Introduction

“Mountains are for inspiration and valleys are for bearing fruit.” Billy Graham
We need both in our life.
Mountains and valleys are part of discipleship.

I. Mountaintop experiences give us a greater vision of God. Matthew 17:1-13

These three disciples were given an incredible privilege. They saw Jesus' glory revealed. Can you imagine how they felt?

- When Moses met with God on Mt. Sinai, his face shone, but it was a reflected glory.
- When Jesus' face shone, it was an intrinsic glory.

Then Moses and Elijah appeared. Peter offered to build three shelters for them – as though they were all equal.
This time it is the Father himself who corrects him.
“This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!”
As great as Moses and Elijah were, they are not God's Son, the Messiah.

Listen to Jesus!
How do we do that?
We do it by paying attention to his Word.
We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 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.” We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.

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. II Peter 1:16-19

As great as mountaintop experiences are, we have something even more important for our spiritual life. We have the Word of God.

II. To be effective in serving God, we need to continually walk with Jesus. Matthew 17:14-21

When they came down from the mountain, they were met by a man whose son suffered from seizures and demonic possession. The man had asked the 9 disciples to heal his son and they could not do it.

In verse 17, we hear Jesus’ disappointment with the world. It is unbelieving and perverse. We also hear his longing to return to his heavenly home.

“Why couldn’t we drive it out?” It was because they were lacking in faith. Genuine faith has three elements.

• Content – Faith is only as good as its object.
• Assent – to that content.
• Trust – A confident belief that what God has promised he will do
Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why “it was credited to him as righteousness.” Romans 4:20-22

The greatest area we see this in is prayer. Yet even there, prayer is not automatic. We must leave the results in God’s hands.

Ask boldly, pray humbly.

III. Discipleship is a process.
Matthew 17:22-27

There will be mountains and valleys, high points and low points, successes and failures, insights and misunderstandings in your spiritual journey. This is the second prediction of Jesus’ death and resurrection. The disciples failed to grasp what he was saying. It would be clear in the days ahead. For now, they needed to simply trust Jesus.

Verses 24-28 are another example of Peter’s misunderstanding and growth as a disciple. “Doesn’t your teacher pay the temple tax?” Peter said yes, of course. Later Jesus would instruct him.

Do kings collect taxes from their sons? No. Neither does the Father collect a tax from his sons. Then he sends Peter fishing and Jesus providentially provides a four drachma coin to pay the tax for both of them.
What did Peter learn?

- Jesus is God’s Son!
- We are God’s sons.
- God provides for his children.

Conclusion

Mountains are for inspiration and valleys are for bearing fruit. We need both in our life. When was the last time you intentionally took a half day or a day to spend time with God?

How do we overcome the failures in our life?

- Listen to Jesus! (His Word)
- Keep our faith personal and growing.
- Know our weaknesses.
- Keep our eyes on Jesus.