die. He delivered Himself over to be our sacrifice. To die in our place. As the Lamb of God who takes away our sins<sup>29</sup> by fully absorbing God's wrath which our sins deserved, and intentionally and voluntarily dying our death for us.

Dear church – Jesus' death on the cross was not an accident. Jesus willingly laid down His life by His own doing.<sup>30</sup> Jesus kept talking to His disciples about the

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<sup>29</sup> John 1:29

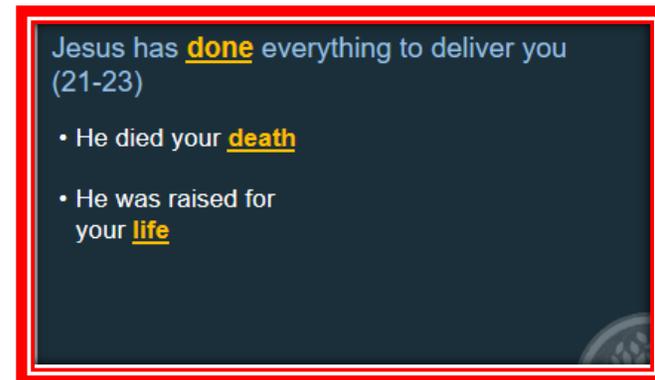
<sup>30</sup> John 10:15-18

<sup>31</sup> John 12:27; Acts 2:23

<sup>32</sup> Romans 6:6

cross to try to help them understand that the cross was always God's plan.<sup>31</sup>

The death of Christ brought sin's power to nothing so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.<sup>32</sup> Now, for all who believe that Jesus' death satisfied God's wrath against your sin,<sup>33</sup> there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.<sup>34</sup> Jesus has done everything to deliver you by dying your death and,



He was raised for your life

**Verse 23** clearly prophesies of Jesus' resurrection three days after He dies to pay for our sins.

So dear child of God – consider afresh the fact that you are never too broken for Jesus. There is no grave which is beyond the reach of His resurrection power! There is no tragic amount of suffering or sin that cannot be transformed into an eternal weight of glory through the resurrection power of Jesus Christ!<sup>35</sup>

<sup>33</sup> 1 John 2:2

<sup>34</sup> Romans 8:1

<sup>35</sup> 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

You must look no longer to earthly resources or your own abilities for your hope before God.



The Lord of glory has come down to enter our brokenness, and make us whole through His substitutionary death and resurrection!

Will you believe that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too may walk in newness of life?<sup>36</sup>

O, may we join in the chorus led by this brokenhearted father of this demon-possessed boy, and cry out today,



Lord, please help me to believe in You!

In **Mark 9:24** this father cries out, *Lord, I believe... help my unbelief!* And so likewise we should call out today – Lord, help me to believe that You draw near to make me whole. Help me to believe in You,



For my own wholeness and For others' wholeness.

First for my own brokenness, and then for the tragic brokenness in another's life...Jesus is the answer. Shalom, or complete wholeness is only found through

<sup>36</sup> Romans 6:4ff

believing in Jesus' power which has been made effective in our lives through His death and resurrection.

So today the Lord of glory has revealed His power and His plan to set people free from Satan's grip and deliver us from sin. Will you come and trust Jesus with all your brokenness today? Will you repent of your self-reliance and sin, and cast yourself entirely in humble dependence upon the finished work of Jesus Christ?

As our band returns to lead us in our response of song, I'm going to invite them to play instrumentally while we take a moment to pray together as a church.

Right now, let's cry out to God believing that no one is ever out of reach of Jesus' mercy. Let's allow our belief that Jesus has the power to deliver us, to fuel our prayers even now... as we trust that Jesus has done everything necessary to deliver us and our loved ones from Satan's grasp.

So please take a few minutes right now to pray that God would help us to believe Him for our own wholeness, and for others' wholeness as well. I'd encourage you to each pray aloud while the music plays, and then after praying together we'll go right into singing together.

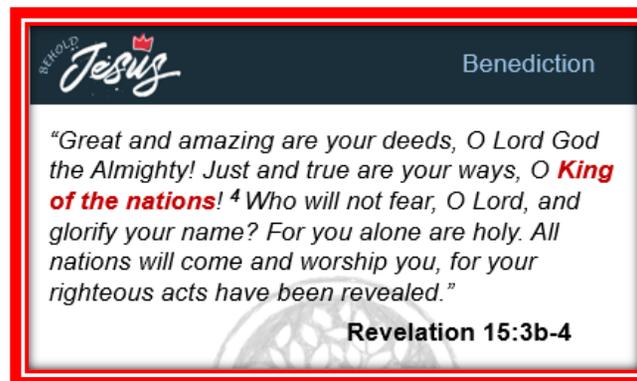
**Let's pray.**

<<All I have is Christ>>

Next week: Stephen Katz from Jews for Jesus bringing message on Isaiah 40!

*Remember to take advantage of the online Downloads and links!*

**Let's pray our benediction together as we dismiss.**



*Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations! Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.*  
**Revelation 15:3b-4**

### **Recommended Resources on When Glory Comes Down:**

- Isaiah 40:3-5
- Matthew 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; 16:8
- Mark 9:14-32
- Luke 9:37-45
- John 10:18; 12:27; 14:12-14
- Romans 1:16-17; 10:8-13
- 2 Corinthians 4:6
- Ephesians 2:1-10
- Philippians 2:8
- James 5:16
- 1 John 4:4
  
- *Safe and Sound*, David Powlison
- *Finally Alive*, John Piper
- *What is the Gospel*, Greg Gilbert
- *Power Encounters*, David Powlison

### **Growing Deeper: Life Group Questions**

1. Matthew 17 gives us a comprehensive portrait of Jesus Christ. List and discuss five different attributes of Jesus that you observe in this chapter.
2. Read Mark 9:14-27. How does this little boy illustrate the sinner's hopeless condition under Satan's control? Do you believe that demons are still active in people's lives today?
3. Read Matthew 17:20-21. Does Jesus' promise here mean that God is obligated to give us what we want if we believe sincerely enough? Why not?
4. Read Matthew 17:22-23. What about this prediction tells us that Jesus wasn't a victim of circumstances? (c.f. Acts 2:22-24).
5. Do you believe Jesus has truly done everything necessary for your salvation? What do you believe you must still do in order to experience perfect wholeness with God forever? Pray for each other to grow in your trust of God's finished work on your behalf.