

# Week of Meetings 1974-03 Savoring Things of God

by James R. Cochrane

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing Jesus as the true Messiah and the call to align our lives with God's divine purposes over human expectations.*

**Duration:** 58:04

**Scripture:** Matthew 16:21

**Topics:** "Following Jesus", "Future Glory"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the interaction between Jesus and Peter, highlighting Peter's lack of understanding and rebuke of Jesus. The speaker emphasizes the importance of comprehending the message of Jesus and the need to follow in his footsteps. The sermon also discusses the concept of coming glory and the disciples' participation in it. The speaker concludes by pointing out the assurance of future glory and the reward for one's works, as mentioned by Jesus in the scriptures.

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## Transcript

Jesus came into the coast of Caesarea Philippi. He asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremiah, for one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ. From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples how that he must go unto Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and the chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee.

But he turned and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan. Thou art an offense unto me, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? For what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he shall reward every man according to his work. Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.

And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them. And his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.

Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here. If thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud which said, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.

Hear ye him." We will not read farther this morning, but the Lord add his blessing to this portion of his work. In the Dominican Republic, back in the late fifties, just prior to the assassination of the dictators, we happened to live for a period of time in the city of Puerto Plata on the northern coast, a very beautiful part of the Dominican Republic. And in our local church we had a choir, and in the choir a number of young, beautiful, Dominican women sang, including also a number of young men.

Some of them were very close, personal friends. My wife, Grace, and myself. And we often were with them.

We often had them in our home. I had the opportunity at that time of directing the choir, and we had great times together. As I mentioned yesterday, at the end of May in 1960, the president was assassinated, and it came to light shortly afterwards that some of our closest friends, young people, some of them in their late teens, others in their early twenties, had belonged to an underground movement in the Dominican Republic.

We had absolutely no knowledge of it. Some of them had served as messengers. Some of the girls had worked in preparation of medicines and bandages in case there might be fighting.

This had all gone on secretly behind the scenes, and some of us who lived there and knew them and had them as our closest friends were totally unaware of what they were doing. It came to us as a shock, believe me. And yet afterwards, sitting down and thinking about it, all of those families had lost one or more members under the Trujillo regime, and they had deep in their hearts a longing for freedom from this man who for over 30 years had been an absolute dictator in the Dominican Republic.

Now, very few of us who've been born and brought up in North America know what it is like to live in no circumstance. But some of these people that I've mentioned this morning would fully understand the feelings of people like Peter and John and many others in the times of the Lord Jesus. For the Jewish nation lived under the power of Rome.

Their country was dominated by Romans. They had lost that sense of independence, of national pride, and in many of these men there was a longing for freedom. There's reason to believe that at least one of the disciples of the Lord Jesus had previously belonged to a group that had sought the independence for the people of Israel.

Peter and Andrew and others, they all longed for the coming of a strong man, the Messiah, that would bring freedom, political freedom, to the people of Israel. When you remember that in John 1, and I'd like to notice the portion with you this morning, we have reference made to Andrew and to Peter. John's Gospel, chapter 1, their first encounter with the Lord Jesus.

John's Gospel, chapter 1 and verse 40, one of the two which heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is being interpreted the Christ, and he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jonah, thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, a stone.

Now, it's very difficult for us today to penetrate and understand what the first impressions were in the heart and mind of Peter when his brother came and said, We've found the Messiah. Now, that there was great spiritual understanding, it may be doubtful to accept it. It might rather have been this longing for political freedom.

And Andrew came, a responsible man, and he said to Peter, We've found the man, the Messiah, the man who will bring our longings to fulfillment. And he took Peter, brought him to the Lord Jesus, and introduced him to him. A little time went by, and then when you come to Mark's Gospel, chapter 1, you find that the Lord Jesus goes to where these men are, and he calls them to follow him in his service.

Mark's Gospel, chapter 1, verse 16, Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea, for they were fishers. And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him.

And when he had gone a little farther then, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets. And straightway he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after Jesus. And then over in chapter 2, if I remember rightly, down in verse 14, And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alpha sitting in the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me.

And he rose and followed him. Now, John 1 is the first introduction to the Lord Jesus. Mark chapter 1, they're so convinced that this is the man that they leave their professions and they follow the Lord Jesus.

Now, we've read this morning in Matthew chapter 16, and the Lord Jesus takes the disciples out to a place called Caesarea Philippi. It would appear to be that the Lord Jesus wanted to have them alone. It was to be a time of testing, to find out what they really thought about him.

