

The Way

THE CLIMB

The miraculous is on display in Galilee. The Master, as most have started calling him, does the impossible. Demons hidden beneath the surface of men retreat at his command. Lame men leap to their feet at the sound of his voice. Blind men's eyes open at the touch of his hand. People with lifelong ailments are delivered by his will. From city to city, the Master gives dissertations and sermons. His words wring out fresh and new each time, yet they hold true to the doctrine of the prophets and the patriarchs.

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The multitude travels with him undeterred by the accusations of the Pharisees or the ready swords of the Roman soldiers. The Master has started a revolution, and they will gladly follow him anywhere he takes them.

Suddenly, he stops at the base of a mountain. Preparing for his next sermon, the multitude rolls out blankets, the sound of sails in the desert wind. Weary from much travel, they lie down like sheep in the pasture after a long journey from Canaan. A soft breeze wafts the smell of fresh cooked lamb in a nearby village. Rumbling, many people's stomachs remind them of how long they have gone with only a little bread. Still, they forego the temptation to leave. The Master will say something important soon.

The Master doesn't speak, though. He scans the crowd, his eyes seemingly locking in with everyone in the mass gathering. Through the afternoon breeze, one can almost hear a faint voice in the wind saying, "Follow me."

The Master turns his back and begins to ascend the mountain. The breeze loses its volume as a murmur from the multitude begins to rise. Complaining starts to go forth. Questions rapidly begin to circulate through the masses.

"Where is he going?"

"Who does he think he is?"

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“I’m not climbing that thing!” one man cried out.

Another urged, “Let us go to the village and eat. The Master only wants to be by himself now. Once we have eaten, he will return and teach us more.”

The crowd begins to disperse, some heading to the town in hunger, some heading to their homes in anger, but some stood still. Amongst them, a young man stands in anticipation. He hesitates hoping that someone will make a decision to step out first. The Master ascends the mountain getting smaller and smaller with each second. The smell of food compels the young man’s flesh. The tired and longing feelings of home pull at his mind. But something deep within him echoes the winds words, “Follow me.” Breathing in the air once more, the light hint of salt tickling his throat, he steps forward and begins to climb.

Jesus had been preaching, healing and performing miracles throughout the region of Galilee. As a result, a great number of people followed him. They locked in on his

DID YOU KNOW:

The tallest building in the world is 2,722 feet high. Imagine climbing the stairs of the tallest building in your state or region just to hear someone talk.

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every word and action, hoping to receive a greater revelation and blessing from him. Everything seemed to be going along so easy, and then he came to a mountain. Jesus' first true test of the multitude was one of the flesh. Would they be willing to put themselves in discomfort so they could gain greater revelation?

DISCOVER:

What other great things have occurred from mountains in the Bible? What was going on before and during those experiences? Find one that relates to you and describe it below. Having Trouble? Genesis 8 is the first account of something happening from atop a mountain.

Scripture:

Description:

Compare and Contrast that event to what was happening before the sermon on the mount in Matthew 4:-5:

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At the peak of this gathering of followers, Christ ascended into a mountain in Galilee. While the average mountain in Galilee is relatively small compared to the other mountains of the world, they tend to rise 1,600-2,000 feet above land. To climb a mountain just to hear someone speak was out of the ordinary. After all, Christ had been teaching and healing in the comforts of the cities and the plains for awhile now. Why go up into the mountains if you could get the blessing down on the base level?

Climbing a mountain, regardless of its incline or difficulty of terrain, requires a great commitment from the climber. First, one must consciously decide to relieve themselves from the comforts of a flat and easy terrain. Typically, one prepares days in advance of climbing a mountain, gathering provisions based on the time to be spent on the mountain. Remember, there are no easy comforts on a mountain. No kitchen, bathroom, pillows or chairs are waiting for you up there. Moreover, traversing the terrain of the mountain takes great commitment and care. One must take caution with every step to ensure that they do not stumble and fall back down the mountain. One must account that they will endure climactic and atmospheric differences than what they normally allow themselves to endure. Different clothes are required to climb a mountain, so one must equip themselves with the proper

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gear. These are just a few considerations one typically goes over before tackling this feat.

REFLECTION:

When have you faced a challenge from God?

When have you denied a challenge?

What resulted from those decisions?

Challenge I faced:

Result:

Challenge I didn't face:

Result:

The people who followed Christ up into the mountain were given no warning, no opportunity to prepare for such a journey. They had to decide if the loss of comforts and perceived necessity was worth the sacrifice of hearing

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his next words. For some it was too much to ask. They could wait for Jesus to come down from the mountain to learn and listen. He would do more miracles and bless more cities with his sermons. Others would tell them about what was said. Even if they mixed up or added to his words, the main theme would come through. For many, this mindset was very reasonable. It is a mindset that we often take with God.

Still, those who sacrificed were give a revelation that had, and still has, the power to alter a person's life and relationship with God. They were counted as his disciples, which means a learner or pupil. They became students of His way, truth and lifestyle.

ACTIVATION:

Pray that God would lead you to a place where you can hear His voice. This place may be a physical location, a specific time of day, or both. Regardless, the key is to seek God each day for the purpose of hearing Him. Commit to going there no matter how difficult the journey, and let Him lead the conversation.

My Place:

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We all have a mountain to traverse, each with its own unique yet equally difficult trials. Unfortunately, many hope that God will come down and reveal His plan. But Christ wants us to come to Him. He makes for certain levels of understanding to be difficult because true wisdom does not come easily. It comes with trials, sacrifice and commitment. If we desire to continue beyond the wonderful spectacle of Christ, to truly know the thoughts and desires of the Master, we must take a path that puts us at a certain level of discomfort.

God has a challenge for each of us to take. This challenge will lead us down a tough path. Through this path, we will attain a greater understanding of Him and we will cultivate a deeper relationship with Him. We will become true followers of Jesus Christ.