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Sermon Notes

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The Ultimate Mountaintop Experience

Matthew 17:1-13

I'll never forget my intensely mixed feelings as I sat there on top of a mountain in Acadia National Park in Maine, watching the orange and purple and red sky of the late afternoon and drinking in the glow of the fall colors...

I lingered longer than I should have, trying to engrave these images as permanently as possible in my mind

From my rocky perch my eye could see sailboats in the harbor beneath me; I could feel the cool fall breeze on my face, and smell the rich organic fragrance of wet leaves wafting around me... from a distance I could hear the call of hawks as they soared below me

I had my Bible with me, and I had just finished one of the best Quiet Times of my life... I felt so close to the Lord... I had by faith in Christ a strong sense of what the New Heaven and New Earth would be like; it was a true mountaintop experience

but my feelings were mixed because that very afternoon I had to get into a car and begin the long drive home...

Tonight, my vacation would end; tomorrow, I would be back at work.

Thus it is always with these sweet mountaintop experiences... in this life, they are temporary, so fleeting... lasting only long enough to refresh us and prepare us to resume our toilsome journey to our final destination

There are still miles to travel, still more suffering to endure, still more pain to drink before we are done with this world... and still more beneficial service to render to the Lord

The mountaintop experiences are meant to give us glimpses of the future glory that will await us

John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* weaves in masterfully the rhythm of the Christian pilgrimage from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City... extremely difficult trials mixed with places of refuge and refreshment that sustain Christian in his journey... the sweetest of these moments of rest was the vision they had of heaven from the Delectable

Mountains... on a particular mountain called Clear they were able to look through a special telescope to see the gates of Heaven

But no mountaintop experience has ever been greater than that experienced by Peter, John and James, when they saw Jesus shine with heavenly glory and talk with Moses and Elijah... when they heard the voice of God speaking out of a cloud, saying

This is my Son, whom I love, with whom I am well-pleased.

O how much they longed to stay there, basking in a rich foretaste of heaven

But they could not... by the end of the account, they were walking down the mountain discussing the event that would turn out to be the darkest of their lives: Christ's death on the cross

God may use this text to give you a greater sense of the heavenly glory of Christ, and of your own future life with Him

I. The Transfigured Face of Christ (vs. 1-2)

A. "God Incognito"

People have always delighted in stories in which some great person goes incognito, in disguise, and people don't know who they're dealing with

Like "The Prince and the Pauper"

I came across a more modern version recently:

In the 1950s, Sao Kya Seng, the prince of 34 independent Shan states in northeastern Burma, came to Denver, Colorado, to study agriculture. Since he wanted to experience what it was like to be a student in the US, he kept his identity secret. Not even his professors knew who he really was. One of his fellow students was a woman named Inge Sargent from Austria. Both of them being exchange students, Inge and the Burmese prince quickly found that they had a lot in common and started to spend more and more time together. Their friendship grew into love but the Burmese prince decided that he would not let on his true identity even though they were seriously dating and moving toward marriage. He did not want Inge's decision to date him to be colored by the fact that she could marry into royalty. So when he finally proposed, with an engagement ring of ruby and diamond, Inge still did not know who he really was. Inge said yes and they got married, as any other couple, in the US. For their honeymoon, Sao Kya Seng was taking Inge to his home country, so that she could meet his family and see where he was from. When their ship reached the shores of Burma, hundreds of people were waiting at the harbor. Many of them had gone out in small boat, holding up welcoming signs. A band was playing and some people were tossing flowers at the ship. Surprised at all this excitement Inge turns to her husband, and asks whose arrival they are celebrating. "Inge," he says, I am the prince. These people are celebrating our

arrival. You are now the princess.” (From *Twilight over Burma: My Life As a Shan Princess*, by Inge Sargent.)

Obviously no story of royalty traveling incognito compares with that of the incarnation of the only begotten Son of God

Charles Wesley put it this way in “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”

Veiled in flesh the Godhead see
Hail the incarnate Deity

Mild He lays His glory by
Born that man no more may die

1. Spurgeon: for Christ to be glorious was His normal state from eternity;
2. Christ chose to lay the outward and visible glory of His person aside when He came to earth
3. this was essential to His plan, for He had to appear as a normal human being in order that His enemies might kill Him... and also in order that His chosen ones might believe in Him—not by sight but by the Scripture and the direct testimony of the Father to their hearts
4. if Jesus constantly appeared to that generation as gloriously as He really is in heaven, all humanity would be constantly overwhelmed and groveling on the ground before Him... barely able to survive
5. and that’s only if He greatly reduced His full glory... no one living can survive that display

Exodus 33:20 But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live."

