

Transfiguration Sunday – February 10, 2013
Good Shepherd Ev. Lutheran Church

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Luke 9:28-36

About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. 29) As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. 30) Two men, Moses and Elijah, 31) appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem. 32) Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. 33) As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter said to him, "Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters--one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." (He did not know what he was saying.) 34) While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. 35) A voice came from the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him." 36) When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone. The disciples kept this to themselves, and told no one at that time what they had seen.

The account of the transfiguration of Jesus is one of those amazing accounts that fills us with awe and amazement. It's almost impossible for us to imagine the glory of Jesus as Peter, James and John were privileged to see it. It's amazing to us to think that Jesus was able to talk with Moses and Elijah and that the disciples knew who they were. If we can get over the awe and amazement we might wonder why this happened. The transfiguration was intended to help Jesus' disciples understand who he was and that it was necessary to pay attention to him. It prepared them to cope with his crucifixion and resurrection. It was good for them to be there and it's good for us to be here today. Today we can hear the Father say,

Theme: This Is My Son, Whom I Have Chosen

1. Behold His Glory
2. Remember His Mission
3. Listen to His Word

As [Jesus] was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. 30) Two men, Moses and Elijah, 31) appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus.

Now ordinarily Jesus looked like any other person – like you or me. But now a change took place. We have a chance to

1. Behold His Glory.

His face changed and it shone as bright as the sun. Why even his clothes became dazzling white – as bright as a flash of lightning. As the Apostle Peter explained, **We were eyewitnesses of his majesty.** The disciples had seen his miracles before – how he changed water into wine, how he feed thousands of people with just a few loaves of bread and a couple of fish, how he healed people of leprosy and drove devils out of people and how he even was able to calm the wind and the waves with his word. And they had even seen him raise the dead. But this was like nothing they had ever seen before. What they saw assured them and us that Jesus wasn't an ordinary man – they saw his glory as God with their own eyes and heard the Father explain: This is my Son, Whom I have chosen.

And why did the Lord preserve this account for us? Well it's so that we too can understand and believe that Jesus is the Son of God – the one who became one of us to rescue us all from our sins. He knows all of your needs and he cares for you and he loves you.

While they were looking at Jesus in all his glory--**Two men, Moses and Elijah, 31) appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem.**

2. Remember his Mission

No one had to introduce these men to Peter, James and John ...somehow they knew who they were. There on the mountain they were enjoying a little look at heaven. Together with them we also behold Moses and Elijah in all their heavenly glory. Moses had died on a mountain top and God had buried him – but here he was alive and talking with Jesus. Elijah – God’s powerful OT prophet had been carried to heaven in a chariot of fire. But here he was talking with Jesus. Peter, James and John heard them talking about everything that Jesus was going to do when he arrived in Jerusalem. They talked about how he would die and be buried. All of this had to happen and then he would rise again and return to heaven to be with Moses and Elijah, and all the other believers who had died trusting that he would be their Savior. There he would live and rule in heavenly glory. That is the mission that the OT prophets spoke about. All the OT sacrifices were pictures of his sacrifice. Jesus was the one who would rescue sinners from eternal death and punishment. He would establish peace between sinners and the Holy God.

So many people at Jesus’ time just didn’t understand what kind of Savior the Christ would be. They only wanted him to take care of their earthly needs. They wanted him to be a great earthly king. They just didn’t understand – and truth be told, Peter, James and John weren’t much better. They had some of these same thoughts in mind. They weren’t always willing to listen to what the Scriptures had said about Jesus. They often had a hard time understanding what Jesus was telling them and even when they heard him speak clearly about his mission – his sufferings, death and resurrection – well somehow or other it just didn’t sink in. But they still didn’t get it even after they saw his glory and heard him talking about his mission.

Sometimes when Jesus prayed those disciples fell asleep. They were a pretty sleepy bunch that night on the mountain too – but **when they became fully awake – they saw Jesus glory and the two men standing with him.** This was no dream – they saw with our eyes and heard with their own what they were talking about. They also heard the Father declare – this is my Son whom I have chosen, Listen to him.

3. Listen to His Word

The disciples surely needed to hear that reminder – because they were not always willing to do that – they had their own ideas about what kind of Savior they wanted and what kind of relationship they wanted to have with Jesus. **As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter said to him, "Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters--one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." (He did not know what he was saying.)**

Peter just didn’t want this little glimpse of heaven to end. He wanted to have heaven on earth. He suggested that they should build some shelters for Jesus and Moses and Elijah right there on the mountain. In retrospect it’s easy to see how Peter didn’t really know what he was saying. It just wasn’t time for Jesus to continue living in all of his glory. Well just think – he hadn’t even completed his mission yet. He hadn’t died for our sins. And it’s not part of God’s plan to establish heaven on earth. No Jesus is going to take us out of this sinful world – destroying it at the last day and there will be a new heaven and new earth where we will live in glory with him. That will be far better than what Peter suggested.

Jesus didn’t really respond to Peter’s suggestion. He didn’t have to. **While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. 35) A voice came from the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him."**

Suddenly they were all wrapped up in a bright cloud – they were afraid – not sure what was happening and then from this cloud they heard the voice saying; This is my Son – listen to him.

God the Father was commanding them and us to pay attention to his Son as the one he had chosen to be the Savior of the World. Listen to him. Pay attention when he tells you about your sins. Pay attention to what he has said about himself. Remember what he has told you about the Father. Don't forget his precious promises.

It's as if the Father is telling us to set aside our own foolish ideas and to pay attention to Jesus. And then as suddenly as this whole episode began it was over. **When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone. They kept this to themselves, and told no one at that time what [we] had seen.**

Peter, James and John had seen a special revelation of God. There was no doubt that Jesus was the Son of God, chosen to fulfill the OT prophecies. But the time wasn't right for them to reveal Jesus' glory far and wide. After all his mission wasn't complete at that time and people wouldn't understand. (Matthew 17:9) As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, "Don't tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

After they had seen the risen Jesus – then he commanded them and us to go and tell the good news to all nations. Once again you and I have heard the good news. It was good for us to be here.

1. To behold Jesus' glory
2. To be reminded of his mission
3. To hear his Word

Amen.