Whether they considered him just to be another political leader, or whether there was some spiritual dimension to their belonging and serving the Lord Jesus. And so, when he has them alone, the Lord Jesus says in verse 13 of Matthew 16, the last part, Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am? Well, they give a number of answers, the things that they had heard amongst the people where they mingled. But then the Lord Jesus, in verse 15, makes it very personal, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter, who was often the

spokesman for the disciples, he took the initiative, and he answered very clearly, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

That is, in speaking and phrasing his answer in this way, he's drawing from the Old Testament, completely convinced that the Lord Jesus is the one promised by God in the Old Testament. The Lord Jesus responds in verse 17 by pronouncing a blessing on Peter, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood have not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven. This wasn't the usual thinking that was so prevalent in Palestine 2,000 years ago.

This just wasn't in the mind of Peter and those who were with him, another one who had appeared, who promised to bring freedom. But rather, having been touched by God, they really believed that this was the promised Messiah. The promises set forth so clearly in the Old Testament were now going to find their fulfillment in this one, the Lord Jesus, the Messiah.

Now, as you go down, verse 21, on the basis of that confession, the Lord Jesus opens his heart to begin to share with the disciples what it was going to mean to be that Messiah, the true authentic Messiah. It wasn't going to be the way that others had come and made their promises of political power and glory. The true Messiah would walk a different pathway, and so in verse 21, from that time forth, from the time of that confession of faith in the Lord Jesus, the evidence that God was working in the hearts of the disciples, Jesus began to show unto his disciples how that he must go into Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and be raised again the third day.

Now, going back to verse 17, the Lord Jesus speaks so openly, so beautifully to Peter, blessed art thou, opens his heart to bestow on Peter this special blessing, a recognition of the work of God in his life. And I can imagine in the heart of the Lord Jesus, with joy, he begins to share with the disciples what lay ahead. It would not be an easy pathway, great deal of persecution and of suffering, those that would mock and scorn him, and finally death itself, but he comes to the climax and be raised again the third day.

Now, it's evident in verse 22 that Peter probably never heard the last phrase at all, but this clear statement of what the Messiah must do shattered in that moment the great dreams that Peter had for the Messiahship. If God had touched his heart, it was also true that he still lived under the influence of men and of human thinking influenced by Satan, and so he turns to the Lord Jesus and he rebukes, and he says in verse 22, Then Peter took him and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee. But Jesus turned and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan.

Thou art an offense unto me, for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. Now, we pause here for a moment because this incident brings into focus one of the greatest tragedies of the Christian era, that a man or a woman may be touched by the Spirit of God and brought to the place of submission to the Lord Jesus to receive Him as we've been taught since Sunday school days as Savior and Lord, and yet at the same time to be an obstacle in the path of the Lord Jesus. Now, what we have in these few verses appears to be all part of what took place in a very short period of time, a clear statement of trust and confidence in the Lord Jesus.

The beginning on the part of the Lord Jesus of sharing with the disciples the great purposes of God, and then defined in Peter an improper response, for in taking the Lord Jesus aside and rebuking Him, he tried to take Him away from that purpose of God. The Lord Jesus turns and very solemnly rebukes Peter. Perhaps one of the most solemn words the Lord Jesus ever pronounced in connection with one of His own, Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offense unto me, for thou savorest not the things that be of

God, but those that be of men.

In other words, today we can be Christians and at the same time an offense to the Lord Jesus. Now, I speak very kindly this morning, and I realize that most of those who are present in this service have many more years of experience in the things of God than I have. Some of you may have a much deeper understanding of the Word of God than I have.

But as I bring this message to you this morning, I think of our young people, I think of the Christian church at large, and in our generation, as in previous generations, it is all too common that Christian people know and love the Lord Jesus. This cannot be questioned in the case of Peter. He really knew Him, and he really loved the Lord Jesus.

But at the same time, he was an offense, an obstacle in the pathway of the Lord Jesus. What the Lord Jesus wanted to do, and what He had begun to share with His disciples, was a commandment He had received from His Father. On one occasion, the Lord Jesus said, I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again.

This commandment I have received of my Father. The word commandment is the word mission. It was given to the Lord Jesus to come into the world, to lay down His life for the redemption of the human race, to take that life again, and to open the door into an eternity filled with glory and power for those who would believe in the Lord Jesus.

