

This is a nice scripture for us today. As we get to the 17th chapter of Matt, it must have been frustrating for Jesus. There was so much debate as to who he was. A prophet, Messiah, or just some fruit cake? Everyone had their own ideas and it seemed like everywhere Jesus went, no matter what he did, he was being questioned as to just who he was and how did he fit into the scheme of things as they have been taught in their various religious upbringing.

So he takes Pete, James and John up to the mountaintop and exposed himself for whom he truly was. And when I say exposed himself, I'm talking some serious exposure, here. He shone like the sun, his garments were white as light and they saw him appear there talking with Moses and Elias.

Well of course Pete jumped right in with his usual enthusiasm and told Jesus, "Hey, we could build three really cool shrines right here to honor you, Moses and Elias. And before Pete could finish, a bright cloud came over them as the voice of God yelled out at them, "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. Listen to him!"

I'm kinda guessing that there was a whole lot more to what God was saying, here. I'm thinking He was saying that the boys just didn't get it. Forget about the shrines. Stop it, already, with the debating who this guy is. Every action he has performed and every word he has spoken points to one, and only one, possibility; "This is my son in whom I am well pleased. Start listening to him!"

But the story doesn't end there. This wonderful display of validation for who Jesus truly was caused the three men to fall to the ground in great fear.

Jesus came to them and touched them saying, "Rise and be not afraid".

What a powerful thing to say at a time like this. Think about it.

God told these guys to listen to Jesus, and the very first words out of his mouth were to rise and be not afraid.

How many times do I hear people talking about Jesus as if he drives a Harley Davidson? They talk as if he's causing us nothing but misery for every infraction we commit. He is always punishing us and trying to teach us a lesson through suffering and hardships.

Well excuse me for living, folks, but this doesn't sound like the author of love to me. It sounds more like some horrible dictator, if you ask me.

When we let Jesus into our lives, it is not to fall on our face and fear him. He wants us to rise and be not afraid.

When Jesus took Pete, James and John up to that mountaintop, the message he wanted to send was pretty clear to me. I am the Messiah. You need to pay attention to what I say and trust me because I know what I'm talking about. And how beautiful it was once he got that message across to follow it with those five very powerful words...

RISE AND BE NOT AFRAID

Jesus does not want a relationship with us that is built on fear. He doesn't want us to do good out of fear of the consequences if we don't, he wants us to do good because we celebrate the goodness in what we can do. A heart full of fear is of no use to Jesus.

This scene clearly shows us that God truly is a God of LOVE!

Rise and be not afraid. What a powerful thing to say.