

Matthew 17:14-21
Coming Down the Mountain
December 1, 2019 – Rev. Rick Lyon

Intro –

Deuteronomy 11:11 - The land is a land of *hills and valleys*.

Reason #1 - The mountaintop provided encouragement.

Reason #2 - The mountaintop provided refreshment.

1 Kings 19:1-4 - Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done... So Jezebel sent this message to Elijah: “May the gods strike me if by this time tomorrow I haven't killed you.” Elijah ran for his life. He went to Beersheba... Then he traveled a day's journey into the wilderness. He sat down under a broom tree and prayed that he might die. “I've had enough, LORD,” he said. “Take my life.”

1 Kings 19:5-8 - Then Elijah lay down and slept under the broom tree. But as he was sleeping, an angel touched him and told him, “Get up and eat!” He looked around and there beside his head was some bread baked on hot stones and a jar of water! So he ate and drank and lay down again. Then the angel of the LORD came again and touched him and said, “Get up and eat some more, or the journey ahead will be too much for you.” So he got up and ate and drank, and the food gave him enough strength to travel forty days and forty nights to Mount Sinai, the mountain of God.

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Reason #3 - The mountaintop provided perspective.

v.5 - A bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I'm well pleased. Hear Him!" And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. But Jesus came and touched them and said, "Arise and don't be afraid." When they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

Reason #4 - The mountaintop provided preparation.

Chris Christian: I'd love to live on a mountaintop, fellowshiping with the Lord. I love to stand on the mountaintop--cause I love to feel my spirit soar. But I've got to come down from the mountaintop to the people in the valley below or they'll never know that they can go to the mountain of the Lord.

Peter wanted to stay on the mountain--but the mountain was preparation for the valley.

God gives you mountaintop experiences for the same reason. So that you'll be:

- **encouraged... refreshed... focused... and prepared**

When I say mountaintop experience, most of us think of big events:

- **weddings... vacations... births... Super Bowl victories...**

You can and should have a mountaintop experience daily.

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William Barclay: "We can't live forever in the moment on the mountain but we can't live at all without it."

1. A Demon-Possessed Boy

v.14 - When they'd come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he's an epileptic and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. So I brought him to Your disciples, but they couldn't cure him."

Mark 9 - A man in the crowd said, "Teacher, I brought my son so You could heal him. He is possessed by an evil spirit..." When the evil spirit saw Jesus, it threw the child into a violent convulsion, and he fell to the ground, writhing and foaming at the mouth. "How long has this been happening?" Jesus asked the boy's father. He replied, "Since he was a little boy. The spirit often throws him into the fire or into water, trying to destroy him."

According to recent studies:

- **The average age of a person's first view of pornography is 9.**
- **The average age when a person takes their first drink of alcohol is 13.**
- **73% of American teenagers experiment with the occult**
- **Suicide is the second leading cause of death for people between the ages of 10 and 34.**
- **Roughly 60-70% of teens are involved in the hookup culture (one night stands)**
- **By the age of 12 the average child has witnessed tens of thousands of violent acts on TV and in video games**

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- **3.2 million adolescents in the U.S. had at least one major depressive episode last year**
- **School shootings... Bullying... Cyber addiction... Drug addiction... Child abuse... Peer Pressure...**

Then Jesus answered and said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? *Bring him to Me.*"

Deuteronomy 6 - Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. And these words that I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise... be careful not to forget the Lord... Fear the Lord your God and serve Him.

2. A Desperate Dad

Mark 9:22 - "The spirit often throws him into the fire or into water, trying to destroy him. Have mercy on us and help us, *if You can.*"

Joe Aldrich: The best argument for Christianity is Christians: their joy, their certainty, their completeness. But the strongest argument against Christianity is also Christians--when they're somber and joyless, when they're self-righteous and smug, when they're narrow and repressive, Christianity dies a thousand deaths.

Mark 9:23 - "Have mercy on us, *if You can.*" Jesus said to him, "If *you* can believe, all things are possible to him who believes."

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Mark 9:24 - Immediately the boy's father cried out, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!"

v.18 - Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour.

"God, You know I trust You."

More honest: ***"God, I'm having a hard time trusting You with this. Please help me."***

3. Defeated Disciples

v.19 - Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why couldn't we cast it out?" So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you'll say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it'll move; and nothing will be impossible for you.

Proverbs 16:18 - Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.

v.21 - "This kind doesn't go out except by prayer and fasting."

One of the most famous paintings in the world is *The Transfiguration* by the Italian painter Raphael... [https://www.raphaelpaintings.org/the-transfiguration.jsp#prettyPhoto\[image1\]/0/](https://www.raphaelpaintings.org/the-transfiguration.jsp#prettyPhoto[image1]/0/)

Conclusion - ***We can't live forever in the moment on the mountain, but we can't live at all without it.***