Now, we know in the world today that men are given missions. You, perhaps in your lifetime, have been given challenges, work, missions to do. You've dedicated yourself to that task, and you've brought it to fulfillment.

Well, the Lord Jesus had received a commandment, a mission. This was the opportunity to share it with the disciples. John 1, it's not sure just what concept they had when they came to the Lord Jesus.

We've mentioned it already. Maybe some of those men just thought of Him as another potential leader that would bring the people to freedom. Mark chapter 1, they're so convinced that they leave their work and their professions to follow the Lord Jesus to identify themselves with Him.

But Matthew chapter 16 is the test, and Peter comes through initially with flying colors. God had opened His heart and mind. This was not just another of the many who had come professing to be Messiahs, but this was the Christ promised in the Old Testament, and now standing before them, and the heart of the Lord Jesus is warm.

Blessed art thou, Simon Barjon. God has touched your heart, and then the Lord Jesus opens His heart. But Peter was still not ready, and his initial response to that unfolding of the purposes of God was negative, and he rebukes the Lord Jesus, and he seeks to take Him away from that purpose.

No wonder the Lord Jesus responded so severely. Already, prior to this incident, he had been taken under the power of the Spirit of God into the desert, and he had been tempted by the evil one. And the temptation is basically the same temptation that Peter now repeats in this particular chapter.

The evil one offered to the Lord Jesus popularity, power, the kingdoms of the world, human glory, and the Lord Jesus turned it all down out of faithfulness to the mission commended to Him by His Father, and he would not be detracted, moved from the fulfillment of that great mission. Perhaps, in a sense, in the mind

of the Lord Jesus, the temptation was passed, and now one of His close and trusted friends comes before Him and repeats the same temptation. No sorrow, no suffering, and certainly no cross in death, but rather the power and the glory of a visible kingdom right now, two thousand years ago.

This idea of a visible kingdom was prominent in the minds of the disciples. I believe it was prominent in the mind of John the Baptist. You may remember the occasion when in jail.

Not a jail like we have in our country today, but one of those dungeons of two thousand years ago. John is in prison, and his disciples bring to him the great news that Jesus had raised someone from the dead, had displayed a power that only belongs to God, and He had really brought back to life someone who was dead. Here's John in a dungeon, and they bring him the news.

And so, he chooses two of his disciples, and he tells them, now you go and find Jesus, and you ask Him, are you the Messiah, or should we look for someone else? For John, no doubt, was thinking, if He has power to raise the dead, then why am I still in a dungeon? Why hasn't He taken the reins of government? Why hasn't He brought about a revolution? Why hasn't He sent back to Rome the legions of the Roman soldiers? If He has power to raise the dead, why hasn't He ushered in the visible kingdom of God? Now, you go and find Him, and you ask Him, are you the Messiah, or should we look for another? Now, if I may share with you a personal thought this morning, I doubt very much that John really questioned the Messiahship of the Lord Jesus. Rather, he was prodding the Lord Jesus. Now, you're raising the dead.

Why don't you take the reins of government, and set up the kingdom of God? For we yearn for it. We long for it. We're weary of injustice, and cruelty, and hypocrisy.

We want to see the kingdom of God. My father told me many years ago that the answer of the Lord Jesus was so beautiful, for He took those men by the hand, so to speak, and He said, now, you spend two days with Me, or a few hours with Me. And they followed the Lord Jesus, and He went about healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, and preaching the Word of God to the poor.

And individuals were converted. That is, they were touched by the Lord Jesus. They were physically healed.

They were spiritually made whole, and individuals moved into the kingdom of God. And the answer that those two disciples must have taken back to John was, the visible kingdom is not coming now. Right now, He's touching individuals, and making them whole, and bringing them individually into relationship with God.

But John, and his disciples, and the disciples of the Lord Jesus, they longed for that moment of power, and glory, and majesty that belonged to the Messiah, and they wanted to see it now. And as Peter spoke that way to the Lord Jesus, the Lord Jesus turned to him, and He rebuked him, and said, Why? Now, the quaint King James version reads, All of us, I'm sure, know what the word savor means. You don't understand the things that be of God.

You only understand the things that be of men, and men who are influenced by faith. Thus, the tragedy that I have referred to this morning can be summed up in this way, that as Peter had been touched by God, and committed himself to the Lord Jesus, and was truly brought into a personal, dynamic relationship with the Messiah, at the same time his thinking was under the influence of ungodly men who, in turn, were influenced by faith. Thus, what he wanted now was the popularity, and the fame, and the prominence of

belonging to that visible kingdom of God.

