



HOPE for everyone.

Want To Go Deeper? - Week 2

Historical Context

Matthew 17 is a significant chapter in the Gospel of Matthew, containing several key events in the ministry of Jesus. Here is some important historical context to help understand this chapter:

1. **The Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-13):** This event occurs on a high mountain, traditionally identified as Mount Tabor, although some scholars suggest Mount Hermon due to its proximity to Caesarea Philippi, where the previous events took place. The Transfiguration is a pivotal moment where Jesus' divine glory is revealed to Peter, James, and John. Moses and Elijah appear, representing the Law and the Prophets, affirming Jesus as the fulfillment of both. This event underscores Jesus' divine nature and His role in God's redemptive plan.
2. **The Healing of a Demon-Possessed Boy (Matthew 17:14-21):** After descending from the mountain, Jesus encounters a crowd and a desperate father whose son is possessed by a demon. The disciples had been unable to heal the boy, highlighting their lack of faith and understanding. Jesus' rebuke of the demon and the subsequent healing demonstrate His authority over evil and the necessity of faith. This event also serves as a teaching moment for the disciples about the power of faith, even as small as a mustard seed.
3. **Prediction of Jesus' Death and Resurrection (Matthew 17:22-23):** Jesus again predicts His death and resurrection, which the disciples struggle to comprehend. This prediction is part of a series of teachings preparing the disciples for the coming events in Jerusalem. It emphasizes the necessity of Jesus' sacrificial death and the hope of His resurrection.

4. **The Temple Tax (Matthew 17:24-27):** In Capernaum, tax collectors question Peter about Jesus paying the temple tax. Jesus uses this opportunity to teach about His identity as the Son of God, who is exempt from the tax, yet He chooses to pay it to avoid causing offense. This incident highlights Jesus' humility and His respect for the established religious practices, even as He fulfills and transcends them.

Understanding these events within their historical and cultural context helps to grasp the theological significance of Jesus' actions and teachings in Matthew 17. The chapter illustrates the growing revelation of Jesus' identity and mission, the disciples' journey of faith, and the unfolding of God's redemptive plan through Christ.

The healing of the demon-possessed boy in Matthew 17:14-21 is a powerful narrative that highlights several important themes and teachings of Jesus. Here's an expanded look at this event:

1. **The Setting:** This event takes place immediately after the Transfiguration, where Jesus' divine nature was revealed to Peter, James, and John. As they descend from the mountain, they encounter a crowd, including a desperate father whose son is suffering from severe seizures caused by a demon. The contrast between the glory of the Transfiguration and the suffering in the valley underscores the reality of Jesus' mission to bring hope and healing into a broken world.
2. **The Disciples' Inability:** The father reports that he brought his son to Jesus' disciples, but they were unable to heal him. This failure highlights the disciples' lack of faith and understanding at this point in their journey with Jesus. Despite having been given authority to cast out demons earlier (Matthew 10:1), their inability in this instance reveals their need for deeper faith and reliance on God.
3. **Jesus' Response:** Jesus expresses frustration with the "unbelieving and perverse generation" (Matthew 17:17), which can be seen as a rebuke not only to the disciples but also to the broader faithlessness of the people. His words emphasize the importance of faith in the work of God's kingdom. Jesus then commands the demon to leave the boy, and he is healed instantly, demonstrating Jesus' authority over evil and His compassion for those who suffer.
4. **The Lesson on Faith:** After the healing, the disciples privately ask Jesus why they could not drive out the demon. Jesus responds that it is due to their "little faith" (Matthew 17:20). He uses the metaphor of a mustard seed to teach that even a small amount of genuine faith, when rooted and active, can accomplish great things. This teaching emphasizes that faith is not about quantity but about quality and trust in God's power.
5. **The Role of Prayer and Fasting:** Some manuscripts of Matthew 17:21 (though not all) include a reference to prayer and fasting as necessary for this kind of spiritual battle. This suggests that certain challenges require a deeper spiritual discipline and dependence on God, reinforcing the need for a life of prayer and spiritual readiness.

Overall, this event in Matthew 17 serves as a critical teaching moment for the disciples. It underscores the necessity of faith, the power of Jesus over evil, and the importance of spiritual discipline. It also foreshadows the greater spiritual battles that Jesus will face and the ultimate victory He will achieve through His death and resurrection.

Word Study

thlipsis: Tribulation, Affliction, Distress, Persecution

Original Word: **θλίψις**

Part of Speech: Noun, Feminine

Transliteration: thlipsis

Pronunciation: THLIP-sis

Phonetic Spelling: (thlip'-sis)

KJV: afflicted(-tion), anguish, burdened, persecution, tribulation, trouble

NASB: tribulation, affliction, afflictions, tribulations, distress, anguish, persecution

Word Origin: from θλίβω - afflicted

1. pressure

{literally or figuratively}

nikaó: To conquer, to overcome, to prevail, to gain victory

Original Word: **νικάω**

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: nikaó

Pronunciation: nee-KAH-oh

Phonetic Spelling: (nik-ah'-o)

KJV: conquer, overcome, prevail, get the victory

NASB: overcome, overcomes, overcame, conquer, conquering, overpowers, prevail

Word Origin: from νίκη - victory

1. to subdue

{literally or figuratively}

Jesus Meeting the Trouble of Sickness (Josh's Notes)