1 Timothy 6:16 who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light

6. so Christ came into the world as God in disguise...
7. but on one unforgettable occasion, He reclaimed some of His glory to show a select group of His disciples a taste of His greatness

Matthew 17:1-2 After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. ² There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light.

B. Some Glory Recovered

1. Christ was always glorious... even before this incredible display

- a. The apostle John stresses a glory that is invisible... a glory of Christ's person, of His character and His actions

John 1:14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

- b. There was glory in His miracles

John 2:11 This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.

- c. There would be glory in the cross... for many times in John's gospel, he spoke of his death as His glorification
- d. None of these displays involved the bright radiant light of heavenly glory that shone on this mount of transfiguration however

- 2. in heaven, the angels veiled their faces before Christ, so great was His glory

Isaiah 6:1-2 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. ² Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying.

- 3. after Christ's death and resurrection, He would return to heaven and receive back all of His rightful place, including His rightful glory with God

John 17:5 And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

- 4. but here, for a brief moment, He let some of His glory shine

C. Transfigured, Not Transformed

- 1. Christ never changes... ever!
- 2. 2 Corinthians 3: we are being transformed from glory into glory; Romans 12 says we should be transformed by the renewing of our minds
- 3. Christ never improves or becomes more glorious IN HIS TRUE NATURE...
- 4. this was merely a display of His glory to encourage His disciples
- 5. the transformation covered His whole body, but it is His face and His clothing that are mentioned most prominently
- 6. His face ***shone like the sun***... and His clothes became ***white as the light***...

7. a picture of transcendent, supernatural glory
8. they knew Christ was great... because of His miracles, His teaching, and His personhood, they knew He was unlike any man they'd ever met; that was why they left their fishing boats behind and followed Him
9. but on the Mount of Transfiguration, they had a physical view of His supernatural glory, of His transcendent greatness

II. The Chosen Witnesses, Both Old and New (vs. 1-4)

A. Three Chosen Apostles

1. out of all Christ's disciples, Christ chose twelve men to be His Apostles
 2. out of these twelve apostles, Christ chose three to be with Him on the Mount of Transfiguration
 - a. thus we can see VERY FEW are chosen for this intense privilege
 - b. so also in church history, very few have been chosen to have incredible experiences with God... seeing Christ far more clearly in prayer and in meditation than normal Christians do
- Jonathan Edwards: As I rode out into the woods for my health, in 1737, having alighted from my horse in a retired place, as my manner commonly has been, to walk for divine contemplation and prayer, I had a view that was for me extraordinary, or the glory of the Son of God, as Mediator between God and man, and His wonderful, great, full, pure and sweet grace and love, and meek and gentle condescension. This grace that appeared so calm and sweet, appeared also great above the heavens. The Person of Christ appeared ineffably excellent with an excellency great enough to swallow up all thoughts and conceptions, which continued, as near as I can judge, about an hour; such as to keep me a greater part of the time in a flood of tears, and weeping aloud. I felt an ardency of soul to be, what I know not otherwise how to express, emptied and annihilated; to lie in the dust, and to be full of Christ alone; to love Him with a holy and pure love; to trust in Him; to live upon Him; to serve Him and to be perfectly sanctified and made pure, with a heavenly purity.”
 - D.L. Moody: [He had been a Christian, a minister in charge of a mission; he was seeing people converted, but he wanted more] “I began to cry as never before, for a greater blessing from God. The hunger increased; I really felt that I did not want to live any longer. I kept on crying all the time that God would fill me with His Spirit. Well, one day in the city of New York—oh! What a day! I cannot describe it, I seldom refer to it. It is almost too sacred an experience to name. Paul had an experience of which he never spoke for fourteen years. I can only say, God

revealed Himself to me, and I had such an experience of His love that I had to ask Him to stay His hand.”

c. Spurgeon’s longing

Charles Spurgeon: “I must confess I envy some saints whose biographies I have read, who have seen the Lord far better than I have; and I aspire, I hunger, I thirst to see as much of Him as can be seen on this side of the river of death; why should we not all do so? Eyes are meant to see light, and spiritual eyes are intended to see Christ...Mark this, then, you huge crowd of churchgoers; out of twelve apostles, only three saw the transfiguration.” [“Christ’s Transfigured Face”, no. 2729; preached August 1, 1880]