Peter was the man of common sense, and he knew that if the Messiah should be killed, then there would be no kingdom, and without the Messiah there would be no prominent positions in the kingdom. There would be no glory if the Messiah would die. Thus, out of personal affection, and also personal interest, he seeks to detract the Lord Jesus from this great purpose of God.

Now, let me pause this morning and ask each of us today about ourselves, and then in a prayerful way let us remember the great Christian community we belong to today. This story is recorded. It was true then.

It's been true many times down through the history of the Christian church, and undoubtedly it is true in the lives of many Christian people today. This paradox of belonging to God, and loving the Lord Jesus, and at the same time not understanding the things that belong to God, if it caused indignation in the heart of the Lord Jesus two thousand years ago, it surely causes indignation today that we should know Him, and love Him, and not understand Him, not follow closely in His footsteps. Now, what does it mean to understand the things that be of God? Well, as we read down in the chapter, we find in verse 24 these words, Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world? Now, that's what Peter wanted. Peter did not want the Lord Jesus to go to the cross.

He believed, and he had reason to believe, that God had created the people of Israel to be a vehicle for blessing to all the nations of the world. Now, he wanted the Lord Jesus to restore the national dignity of Israel, and once it was restored, the blessings of God would flow through that nation right out to the whole world. For the Lord Jesus said, What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul, or his own life? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul or his life? Now, if we go carefully over the verses, beginning with verse 24, you find this threefold emphasis.

It begins with self-denial, and then the taking up of the cross. And it doesn't matter how you spiritualize it, there was no doubt that in its initial pronouncement, the Lord Jesus was referring to the possibility of martyrdom. All of those who were with the Lord Jesus knew about crucifixion.

They had seen many, many times the crosses outside of Jerusalem, and people who had died by crucifixion. Now, the Lord Jesus speaks very clearly. There must be self-denial, and that commitment to my cause that will lead a man even to give his life in that cause.

And above all, the third step to follow faithfully and closely in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus. Now, our life today, like Peter's life so long ago, can be lived selfishly. It can be lived for ourselves, and men can gain the world.

But if they do it, then they've lost the opportunity to use their life in the service of God. But those who are willing to lose their lives in the service of God, those lives count enormously in the great purposes of God, and they also bring their reward in eternity. And the man who finds that by gaining the world, he's found great profit, sooner or later will come to the conclusion that there is absolutely no profit, that he's lost what he thought was profit, and he's lost his life, which was the only opportunity he had to gain real eternal profit.

And when you come to that stage, there is nothing that you can give in exchange for that life. You have lived it, and it has gone, and it has been wasted. Now, if that sounds like a negative message, it surely is not negative, because in verse 27, the Lord Jesus points on to the assurance of coming glory.

He says in verse 27, for the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he shall reward every man according to his works. And furthermore, the Lord Jesus says, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom. Now, it's evident that none of the disciples knew what the Lord Jesus was talking about.

The great preacher G. Campbell Morgan speaks about these six days of silence between chapter 16 and chapter 17. You'll notice in chapter 1, or verse 1 of chapter 17, that after six days, there appears to be a blank period. He has suggested, and he might be right, that they were six days in which there was no fellowship, no comprehension, no communication between the disciples and the Lord Jesus.

They simply could not understand how the Messiah, the sent one of God, was going to suffer and to be killed and die. And even though the Lord Jesus had explained it in connection with himself, and then he had explained what it would mean to them if they really followed him, and then went on to speak of the coming glory, the Son of Man would come in glory. And they would participate in that glory.

They simply failed to comprehend what he was talking about. Now, let me share with you this morning that all of us who've been called to the grace of God, irrespective of age, have the opportunity in a practical way of following in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus, of experiencing day by day self-denial. You know, it comes sometimes as a shock when you listen to the world speaking in language almost identical to Christian language.

I referred last night to the conference in Rome on hunger held just a few days ago. One of the things that was emphasized over and over again was that the affluent nations of the world must learn to deny themselves if the poor nations of the world are going to have even the chance for survival. Thus, the world is beginning to speak about self-denial for the common good.

But we who are Christian people have been called by the Lord Jesus, and one of the fundamental lessons of Christian experience is self-denial. Now, there are so many forms of self-denial. Paul speaks about it in a local church situation in Philippians chapter 2 when he says, we must learn to esteem others better than ourselves.