Physical / Bodily Healing

1. Man with leprosy – *Matthew 8:1–4; Mark 1:40–45; Luke 5:12–16*
2. Centurion's servant – *Matthew 8:5–13; Luke 7:1–10*
3. Peter's mother-in-law – *Matthew 8:14–15; Mark 1:29–31; Luke 4:38–39*
4. Two blind men – *Matthew 9:27–31*
5. Mute man with demon – *Matthew 9:32–33*
6. Man with withered hand – *Matthew 12:9–14; Mark 3:1–6; Luke 6:6–11*
7. Woman with bleeding issue – *Matthew 9:20–22; Mark 5:25–34; Luke 8:43–48*
8. Two blind men near Jericho (Bartimaeus) – *Matthew 20:29–34; Mark 10:46–52; Luke 18:35–43*
9. Deaf and mute man – *Mark 7:31–37*
10. Blind man at Bethsaida – *Mark 8:22–26*
11. Crippled woman – *Luke 13:10–17*
12. Man with dropsy – *Luke 14:1–6*
13. Ten lepers – *Luke 17:11–19*
14. Servant's severed ear (Malchus) – *Luke 22:50–51*
15. Official's son – *John 4:46–54*
16. Invalid at Bethesda (38 years sick) – *John 5:1–15*

17. Man born blind – *John 9:1–12*

Healing by Raising the Dead

1. Widow's son at Nain – *Luke 7:11–17*
2. Jairus's daughter – *Matthew 9:18–26; Mark 5:21–43; Luke 8:40–56*
3. Lazarus – *John 11:1–44*

Deliverance / Spiritual Healing

1. Demon-possessed man in synagogue – *Mark 1:21–28; Luke 4:31–37*
2. Gerasene demoniac (Legion) – *Matthew 8:28–34; Mark 5:1–20; Luke 8:26–39*
3. Blind and mute demoniac – *Matthew 12:22–23; Luke 11:14*
4. Boy with unclean spirit – *Matthew 17:14–21; Mark 9:14–29; Luke 9:37–43*
5. Canaanite woman's daughter – *Matthew 15:21–28; Mark 7:24–30*

Mass Healings (Not Individually Counted)

1. *Matthew 4:23–24* — “He healed every disease and sickness among the people.”
2. *Matthew 8:16–17* — “He drove out spirits... and healed all the sick.”
3. *Matthew 14:14* — “He had compassion on them and healed their sick.”
4. *Matthew 15:30–31* — “The lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute... and He healed them.”
5. *Luke 4:40* — “Everyone brought the sick to Him... and He laid His hands on each one.”

Deeper Application

1. **Faith as a Living Force:** The sermon emphasizes that faith should not be static or merely intellectual. Instead, it should be like a mustard seed—small but invasive, capable of spreading and transforming everything it touches. This kind of faith is active, persistent, and deeply rooted in the reality of who Jesus is. It challenges believers to allow their faith to permeate every aspect of their lives, influencing their actions, decisions, and interactions with others.
2. **Hope in Action:** The sermon calls for believers to be conduits of hope in their communities. This involves recognizing the pervasive hopelessness around us and responding with the love and presence of Jesus. It means engaging with those who are hurting, offering support, and pointing them to the hope found in Christ. The call to “pray, celebrate, and participate” is a practical way to embody this hope, encouraging believers to seek God's guidance, rejoice in His work, and actively contribute to the mission of the church.
3. **The Role of the Church:** The sermon highlights the church's role as a beacon of hope in a dark world. It challenges believers to see their local church as a vital part of God's plan to bring healing and restoration. This involves committing to the church's mission, supporting its initiatives, and being part of a community that reflects Jesus' love and truth. The church is not just a building but a movement of people dedicated to living out the gospel and making a tangible difference in the world.
4. **Personal Reflection and Commitment:** The sermon invites personal reflection on who in our lives needs the hope that only Jesus can provide. It encourages believers to identify those individuals and commit to praying for them, reaching out to them, and being a source of encouragement and support. This personal application challenges believers to move beyond comfort zones and engage with the needs around them, trusting that God can use their efforts to bring about transformation.

Challenge

Imagine a world where every person you encounter knows the hope that only Jesus can provide. Picture your community transformed by the love and power of Christ, where despair gives way to joy, and hopelessness is replaced by purpose. This vision is not just a distant dream; it is a calling for each of us to embrace and act upon.

Here's the challenge:

1. **Embrace a Living Faith:** Let your faith be like a mustard seed—not just small, but unstoppable and transformative. Allow it to take root in every area of your life, influencing your thoughts, actions, and relationships. Ask yourself, "Is my faith visible in how I live? Does it invade every corner of my life, bringing light to the darkness?"
2. **Be a Conduit of Hope:** Identify one person in your life who is struggling with hopelessness. Commit to praying for them daily, reaching out with love and support, and sharing the hope of Jesus with them. Let your actions be a testament to the transformative power of Christ in your life.
3. **Engage with Your Church's Mission:** Join the movement of hope that your church is spearheading. Participate in the initiatives, support the vision, and be an active part of the community that seeks to bring Jesus' hope to everyone. Ask God, "What do You want to do through me?" and be open to His leading.
4. **Live Out the Gospel:** In your everyday interactions, be intentional about reflecting the love and truth of Jesus. Whether at work, in your neighborhood, or within your family, let your life be a beacon of hope that points others to Christ. Remember, you are the hands and feet of Jesus in a world that needs His touch.

This challenge is not just about doing more; it's about being more—more like Jesus, more filled with His Spirit, and more committed to His mission. Together, let's rise to this challenge and be the hope-bearers our world so desperately needs. With faith as small as a mustard seed, we can move mountains and see God do the impossible. Let's step out in faith and watch as God transforms our communities, one life at a time.