3. perhaps we could glean why these three were chosen:

some say:

- a. Peter was chosen because he loved his Master so much
 - b. That John was chosen because his Master loved him so much
 - c. That James was the third because he would soon die, the first of the martyrs among the apostles
 - d. However: Spurgeon points out that we cannot say such things... we cannot say that Peter loved Jesus more than John did, etc.
 - e. In any case, all three would soon see Christ arrested, and John would see him no longer radiantly beautiful but blood on the cross
4. bottom line: three would stand together as legal witnesses, eyewitnesses of the glory and majesty of Christ
5. and do not wish you had been there to see it too
- a. Peter who was there says that the testimony of Scripture is more certain
 - b. An experience can fade into questionable memory... the testimony of the Scripture is eternal

2 Peter 1:16-19 we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷ For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." ¹⁸ We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain. ¹⁹ And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

Experiences are open to question... scripture endures forever

B. A Place of Retreat

1. Matthew tells us it was a high mountain, and that they were by themselves
2. Peter calls it a sacred mountain
3. in any case, it was a place of sweet retreat away from the maddening crowd, away from the duties and responsibilities of life
4. so often, I think, we miss times of sweet fellowship with Christ, and even times of unforgettable intimacy with Him, because we never retreat to the quietness of a sacred mountain... we are like so many Marthas, running around overwhelmed with the worldly preparations and activities of ordinary daily life, when we should be like Mary, who sat quietly at Jesus' feet and listened to Him speak

Mark 6:31-32 Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." ³² So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place.

Of course, when Peter wanted to build shelters and stay there longer, that plan was rejected... they still had work to do on earth

Two lessons:

- 1) mountaintop experiences are essential to spiritual health
- 2) mountaintop experiences must end at some point so we can finish our work here on earth

C. Two Other Witnesses

1. Peter, James, John were not the only witnesses on that mountain that night
2. Suddenly, two other witnesses appeared and began speaking with Jesus

Matthew 17:3 And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him.

3. Luke tells us more about them, their appearance, and their conversation

Luke 9:30-31 And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, ³¹ who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

- a. They were called "men"... no different from us, except that they were DEAD and now glorious in appearance

- b. They thus testify to the resurrection of the dead... they are absent from the body but present with the Lord

Matthew 22:32 He is not the God of the dead but of the living.

Note: neither of these men had resurrection bodies... the time for that will be at the glorious appearing of our savior... “at the last trumpet, the dead will be raised imperishable” [1 Corinthians 15:51-52]

What was their topic of conversation??

- c. Luke tells us they were talking about literally Christ’s “exodus”... translated “departure”, which he was about to accomplish in Jerusalem
- d. Not referring only to His own death, but the spiritual Exodus he would lead as one greater than Moses... leading captives free from their slavery to sin and death into the Promised Land of eternal life

4. Why Moses and Elijah?

- a. Most commentators believe they represent the Old Testament Scripture in its witness to Christ
- b. Moses the Lawgiver... certainly represents the “Law”
- c. Elijah, the greatest of the prophets
- d. Both of them talking with Jesus about His crucifixion and resurrection, representing the testimony of the Law and the Prophets to Christ

Matthew 5:17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

Romans 3:21-22 But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. ²² This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.

These three apostles were eyewitnesses of Christ’s majesty... so also were the dead Old Testament saints—Moses and Elijah—who were talking with Jesus

Five witnesses to the glory and deity of Christ on that sacred mountain!!

III. The Overwhelming Voice of God (vs. 4-6)

A. Peter Speaks When He Should Listen

Matthew 17:4 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."

1. Peter, in all his bumbling genuineness, represents us sinners among the apostles

Mark 9:6 He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.

2. isn't it amazing!! He didn't know what to say, so he spoke... wisdom would have caused him to put his hand over his mouth in the presence of such majesty and glory... what an awesome scene—the incarnate Lord Jesus Christ, glowing radiantly with heavenly glory, talking with two heroes of the faith, long dead, but now partially glorified; Peter doesn't know what to say for terror
3. it would have been better to have been silent and worship in awe

Ecclesiastes 5:1-3 Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools, who do not know that they do wrong. ² Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few. ³ As a dream comes when there are many cares, so the speech of a fool when there are many words.