And he uses the great illustration of the Lord Jesus who, being in the form of deity, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, he did not stand upon his dignity. He did not use his privileges and his rights for his own interests. Instead, he thought about us, and he humbled himself.

And he came down into our world, and he went to a place called Calvary, and he died for us. That's the highest example of self-denial. The Lord Jesus, from the circumstances and the privileges of deity, comes down to a cross outside of Calvary, and he gives himself forth.

That's unlike the preacher who's speaking to you this morning. The Lord Jesus, who 2,000 years ago said to the disciples, now, if you're going to follow me, you must deny yourselves and take up your cross and follow me. He first of all set the example, and then he taught that truth to his disciples.

He not only taught it, but he took them on to give them the clear assurance of coming glory. Why? Some of you who are standing here, you're going to see the Son of Man coming in glory. You're going to see the

kingdom of God come with power.

Maybe some of you are wondering this morning just how and when that happened. Some feel it may have happened in the following chapter, in connection with the transfiguration. That would hardly be likely, for it would rob the thought in the previous verses that some of them would survive until that time.

The transfiguration took place only six days later. Some think of the resurrection. Some think of the power that was manifested on the day of Pentecost.

Some think of the great events in the early years of the church, and some go on to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Some of us would suggest that none of those specific instances are set aside as the fulfillment of that promise, but all of them together. And some of them did survive until the year A.D. 70 and saw the destruction of Jerusalem.

But what they all saw, beginning with the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, the great spread of the gospel in the early months and years of the Christian era, this was all the evidence of the power of God manifested amongst men, and they saw it. This is evident from the writings of Peter, because here in Matthew chapter 16, he rebukes the Lord Jesus. He doesn't understand the message, but when he writes in his epistles, you can sense his joy and his happiness as he serves the Lord Jesus, following in the footsteps of the Master in great suffering and adversity.

But he had seen the glory of God manifested in the resurrection on Pentecost in the early years of the Christian testimony. But here in our chapter, after all that the Lord Jesus said, there are six days of silence. And then I think one of the most gracious things the Lord Jesus ever did is recorded in the opening verses of chapter 17, and I think we lose the preciousness of it if we think about it in isolation from chapter 16.

Let us go back now briefly in summary. Peter, touched by God, recognized that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah. He is blessed of the Lord Jesus.

The Lord Jesus then, on that basis, begins to share with Peter and his companions what lay ahead of him. That brought the reaction from Peter, not yet prepared to understand all that the Lord Jesus must do. Thus he rebukes the Lord, and the Lord rebuked Peter.

And then he went on to say very clearly what they would have to learn if they were going to follow and participate in his great work. And he left them at the end of chapter 16 with the concept and the certainty of coming glory and their participation in that glory. But they did not understand.

So at the beginning of chapter 17, you read that, "...Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them. And his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as light. Behold, there appeared unto him Moses and Elias talking with him." Now, this object lesson, for that surely is what it is, was the gracious answer of the Lord Jesus to the inability of the disciples to grasp this great promise that, first of all, there is service and suffering and even death.

But afterwards, there is eternal glory. Now, they did not understand it, so the Lord Jesus took three of them up into that mountain, and he was transfigured before them, and they saw the glory. The Lord Jesus, in that transfiguration, his face did shine as the sun, his raiment was white as light.

Many great and godly men have pondered what happened on that mountain 2,000 years ago, and some feel that the Lord Jesus shared with his disciples that glory that was his prior to the incarnation. Others come to the verse and wonder if this is the glorified manhood of the Lord Jesus. What should have belonged to Adam if he had not sinned and rebelled against God? But the Lord Jesus, in his perfection, is transfigured in his glorified manhood.

On that mountain, as we've been taught since childhood, he could have stepped into heaven into the presence of God, and they saw that glory, and they were overcome with the glory of the Lord Jesus. And so Peter says, Lord, let's make three little houses here, one for you, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. And then God intervenes from heaven, and a bright cloud overshadowed them, and the voice was heard, and this is the message.

It was a special message for Peter, James, and John 2,000 years ago. It may be just as special for some of us who are here this morning, for God said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. That is the divine confirmation given to them that Jesus is the Messiah, and that in the Lord Jesus, the Father finds his greatest joy and satisfaction.

But then the second part of the message is extremely personal, for God said, Hear ye him. In other words, as we would say today, Now you listen to what he is saying. And what was it the Lord Jesus said? Well, in chapter 16, it's all spelled out so clearly.

