

Readings

Scripture

¹ And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. ² And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. ³ And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. ⁴ And Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." ⁵ He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." ⁶ When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. ⁷ But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and have no fear." ⁸ And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

⁹ And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, "Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead." ¹⁰ And the disciples asked him, "Then why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?" ¹¹ He answered, "Elijah does come, and he will restore all things. ¹² But I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of Man will certainly suffer at their hands." ¹³ Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist.

- Matthew 17:1-13 (English Standard Version)

Reflection

I did not see that it is in the process of being worshiped that God communicates His presence to men. It is not of course the only way. But for many people at many times the "fair beauty of the Lord" is revealed chiefly or only while they worship Him together. Even in Judaism the essence of the sacrifice was not really that men gave bulls and goats to God, but that by their so doing God gave Himself to men; in the central act of our own worship of course this is far clearer – there it is manifestly, even physically, God who gives and we receive.

- CS Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms* (p. 93)

"...But you have been chosen, and you must therefore use such strength and heart and wits as you have."

'But I have so little of any of these things! You are wise and powerful. Will you not take the Ring?'

'No!' cried Gandalf, springing to his feet. 'With that power I should have power too great and terrible. And over me the Ring would gain a power still greater and more deadly.' His eyes flashed and his face was lit as by a fire within. 'Do not tempt me! For I do not wish to become like the Dark Lord himself. Yet the way of the Ring to my heart is by pity, pity for weakness and the desire for strength to do good. Do not tempt me! I dare not take it, not even to keep it safe, unused. The wish to wield it would be too great for my strength. I shall have such need of it. Great perils lie before me.'

- JRR Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings* (Kindle Version) p. 61 Location 1628

Sermon Outline

Why?

Matthew 17:1-13

Our Highest Calling

Brad Anderson

Worship is our highest calling...

What pattern does the Bible reveal about the challenge of worship?

Only God's love can set a person free from bondage... (Exodus 19:1-4; John 4:13-15)

Only God's love can make us fit for service... (Exodus 19:5-6; John 4:16-18, 28-30)

The reason that God has loved is deeply related to our need as worshippers...

- We do not know how to love, naturally... (Exodus 32:1-6)
- We always worship what we love by design... (Exodus 4:19-26)

Reflection Questions (taken in part from the Serendipity Study Bible for Groups)

- What do you observe about people in your neighborhood, workplace, school, or club when it comes to worship? To answer the question with greater dimension, use the following quote as a foil through which to make your observations, "The way of the ring to my heart is through pity." (See the extended quote at left)
- Read Exodus 19 and Matthew 17:1-13. How are these passages similar? Who were Moses and Elijah in the Old Testament? What might their presence on the Mount of Transfiguration with Jesus represent? What similarities do you observe between the two passages?
- Why can't we deliver, save, or free ourselves from the challenge of sin?
- Why can't we make ourselves pure, holy, or clean related to the effects of sin?
- For what purpose does God deliver us and make us clean?
- How are love for God and worship of God related?
- Can you trace your story/testimony/conversion to faith in Jesus Christ using the three part framework of 'set free from bondage by God's love', 'made fit for service by God's love', 'called to worship (serve) God in every area of life'?