

# INI

St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
2100 16<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Austin, MN 55912-1749  
Pastor Ted Barthels  
Sermon preached on  
March 3, 2019  
Transfiguration Sunday

Scripture Lessons: Exodus 34:29-35; 2 Corinthians 4:3-6  
Hymns: 359; 719; 135; 50:2 (38:1-3)

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: Luke 9:28-36

<sup>28</sup> Now it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, that He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. <sup>29</sup> As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe *became white and glistening*. <sup>30</sup> And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, <sup>31</sup> who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. <sup>32</sup> But Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep; and when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him. <sup>33</sup> Then it happened, as they were parting from Him, *that* Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah"—not knowing what he said. <sup>34</sup> While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were fearful as they entered the cloud. <sup>35</sup> And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!" <sup>36</sup> When the voice had ceased, Jesus was found alone. But they kept quiet, and told no one in those days any of the things they had seen.

(NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

In Christ Jesus, God our Savior, dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: It's time to wake up and see the glory!

One of the details that jumps out for me in the text before us this morning is that the disciples that were chosen by Jesus to accompany Him on this special day were falling asleep. On a few special occasions Peter, James, and John were chosen to accompany Jesus when the other disciples were left behind. That had to be unusual enough for these three close friends of Jesus to take note and watch with anticipation what this must be about. So on this day of Jesus' transfiguration Jesus had these three close disciples go with Him as He walked up a mountain, but then when He got where they were going it was simply Jesus praying to His heavenly Father, and the three men yawned, and proceeded to fall asleep.

It is easy for us to be rather critical of the three disciples for this failing of theirs on this occasion. However, I have been known to doze off myself while reading my Bible, and more than once I have noticed individuals either agreeing with me rather vigorously during my sermons or perhaps they're nodding off. Sometimes it is difficult to tell. We have all had late nights. We also all have read or heard Scripture truths before so that we didn't pay particular attention to the message of the day. It is oh so very easy for our thoughts to drift or our eyes get heavy!

Today we end the Epiphany season of the church year which focused our attention on the revelation of Jesus' glory and then this coming Wednesday we enter Lent and the consideration of Jesus' sufferings and death for our salvation. Today's message continues to direct our attention to Jesus' glory, a message we have heard for seven weeks. Maybe spiritually we are nodding off.

However, today's message also connects the revelation of Jesus' glory directly with Jesus' sufferings for our salvation. The resulting glory is startling and spectacular, presenting a gospel brilliance that should awaken us all even as it did Peter, James, and John. While this event on the holy mountain was an important event for the Lord Jesus as He proceeded to His passion, it was also something He desired for these disciples to observe. Jesus wanted these disciples to see His glory, and so it is that we see --

## **THEME: Jesus' Glory Revealed for Us:**

### **I. Revealed For Us to See Him as the Chosen Messiah.**

The time had come for Jesus to fulfill the mission of salvation which had been given to Him by His heavenly Father. It doesn't take guesswork to figure out that this was the subject of Jesus' prayers on that mountain top. What took place was most certainly the Father's response to Jesus' prayers.

Jesus' appearance changed. It changed because two of the prophets of old were about to appear before the Lord, and they were going to appear glorified before Jesus. Moses, who had received the law of God on Mount Sinai, and Elijah who had boldly professed God's truth before an impenitent Israel were suddenly present with Jesus. They were appearing there in a state of glory, and so Jesus appeared in the glory that was His as the only begotten Son of God, the glory that was His since before the world was made. But Jesus was also true man, who had taken on human flesh and blood had veiled His glory that He might fulfill a mission of salvation to deliver a fallen human race from the corruption and curse of sin and death.

Our text tells us that Moses and Elijah spoke with Jesus of His impending death in Jerusalem. But we need to take note of the strange expression used here concerning

Jesus' death, that this was something He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. You might expect that one might simply say this was something that was going to happen to Jesus, He was going to die. Considering the circumstances of Jesus' suffering at the hands of His enemies, one might say this was something Jesus was about to endure. It was going to involve bitter sufferings and death. Our text says that this was something **Jesus was going to accomplish**. We are reminded here that Jesus' enemies did not take Jesus' life from Him. Jesus offered His life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world. In His Good Shepherd sermon Jesus said: *"Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father."* (John 10:17-18)

The point of Moses and Elijah being present with the Lord as He was about to go up to Jerusalem to suffer and die was to present to Jesus the blessed result of this great sacrifice, this personal sacrifice. The greatest thing that Moses and Elijah had in common was their faith in the words and promises of God. Jesus came into the world to fulfill these words and promises of God. Jesus came into the world to secure salvation for sinners, including these two sinners named Moses and Elijah. They spoke to Jesus about what He was about to accomplish for them, even their salvation. Jesus is the Messiah the prophets foretold would come into the world, the Messiah in whom all the believers of old had trusted. Jesus was the one chosen by God, sent by God, endorsed by God to be the Savior of the world.