4. Luke also tells us that they had been overwhelmed with sleep... it may have been night time
5. Peter's message: let's stay here a while!
 - a. The booths are reminiscent of the Feast of Tabernacles, when the Jews remember their time of sojourning in the desert and they all dwell in temporary shelters
 - b. Peter's false understanding... as though Moses and Elijah were actually equal to Christ
 - c. Peter did not realize just how much greater than Moses and Elijah Jesus actually is!!
 - d. Peter also did not realize that this mountaintop experience was not meant to last any longer... there was work to do!
 - e. In any case, Peter should have been quiet
 - f. Almighty God is about to speak and set him straight!!

B. The Terrifying Voice of Almighty God

Matthew 17:5-6 *While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"* ⁶ *When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified.*

1. the clear message: the DEITY of Christ
 - a. the second time now that Almighty God has spoken this same message
 - b. the first time was when Christ was baptized
 - c. the message is God speaking to the world... this is my Son, my only Son, in whom is all my delight,
2. God's Delight in His Only Begotten Son
 - a. One of the most important lessons of the Bible: GOD IS HAPPY.... GOD IS A DELIGHTED BEING

1 Timothy 1:11 the glorious gospel of the blessed God

John Piper's translation is priceless: "the good news of the glory of the happy God"

In his book, *The Pleasures of God*, Piper writes this:

"A great part of God's glory is His happiness.... It is a glorious thing for God to be as happy as he is. God's glory consists much in the fact that he is happy beyond our wildest imagination." [p. 23]

Piper goes on to argue that the happiness of God is first and foremost a happiness in His Son

From eternity past, God the Father has stared into the face of His only begotten Son and has delighted in it... He is infinitely "well-pleased" with His Son

And our salvation very much consists in being able to enter into that joy, that happiness, that indescribable love FOREVER

Jesus prayed:

John 17:26 *I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.*

What an incredible thought!!! God the Father wants us to share in the love He has for His Son... He is going to transform us to be just like Christ so that He can delight in us as much as He delights in Jesus

But the key to that transformation is the faith that come from HEARING Christ's voice!!

Romans 10:17 faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

John 10:27-28 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish

SO...

3. STOP TALKING, PETER!!!

Psalm 46:10 "Be still, and know that I am God

God's message is simple... listen to Jesus! Hear Him speak!!!

C. The Effect of God's Voice: FEAR!!

1. Peter immediately stops making suggestions on how to improve the encounter
2. all three of the chosen apostles fall on their faces in sheer terror
3. very much like the effect of hearing God's voice on Mount Sinai

Deuteronomy 5:25 we will die if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any longer.

4. He is eternal, we are temporal... He is infinite, we are finite... He is almighty, we are weak... He is Creator, we are creature... He is holy, we are sinful... He is God, we are human

So there they are, face down, trembling on the Mount of Glory, unable to lift their faces to God who speaks to them from the cloud

IV. Hearing Only Jesus, Seeing Only Jesus (vs. 7-8)

Matthew 17:7-8 But Jesus came and touched them. "Get up," he said. "Don't be afraid." ⁸ When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.

A. The Compassion of Jesus

1. so many times in His ministry, Jesus uses a gentle touch to show compassion
 - a. in Matthew 8:3, Jesus is filled with compassion for a leper and touches him to heal him
 - b. so also in Matthew 20:34, Jesus is filled with compassion for two blind men, touches them and heals them
2. here Jesus cannot leave His three precious friends trembling on the ground... His whole purpose is to drive out fear and replace it with perfect love

3. so He issues His most common command: “Fear not!!” “Don’t be afraid!” fourteen times in the gospels Christ commanded someone in this exact way!

B. Seeing Only Jesus

1. Charles Spurgeon wrote a whole sermon entitled “Jesus Only”
2. Moses is gone... the Law is fulfilled in Christ
3. Elijah is gone... “the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Christ
4. even the cloud representing God the Father is gone... for Jesus said

John 14:9 Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.

5. all that is left is Jesus... He is enough, He is sufficient... He is the Savior

C. God Means us to Focus on Christ

1. He means us to realize that His voice speaking by the Spirit and from the Scriptures is sufficient for all the guidance we need
2. He means us to understand that His righteousness is all the righteousness we’ll ever need
3. He means us to focus our minds on Christ and Christ alone... Jesus is the way and the truth and the life... Jesus is the resurrection and the life... Jesus is the bread of life... Jesus is the spring of living water... Jesus is the law... Jesus is the final prophet to the human race... Jesus is our judge...

