

The Transfiguration of Our Lord
Sunday, February 11, 2024

QUESNEL

“Christ’s Transfiguration and Our Hope of Glory” (Mark 9:2-9)

Our text is the reading from Mark chapter 9.

- It begins:
 - *“And after six days Jesus took with Him*
 - *Peter and James and John,*
 - *led them up a high mountain by themselves.*
 - *And He was transfigured before them,*
 - *and His clothes became radiant,*
 - *intensely white,*
 - *as no one on earth could bleach them.”*

Jesus was transfigured,

- that is, His form was changed.
 - His face shone.
 - His clothes became radiant.
 - As the Son of God from eternity,
 - Christ has always possessed this heavenly divine glory.
- But when He came in the flesh,
 - during the days of His humiliation,
 - Christ Jesus emptied Himself
 - and made Himself nothing,
 - taking the form of a servant.
- His glory was put under wraps.
 - But now,
 - in this moment
 - on the mountain,
 - Christ’s glory shines forth.
 - And these disciples get a glimpse of it,
 - even if they do not understand it.

This is a preview of the glorification of Christ

- that will begin with His resurrection.
 - For at that time

- the disciples will see Jesus again
 - in a glorified state,
 - when He appears to them
 - having risen from the dead.
- Our text even says that Jesus
 - *“charged them to tell no one what they had seen,*
 - *until the Son of Man*
 - *had risen from the dead.”*
- And so, the transfiguration is meant
 - to point us ahead to Easter
 - and the resurrection of Christ.

This transfiguration is a type of preview of Christ’s resurrection,

- and most certainly of our resurrection also.
 - For you and I were joined to Jesus in Holy Baptism.
 - There, at our baptism,
 - the Father, who said of Jesus,
 - *“This is my beloved Son”*
 - in Holy Baptism,
 - the Father takes us
 - as His own dear children.
 - In baptism,
 - God adopted us by grace
 - and made us co-heirs with Christ
 - of His glory.
 - Now we have an inheritance waiting for us in heaven.
 - At the transfiguration,
 - Christ’s clothes became radiant,
 - intensely white,
 - as no one on earth could bleach them.
 - So, traditionally,
 - those being baptized
 - wear a white christening garment,
 - to show that they are being clothed
 - with the robe of Christ’s righteousness.
 - Your sins,
 - though they were scarlet,
 - became as white as snow.
 - No one on earth can cleanse you to be that pure and holy.
 - Only God can.

- Just as Christ's transfiguration points ahead
 - to His resurrection,
 - so your baptism,
 - when you were connected to Christ
 - that is your personal transfiguration,
 - and it points ahead
 - to your own resurrection.
- This is the hope of glory you have right now.
- You are a baptized child of God,
 - with the sure hope of the resurrection.
- So our first point today
 - is that Christ's transfiguration is a preview
 - both of His own glory when He rises from the dead
 - and of the glory
 - we will share
 - when Christ raises us
 - from the dead.
- Secondly, notice that Moses and Elijah show up:
 - *"And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses,*
 - *and they were talking with Jesus."*
- Now that is something, isn't it?
 - Think of it:
 - Moses died some 1400 years earlier.
 - Elijah did not die;
 - he was taken up into heaven in a chariot of fire.
- But that was almost 900 years earlier.
 - And now,
 - they both are here with Jesus,
 - on the mountain,
 - seen by three witnesses,
 - Peter, James, and John.
- Moses and Elijah were not just some sort of hologram or hallucination.
 - They were really there, actually present.
 - Now what does this tell us about life after death,
 - about eternal life?
 - That it's real!
 - Earthly death was not the end for Moses.
- And for Elijah,
 - death was not even there for him
 - in the first place.
- That is a foreshadowing

- of those who will still be alive
 - at our Lord's second coming.
- Life,
 - life in heavenly glory,
 - is the reality that all of God's baptized people
 - have to look forward to.
 - This is God's promise,
 - and it is attested to us
 - by the presence of these two men of God,
 - Moses and Elijah.

Elijah and Moses are standing there with Jesus,

- but then
 - after a while the disciples look up
 - and see only Jesus.
 - This previews the promise of eternal life
 - that is focused on
 - and fulfilled by none other
 - than our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.
- Moses and Elijah are there,
 - alive and in person,
 - but they are there
 - **only because of Jesus.**

So it will be for you, my friends!

- Death will not be the end for you.
 - Death will not separate you from your Saviour.
 - Just as Moses and Elijah
 - were with Jesus there on the mountain,
 - so also you,
 - when you die,
 - will be with the Lord in paradise.
- Life everlasting is in store for you.
 - This is our faith and hope,
 - this is our sure and certain hope,
 - the hope of glory.

But now,

- the third previewing of our salvation in the Transfiguration,

- that glory must come through the cross.
 - Notice, at the end of our text it says,
 - *“until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.”*
 - This means that first He must die.
 - You know,
 - in all the gospel accounts,
 - the Transfiguration takes place
 - in the context of Christ
 - first predicting His passion,
 - that is,
 - His suffering and death.
 - So here in Mark,
 - in the verses right before our text,
 - it reads:
 - *“And He began to teach them*
 - *that the Son of Man must suffer many things*
 - *and be rejected by the elders*
 - *and the chief priests*
 - *and the scribes*
 - *and be killed,*
 - *and after three days rise again.*
 - *And He said this plainly.”*
 - Then a little while after these words,
 - shortly after the transfiguration,
 - Jesus will tell them again:
 - *“The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men,*
 - *and they will kill Him.*
 - *And when He is killed,*
 - *three days He will rise.”*
- The disciples did not want to hear this talk
 - of their master getting killed.
 - It did not fit their idea
 - of what should happen to the Messiah.
 - St. Peter even tried to argue with Jesus
 - about the idea of His going to the cross.
- But here at the transfiguration,
 - the Father’s voice affirms
 - what Jesus says about His suffering.
 - The Father says, **“Listen to Him.”**

Now why is this?