All this glory captured the attention of the Peter, James, and John. They weren't dozing off anymore. Indeed, when Peter observed that Moses and Elijah were taking their leave of Jesus he blurted out that it was good for them to be present on the mountain with Jesus, and Peter would be willing to build some shelters for Jesus and Moses and Elijah. This was an expression of Peter's desire to

preserve that blessed moment, to keep that glory before their eyes. But that was not to be.

At that moment a bright cloud passed over them and the voice of God spoke from the clouds proclaiming, *"This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!"* (v.35) Again, this is an incident that serves a tremendous dual purpose. Jesus as the Son of God was well aware of who He was and who had sent Him, and to what end and purpose He had been sent, but this voice was a blessed endorsement of all that Jesus had accomplished and was about to accomplish as He journeyed to Jerusalem. On Good Friday the Jesus would be forsaken by God and afflicted. As Jesus endured that curse of God upon the cross He would cry out the words written in prophecy by David in the 22<sup>nd</sup> Psalm, *"My God, My God! Why have You forsaken Me!"* (Psalm 22:1) But that was not the case on the holy mountain as Jesus was transfigured, and His glory as the only begotten Son of God was revealed. Here the Father declared His possession of Jesus as His Son, His chosen One who as the Savior of the world would endure the curse of the law.

With the words *"Hear Him!"* God endorsed Jesus and the message of salvation Jesus brought into this world. We need to heed these words of the Father. This is the plan God established for our salvation. This is the only way to life and salvation. On the night before His death Jesus said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."* (John 14:6) Also recorded for us in the Acts of the Apostles is the testimony of Peter and John, *"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."* (Acts 4:12)

There it is - the wonder of the Transfiguration revealing Jesus' glory as the True Son of God the Savior of the world, Revealing Jesus' glory -

## **II. For Us to Know the Glory that Awaits Us.**

Moses and Elijah appeared in glory talking with Jesus about the death He was to accomplish in Jerusalem. They appeared in glory. They were both alive and glorified. We know Elijah passed directly from this life to the next without passing through death as the chariot of God lifted him off the earth; but Moses, Moses died and God buried him. And yet there Moses was on the holy mountain talking with Jesus. Moses and Elijah were great men, great prophets of God, but the glory they possessed was not in any way due to their faithfulness of duty, or their bravery under fire, or any other thing that they had done. The glory they had come upon them had come upon them by grace because they believed the words and promises of God.

This is a great wonder for us to observe. It speaks to us of the wonder of grace that Jesus secured for us also in the death that He accomplished in Jerusalem. Jesus *"bore our sins in His own body on the tree."* (1 Peter 2:24) Jesus died bearing the curse and the shame of our sin. Jesus died and rose again to secure the glory of eternal life that is reserved for us in heaven. That's what we see in the glorious appearing of Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration. Our hope is in Christ our Savior. Our hope is the hope of glory because we too shall be received by the Lord to Himself in heaven. We are given this assurance by the Apostle John who was there on the Mount of Transfiguration: *"Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."* (1 John 3:2) We cannot imagine possessing such glory, but that is what the Lord Jesus has secured for us, and in that appearance of Moses and Elijah we were granted a glimpse, just a glimpse of the glory that awaits us.

Today we speak of the manifestation of Jesus' glory as He was transfigured before the eyes of Peter, James, and John. Starting Wednesday we enter the season of Lent during which we shall contemplate the passion of our Lord

and how it was our sin that brought this woe on Him. But even then we shall learn more of the glory of God's Son, the glory of His grace and love that is made evident in the great lengths He was willing to go to secure for us salvation.

I know you've heard it all before. Many times before. Don't doze off, but rather marvel at the glory that is revealed in Christ our Savior. He is the Beloved Son of God. Hear Him! Praise His glorious name!

**AMEN.**

And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.