

SESSION #4

Fear of God Getting Out of My Box Matthew 17:1-8



Introduction: A box is for containing a product into something we can package and deliver. We are using a box as a metaphor for how we try to package God in terms that we can both understand and control. God doesn't fit into that kind of a box. God wants us to understand Him to a point, but He must define His character and nature, not us. God does not want to be controlled, but to be loved, trusted and followed. God wants our lives with Him to be an adventure rather than a predictable, safe journey. This session we want to discover who God really is, how we relate to Him and let the awe of God buckle our knees and empty our lungs. Releasing God from our safe & comfortable understanding and worship will start an adventure in life you may never recover from!!

Discussion Starter:

READ: Isaiah 6:1-9

- **What was the issue that Isaiah and Israel faced in Isaiah 6:1**
King Uzziah died, who had been king of Israel and had restored peace to the land.
- **When Israel's situation looked grim, what did God reveal to Isaiah? Isa 6:1b-4**
God's glory and heaven's response to His glory. Take time to lead the group through the character of God Isaiah sees and the worship that goes on in heaven.
- **Why do you think Isaiah's response to this vision of God brought an overwhelming sense of doom? Isa 6:5**
While before Isaiah was focused on the circumstances in Israel, now He saw the reality of God in heaven. When King Uzziah died he felt fear that Israel's future was threatened, when He saw God on His throne in heaven his only fear was over his own sin.
- **What specific issue did God's greatness uncover in Isaiah? Isa. 6:5**
I have filthy lips, and I live among a people with filthy lips. How does our conversation elevate when we are exposed to God's pure character?
- **How does God handle Isaiah's admission of his guilt? Isa. 6:6-7**
He touches his lips (remember: *I have filthy lips?*) and then calls him to go speak for Him
- **What was Isaiah's god like before his vision, and what was God like when he let him out of his box?**

READ Matthew 16:21-22

- **What was Peter's god like when he had him in his box? 16:22**
Peter's idea of the Messiah was that rather than being killed by His enemies, He would conquer His enemies. He also pictured himself as the defender of God!

READ Matthew 17:1-8

- **When Jesus knew that the final conflict that would cost His life was near, what did he do? 17:1-3**
He went to a secluded place with his closest disciples to spend time with His Father and find encouragement from the text. Moses & Elijah were sent by God to encourage Him in person!! Pretty sweet God & I time, huh?
- **What did Peter want to do with this view of Jesus and the appearance of Moses and Elijah? 17:4**

He wanted to build a Cathedral (*I'll make three shelters*). He wanted to memorialize the event, create an tradition, built a holy land tourist stop. Rather than recognizing God in the flesh, He wanted to create an experience. The vision should have buckled his knees and emptied his lungs in awe and worship, but instead he wanted everyone else to see the Messiah in His glory so they would let Him bring in His Kingdom. One was personal worship, the other was for other people.

- **In the middle of Peter's attempt at taking leadership (*even as he spoke*) in a situation where he should have given Christ leadership, the Father interrupts with an order. When God spoke, what did Peter, James and John do?**

They were terrified and fell on their faces.

- **What did God declare and order Peter to do? 17:5-6**

"This Jesus who is transformed into His true identity before you, is GOD...so you really ought to be listening right now, not talking!!"

Responding to Christ's Glory....for Dummies!

- **When you come to a worship event at Harvest, how is it similar to the Transfiguration event Peter, James and John experienced?**

Possible ideas – We see the unveiling of Jesus in music about Him, in the explanation of Him in the sermon, in a story we hear about what He's done in someone's life, in the Kingdom coming through the saving of a life in Ethiopia.

- **What did you discover about Jesus this last weekend in the music, Adoption finalization ceremonies, or George's message about freeing God from our boxes?**

This may include things like I sang about Christ releasing me from my fears or celebrated God's greatness in the hymn "How Great Thou Art," I witnessed families expressing their passion to save an orphan through adoption, or how I have a tame view of God.

- **What are some ways that I can adjust my view of God and let God's majesty change my life?**

Enter into the worship more fully, rather than watching the worship team perform I can sing and pray and worship God through the music. I can write an encouraging note to the adopting families that finalized their adoption, and thank them for representing Harvest in saving an orphan. I can adjust my lifestyle from what I heard in the message each week.

- **George's 'Big Idea' was "How long has it been since a fresh understanding of Christ buckled your knees and emptied your lungs?" Based on our discussion, How can you let God's greatness change your thinking, feelings and actions this week?**

Verse to Memorize:

Matthew 17:5-6 *But even as he spoke, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy. Listen to him." The disciples were terrified and fell face down on the ground. (NLT)*