- Why must victory over death come through the cross?
 - Because the righteous death of Jesus
 - is the **only** conqueror of the sinner's death.
 - There is no other way for Jesus
 - to fulfill His mission of redeeming mankind.
- Jesus came to save sinners.
 - You and I would be lost forever
 - without God's forgiveness.
 - But Christ came to win our forgiveness,
 - to do the job we could not do.
 - And it required His death to accomplish this.
- The wages of sin is death.
 - That is the earned consequence
 - of our rebellion against God.
 - Our mountain of misdeeds,
 - the selfishness and lack of love we all manifest
 - on a daily basis -----
 - these sins testify against us.
- Now multiply that by a few billion,
 - and you see all the sin of humanity
 - that had to be covered and atoned for.
 - If sin is to be forgiven,
 - if the judgment of death is to be satisfied,
 - there is only one way for every last single speck
 - of that sin and death
 - to be taken care of.
 - It is through the death of Jesus Christ,
 - God's only Son.
 - His holy precious blood is of such brilliant purity,
 - that when He sheds his blood on the cross,
 - when He offers His life as the sacrifice for sin,
 - there is forgiveness:
 - Because Christ has atoned
 - for all the sins of the whole world.
 - It is done,
 - it is finished,
 - it is all taken care of.
 - Without the cross,
 - there is no hope of life
 - eternal life.
 - There is only be the grim prospect

- of eternal death and damnation.
- But with the cross of Christ,
 - there is forgiveness.
 - And with forgiveness
 - where sin is taken care of,
 - there death is taken care of also,
 - and life will reign in its place.

The glory of Christ must come through the cross.

- We even portray that truth in the church year.
 - Today is the last Sunday in the Epiphany season,
 - which means it is the Sunday right before Lent.
 - And on this Sunday,
 - the Holy Gospel is always
 - an account of the transfiguration.
- That is a good choice,
 - as we move from Epiphany to Lent.
 - For in the gospels themselves,
 - the transfiguration serves as a pivot point
 - in Christ's ministry
 - from here on
 - Jesus is heading to the cross.
- So likewise in the church year,
 - this Sunday reflects that movement.
 - The Transfiguration of Our Lord
 - serves as the pivot point
 - between Epiphany and Lent:
- The Epiphany season manifests the Son of Man
 - bringing to light
 - Jesus as the Christ,
 - the Son of God.
- Lent traces Jesus on His journey to Jerusalem
 - for His suffering and death.
 - Today, Transfiguration Sunday,
 - serves as the bridge that connects the two.

Today, as we conclude the Epiphany season,

- we sing our Alleluias
 - and our Glorias,

- lots of them,
 - in glorious,
 - exuberant praise.
- But at the end of this service,
 - we will set aside “Alleluia”
 - for a little while,
 - until Easter comes.
 - Lent will be a time
 - for more subdued reflection and repentance.
- We will go on that journey with Jesus to Jerusalem.
 - After today,
 - we will put away the glistening white
 - and put on the penitential purple.
 - As we physically reflect
 - that the glory of God in Christ
 - will come through the cross.

But today, for one last time, we sing our Alleluias.

- It is still Epiphany.
 - And what have we seen this Epiphany season?
- From the visit of the Wise Men;
 - to the Baptism of our Lord,
 - where the Father’s voice first declared,
 - “*You are my beloved Son*”;
 - through the preaching, teaching,
 - and healing ministry of Jesus
 - during this Epiphany season,
 - Jesus has been manifesting His glory
 - as the Son of God.
 - From the shining star of Bethlehem
 - to now our shining Lord
 - on the Mount of Transfiguration,
 - we have been seeing who this Jesus is.

And so,

- ’tis indeed good, Lord, to be here,
 - here on the mountain with the Saints Peter, James, and John.
 - Why?
 - Today we have seen three reasons.

- One, Christ's transfiguration points us ahead
 - to His resurrection,
 - and thus to our own resurrection,
 - for we are joined to Jesus in baptism.
- Two, the presence of Moses and Elijah
 - bears testimony to life beyond the grave,
 - a hope focused in
 - and fulfilled by Jesus only.
- And three,
 - this glory comes through the cross. →
- There Christ made atonement for our sins
 - and suffered death for us,
 - thereby life that is our hope of glory
 - winning our forgiveness
 - and assuring us of the eternal life with Him.

In Christ's transfiguration,

- we are given a glimpse of our hope of glory.
 - And this sure hope
 - will give you the strength you need to carry on.
 - Because when we come down from the mountain
 - and we are going through the plain,
 - when we experience the tough
 - and perplexing places of life,
 - this hope of glory will help us
 - to keep on keeping on.
 - The brilliance of the Transfiguration
 - on this last Sunday of Epiphany
 - fulfills the promise given in the Baptism of our Lord
 - beginning with the first Sunday of Epiphany.
 - As we await our turn to see our Lord
 - in His transfigured state
 - in that final glory of our heavenly salvation,
 - we pray that He will be with us
 - as we walk once again
 - on this earthly plain.

AMEN

This sermon was prepared for the Divine Service at Trinity Lutheran Church, Quesnel, BC and was presented on February 11, 2024, the day we celebrated the Transfiguration of our Lord. If you have questions or comments please feel free to call or text Pastor Alan Visser at (250) 552-4685.