I must go to Jerusalem. I must suffer many things, and I must be killed, and I will be raised again the third day. Now God says to those three men, Now you listen to him, for that is the will of God.

But that's not all the Lord Jesus said. For in chapter 16, he also added, Now, if you're really going to follow him, if your profession of faith is going to be worked out in a practical way, then this is what you must do. You must deny yourself, and you must take up your cross, and you must follow me.

Now God, who on that occasion shattered the heavens and spoke so clearly, he said, Now you listen to him. Even in view of the transfiguration, there was no deep understanding. And as I mentioned this to you this morning, I don't do so in a critical way.

There were many mysteries that the disciples did not understand that all came into focus after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. As we go down into chapter 17 this evening, you'll find that again the Lord Jesus spoke about his death and passion, and it says that the disciples were exceeding sorrowful. They could not grasp or understand it in connection with the Lord, nor could they understand or grasp that they too would be called to a life of service and suffering and dedication to the Lord Jesus.

But when you pass on beyond the resurrection, you find that all of these men, with great joy and great dedication and no turning back, they suffered and they served in the cause of the Lord Jesus. Now, to savor the things that be of God, and here we leave our meditation this morning, means this, that you understand that we have been called, first of all, to serve and even to suffer in the cause of the Lord Jesus. Afterwards, the glory will come.

It is sure, it is magnificent, and it is eternal. But the suffering and the service first, the glory and the majesty and the power afterwards. Now, to savor the things that be of men is just the opposite.

There is that impatience to have right now, in our world and in time, the power, the preeminence, and the glory. Satan knew that, and he came and he tempted the Lord Jesus, and the Lord Jesus rejected the

temptation. Through Peter, he comes a second time with the same temptation, offering to the Lord Jesus popularity, prominence, a visible kingdom instead of suffering and the cross.

And the Lord Jesus rebuked Peter and refused to listen to the temptation. If it came into the life of the Lord Jesus, and if it came into the life of the disciples, none of us here this morning are exempt from that temptation. Our prayer, as we close today, is that we will savor the things that be of God, and not the things that be of men.

And as I close, and I mentioned it this morning already, I trust that this would not be only, perhaps, a message for you or for me, but that it might be something that will burden our hearts in prayer for the Christian community in the world today, for our Christian young people, for Christian congregations, for Christian outreach around the world, that we will be spared that temptation of living a life under the influence of the way men think without God. Rather, that our young people and our churches and our missionary outreach will savor the things that be of God. To use the words of Paul, that we'll know something about spending and being spent in the service of God with the full assurance that there is a day coming when, as the disciples saw the glory of the Lord Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, we shall see Him face to face in His glory, and we shall be transformed, and we shall participate forever in that unending glory of the Lord Jesus.

Now, please take your hymn book, and we'll sing just a verse or two this morning of hymn number 562 as we close our service. The second verse, To serve the present age, my calling to fulfill, O may it all my powers engage, To do my master's will, help me to watch and pray, And on thyself rely, and let me ne'er my trust betray, But press through realms on high. I suggest we sing the last three verses of hymn number 562.

Verse two, To serve the present age, my calling to fulfill, O may it all my powers engage, To do my master's will, help me to watch and pray, And on thyself rely, and let me ne'er my trust betray, But press through realms on high. Our Father, we thank You for this hour spent in Christian fellowship this morning. We thank You for the hymns of praise that we have sung.

We thank You for Your Word which we have read, and we commend now into Your care and keeping the thoughts expressed this morning that what has been of the Spirit of God will touch our hearts and bring us to that place of full commitment to the Lord Jesus. We thank You for the example of the disciples after the day of resurrection when we find them spreading around the world, spending and being spent in the service of God, displaying in the preaching of the gospel the glory of the kingdom of God. We thank You for the great number of people then who were born anew into the kingdom of God.

We thank You today for men and women around the world who are engaged in the service of God, and who today through the preaching of the gospel are witnessing thousands and thousands, hundreds of thousands, who are coming to faith and commitment in the Lord Jesus. We pray then at the close of this service that You would help each one of us in our own sphere to remember that as You went to Jerusalem, and as the Lord Jesus suffered there, and finally was crucified and then rose again, we pray that we might learn to deny ourselves and to take up our cross and to follow in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus. We ask these things as we commend ourselves to You this morning in His worthy and precious name, Amen.

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