

<sup>28</sup> About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. <sup>29</sup> As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. <sup>30</sup> Two men, Moses and Elijah, <sup>31</sup> appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem. <sup>32</sup> Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. <sup>33</sup> 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.) <sup>34</sup> While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. <sup>35</sup> A voice came from the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.” <sup>36</sup> 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.

In the name of our glorious Lord and Savior, dear friends,

There was no way she could come forward. The police were knocking on doors in the neighborhood and she knew what they were doing. Hours earlier, a young man had been shot in the street near the corner. They were canvassing the neighborhood, looking for anyone who saw or heard what happened. And she saw the man who did it. If his friends found out that she talked to the police, they’d come after her. She had two little babies to worry about. There was simply no way she could come forward; she was too afraid.

When people see something that makes them are afraid, they sometimes keep quiet—some forever, some for a while—until it’s safe.

Something happened to the closest of Jesus’ friends, Peter, James and John. They witnessed something that was very strange, almost unbelievable—except that they saw it with their own eyes! And it caused them to be afraid. It says that they ***kept this to themselves, and told no one at that time what they had seen.*** This was not only out of fear, but at the command of Jesus as he was transfigured before them.

In Luke’s account of Jesus’ Transfiguration we hear:

**THIS IS GOD’S SON!**

*And as we do, I urge you to...*

- 1. SEE HIS GLORY (28-30)**
- 2. REMEMBER HIS MISSION (31-33)**
- 3. LISTEN TO HIM (34-36)**

Peter, James and John were very fortunate—they were privileged to see Jesus in the flesh. We heard last Sunday that these disciples were called away from their fishing business to follow Jesus. And these three knew Jesus as well as anyone. Sometimes Peter, James and John are referred to as the “inner circle” of Jesus’ friends because we find them present at many important events, at some of the highlights of Jesus’ life and ministry. They were the only ones allowed to be with Jesus when he healed Jairus’ daughter. They were the ones pulled away from the rest of the disciples to be with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane just prior to his betrayal. And they shared this blessed event before us today—Jesus’ Transfiguration.

If you read the book of Acts, you'll find that these three men remained close friends and co-workers in the gospel ministry. Surely their work together on the boats on the Sea of Galilee helped these men to bond, but we can be sure that the experiences they shared together with Jesus solidified their friendship and resolve to be missionaries of the gospel.

But back to the mountain! Jesus had these men go with him up on the mountain to pray. It was likely that Mt. Hermon is the spot where they witnessed Jesus' Transfiguration—an outward display of his glory. It says, ***As (Jesus) was praying, the appearance of his face was changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning.*** All we know about what this meant is written here. It was a spectacular sight as Jesus, the spiritual Light of the world, literally shone like the brightest light.

Usually Jesus looked like any other person—the Bible even indicates that there was nothing about the way he looked that would have made him stand out from any other person. But he was changed on that mountain. When Matthew records the events of the transfiguration, he adds that Jesus' face ***“shone like the sun (17:2)”*** When speaking of the brightness of Jesus' clothes, Mark says that they were ***“dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them (9:3)”***.

As you can probably tell from the three recorded gospel accounts, words don't seem to adequately describe just how bright Jesus and his clothes were! This was a glimpse of the glory that always belonged to Jesus as true God, but was not visible. His divine nature was displayed in brilliant, glorious light. Peter, James and John SAW THE GLORY of Christ.

You and I also SEE HIS GLORY. When we read the Bible, the revealed Word of God—inspired by God and inerrant—we SEE HIS GLORY with the eyes of faith. When we believe all that is written about our Savior in the Scriptures, we SEE HIS GLORY. When we know beyond a shadow of a doubt that Jesus and his love lives in our hearts, we know the GLORY of Jesus in a personal, meaningful way.

Peter, James and John got a glimpse of what heavenly glory will be like as they saw Moses and Elijah on that mountain too. These were two significant believers from days gone by. God had taken both of them in special ways. The LORD himself buried Moses, and Elijah was taken up to heaven in a chariot of fire. There were no photographs or digital pictures of Moses and Elijah that would have allowed the disciples to know who these men were. We don't know how the disciples recognized them, but they did.

It says that they appeared with ***glorious splendor***. God clearly says in his Word that people don't come back from the dead to this earth. This, however, was an exceptional, spectacular event involving the revelation of Jesus' divine glory. Moses and Elijah came down from heaven and appeared with Jesus.

We might remember that Moses and Elijah only had heaven because of the glory of Christ. They had prophesied about the Christ's coming. They had believed that the Savior would one day come. They enjoyed the blessings of heaven by faith Christ. Their glory was a reflection of Christ's glory. And in them we receive a glimpse of the heavenly glory we will share because of our Savior.

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When Moses and Elijah appeared at Jesus' Transfiguration, they were there for more than just impressing Peter, James and John. It says that they ***appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem.***

***“His departure”*** was his impending death, the purpose for which he entered the world, the very thing which Moses and Elijah had foretold by God's power and instruction. God does not reveal to us here what aspects of Jesus' suffering and death they discussed, so we should not speculate too much about the details. But we might wonder whether or not Moses and Elijah were sent to strengthen Jesus for

what was coming up, in much the same way the angels attended him after he fasted in the desert and was tempted by Satan, and in the same way angels would later appear to him and strengthen him in the Garden of Gethsemane just before his sufferings and death. All we're told, really, is that they were there speaking with Jesus about these things.