D. The Christ-Centered Life

1. fixing our eyes on Christ: His future glory, His past sufferings

Hebrews 12:2 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus

2. fixing our ears on Christ’s voice

John 10:27-28 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.

John 10:3-5 He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵ But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice."

3. in this way alone can we make progress

V. The Ominous Warning of Future Suffering (vs. 9-13)

Matthew 17:9-13 *As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, "Don't tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead." ¹⁰ The disciples asked him, "Why then do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?" ¹¹ Jesus replied, "To be sure, Elijah comes and will restore all things. ¹² But I tell you, Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but have done to him everything they wished. In the same way the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands." ¹³ Then the disciples understood that he was talking to them about John the Baptist.*

A. Mountaintop Experience Over

1. they had to resume the difficult journey to the cross
2. Christ had come to suffer, to lay down His life as a ransom
3. they couldn't stay on that blessed mountain forever, much as Peter wanted to build a house there
4. soon, they would face a bitter trial in the unbelief of the disciples Jesus left behind
5. but first, Christ warns them not to tell anyone the experience on the mountain

B. Puzzled by a Phrase

1. Christ speaks of the Son of Man "rising from the dead"
2. they must have known that Jesus was referring to Himself, as He always called Himself the "Son of Man"
3. this was to emphasize both His deity (from Daniel 7:13-14) and His humanity
4. the essence of His humanity was that He could die
5. but as usual the disciples could not fathom that Christ had to die

Mark 9:10 *They kept the matter to themselves, discussing what "rising from the dead" meant.*

6. it didn't seem ever to make sense to the disciples that Jesus would actually die... no matter how many times He told them

Luke 9:44-45 *"Listen carefully to what I am about to tell you: The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men." ⁴⁵ But they did not understand what this meant. It was hidden from them, so that they did not grasp it, and they were afraid to ask him about it.*

C. Question About John the Baptist

Vs. 10 The disciples asked him, "Why then do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?"

1. the legend had it that Elijah had to return bodily before the Messiah came
2. based on the final words of the Old Testament

Malachi 4:5-6 "See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. ⁶ He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse."

3. at the Passover, many Jews keep an empty chair for Elijah
4. Peter, John, and James were utterly convinced that Jesus was the Messiah
5. but what happened to Elijah? This is especially poignant in that they had just seen Elijah talking with Jesus

D. Elijah HAS Come... a Picture of My Impending Suffering

1. John the Baptist embodied the spirit of Elijah

Luke 1:17 And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous-- to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

- a. Just as the spirit of Elijah came to Elisha... he'd asked for "a double portion of your spirit" and took up Elijah's fallen mantle
 - b. Now John the Baptist was called by God to follow the same pattern
 - c. Wearing rough clothes—camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist
 - d. Living in the desert, eating food from the desert
 - e. Boldly confronting the sin of the wicked king of Israel
2. faulty expectations, violent reactions
 - a. The Jews expected the literal Elijah... what they got was something else
 - b. So they "did to him whatever they wanted"... the power of darkness was given freedom to kill
 - c. John was beheaded for confronting Herod about Herodias, his wife whom he'd stolen from his brother, Philip

- d. They finally understood who John the Baptist was... but now they needed to understand Christ's mission as well
- 3. "in the same way..."
 - a. the Jews were expecting a different kind of Messiah than Jesus
 - b. and they would kill Jesus as they'd killed John
- 4. the mountaintop experience: a foretaste of heavenly glory
- 5. this conversation: a foretaste of earth suffering
- 6. the suffering was necessary to pay for the glory

VI. Application

A. Christ is God's Glorious Son

- 1. not one of us fully realizes how great is Christ's glory
- 2. not one of us sees Him properly
- 3. all of us should yearn for a clearer vision of Christ... of his power and glory
- 4. all of us should yearn to LISTEN to Christ's clear voice
- 5. so also all of us should realize how much delight the Father has in Christ
- 6. AND how much He delights in us as well

^{NKJ} Ephesians 1:6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.

Do you actually believe that God the Father loves you as much as He loves His perfect Son?

B. Christ Promises Us a Glorious Future

- 1. we shall see His glory
- 2. we shall be glorious ourselves
- 3. we can stay with Him forever

C. Earthly Mountaintop Experiences are Temporary

D. Suffering Awaits at the Bottom of the Mountain