I hope that your ear caught this phrase: ***They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem***. Jesus was about to bring these things to fulfillment. He knew what he was going to do! He knew what they would do to him. He knew he would feel the awful load of the world's sin. He knew they would kill him on that cruel Roman death-penalty device, the cross. He knew HIS MISSION! He knew.

If you question whether Jesus really knew or not (and many people do), then listen to his own words: ***The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again (John 10:17-18)***. Jesus knew HIS MISSION. Pilate interrogated Jesus and at one point asked him, ***Don't you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?*** Jesus' chilling response to Pilate was ***You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above (John 19:10,11)***. What Pilate didn't realize, Jesus did—that his MISSION included being handed over to the Roman governor and crucifixion. Jesus knew that Pilate was simply a tool used by God to accomplish the salvation of the world.

All of the parts of Jesus' heavenly MISSION were known to him. He willingly was born, in all humility, as a human being. He forced himself to be in a position to keep his own holy Law without exception. He willingly offered himself up as the sacrifice for our sins. In fact, the day after his Transfiguration, Jesus said this to his disciples: ***Listen carefully to what I am about to tell you: The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men (Luke 9:44)***. Oh, Jesus absolutely knew what he needed to do to save lost souls.

As we approach the Lenten season (remember that Ash Wednesday is this week), we must REMEMBER HIS MISSION as well. We are not filled with pity for Jesus because of the injustice done to him. We are filled with sorrow over our sins, which caused him to have to go that route for us. In Wednesday worship, beginning this week, we'll walk with Jesus as we REMEMBER HIS MISSION to save sinners, which ended not at the cross and not at the tomb, but was complete with his resurrection from death and his ascension into heaven.

We're told that Peter, James and John were very sleepy but became fully awake and saw Jesus in his glorious state along with Moses and Elijah. They knew that this was special, but didn't quite know what to make of it. Peter didn't know what to say and so he blurted something out. ***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***. It says he didn't know what he was saying. But true to form, bless his heart, Peter has to say something. He knew it was good and he wanted to prolong the blessing of being there. I don't think we can blame him; we might have done the same!

There was no time for an answer to Peter. Moses and Elijah went back into heaven and a cloud descended. It was time for Peter, James and John to be reminded of Jesus' MISSION—that he was God's Son.

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The voice from the cloud would impress upon these men the need to LISTEN TO JESUS. It does the same for us as we hear what happened.

***While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. A voice came from the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.” 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.***

Along with that cloud, fear descended upon those men. Put yourself in their place for a moment. You’re up on a mountain with Jesus. Moses and Elijah show up from heaven. Jesus is all bright—brighter than anything you’ve ever seen and can hardly describe. And now a cloud envelops you. “*What next? What more could possibly happen?!*” Then a voice—a voice unlike any other—the voice of the almighty God speaks to you as you’re swallowed up by this cloud! And this is God’s message: ***This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.***

If there was any doubt in their minds before, this should have cleared it up, don’t you think?! ***This is my Son***, the Father said. This was the Son of God. He had the authority of God. He had the approval of the Father. Those disciples could be sure that Jesus was the Son of God!

***Whom I have chosen***, the Father said. This is the chosen One, the Christ, the promised Messiah. God the Father chose to have Jesus save mankind from their sins. He was the Savior God’s people had been looking for!

And then the command of God the Father from Heaven: ***listen to him***. This is the Savior. He is God. His words are the words of God himself. In his words are salvation and life. God himself spoke to those men and instructed them to LISTEN TO JESUS.

You and I, dear friends, also know that we are to LISTEN TO HIM because his words are salvation and life for us. As we LISTEN TO JESUS’ Word and we experience his forgiveness and love, we find that we can’t only listen to it—we also want to live it. And this is the expectation of our Savior, who said to his disciples just before he went to the cross by which he saved us: ***“If you love me, you will obey what I command (John 14:15).”***

It is our love for Jesus, the Son of God, the chosen Savior, that prompts us to continue listening to his Word. Peter, James and John and the rest of the disciples would need to listen and remember Jesus’ words to them as their Lord’s time of suffering drew close and as they would see him die. They would be left to do the work of spreading the gospel. Although Jesus told them not to tell anyone of their experience on that mountain, at least for a while, they would later tell of it and everything the Savior did for sinners like us, as they became his missionaries to the world.

You and I are very much like those first disciples! We need Jesus’ Word—the promises, the comfort, the love of God in Christ. Our daily life is full of sin and disappointment—we need to LISTEN TO HIS WORD where we find the promise of forgiveness and the certainty of eternal life in heaven. Jesus’ great love invites us to listen. And we are not to keep quiet about it, but instead spread the news of our Savior’s love for the world. God give us the strength to do so because we are the ones who know that Jesus is God’s Son! We have seen his glory. We remember his mission to save sinners. And we have listened to his Word so that we can proclaim it! May God bless us as we share the news of our glorious Lord Jesus! Amen.

**Now the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,  
will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.**