

**February 22, 2009**  
**Transfiguration of Our Lord**

*“Lord, Jesus We Love to See Your Glory”*

**MARK 9:2-9**

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*After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. <sup>3</sup> His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. <sup>4</sup> And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus. <sup>5</sup> Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters-- one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” <sup>6</sup> (He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.) <sup>7</sup> Then a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and a voice came from the cloud: “This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!” <sup>8</sup> Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus. <sup>9</sup> As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.*

I was on my way to the church this past week. The sun was breaking through the eastern sky. There was a dark cloud in the west. I noticed a rainbow beginning to form. By the time I drove into the parking lot, the rainbow was arching across the sky. We were able to get a picture of the front of our church, with a dark cloud in the background, bright sun illuminating the cross in the front of the church and the bottom of the rainbow touching the top of the cross.

We treasure those moments in life when we are able to observe beautiful moments in nature such as a waterfall in the mountains, a walk along the beach at sunset, the snow in the mountains. Even more beautiful than scenes in nature, are the moments in life when we see people showing kindness and love to each other. When it happens to us personally, we want to cherish those moments forever. And then there are those moments, those serendipitous moments, when we are alone in God’s Word. We see some aspect of God’s love or one of his promises in a way we never saw it before.

Jesus offered his beloved disciples Peter, James and John, a moment they never forgot for the rest of their lives. Later John would revel in what he saw as he wrote to Christians of every age, “And we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” This morning we want to share that moment with Jesus on that holy mountain, a moment of glory we don’t want to ever forget.

**We love to see your glory as God**

Your best moments in your life come to you when you see Jesus for who he truly is- your Lord and God. Sometimes this comes in times of great stress and hardship. “After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him led them up into a high mountain.” Six days earlier Jesus spoke plainly about the agenda for the coming weeks of his life; the suffering, the rejection, the death on the cross for the sin of the world, and his rising from the dead. This was tough talk, this cross talk, hardly in keeping with the dreams and aspirations the

disciples had three years early when they left their nets to follow Jesus. Peter even took him aside and rebuked him. Jesus had to tell Peter, "Get behind me Satan." It was a super stressful time for Jesus and his disciples.

Six days after this stressful time, Jesus led them up to a high mountain and was transfigured before them. His clothes became a dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. His human body radiated the glory he had as Lord and God from all eternity. The word for transfiguration is the Greek word, "morphe" from which we get words such as metamorphosis and morphine. I learned the word "metamorphosis" in the first grade as we watched in amazement as a Monarch butterfly was changed from a lowly worm feeding on a milkweed plant to a magnificent butterfly. They saw Jesus fully human "God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, True God."

The greatest change or metamorphosis that can ever happen in your life occurs when your life is changed by the Holy Spirit. You were born again, to believe that Jesus is much more than a great prophet, or important world leader, or some person in history who has had legends about miracles attached to his life. What a change you have undergone in your life when with the eyes of faith you see what Peter, James and John saw on that mountain. You don't laugh, but you believe with all your heart these words from John's gospel: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made." You see a tiny baby born in Bethlehem as your Lord and God. You see Jesus risen from the dead with the nail prints still in his hands, and you confess in awe and wonder with Thomas, "My Lord and my God."

The beauty of that moment with Jesus radiating his glory as God becomes even more beautiful as suddenly Moses and Elijah appear there with Jesus. "And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking to Jesus." It was Elijah who went up into heaven in a chariot of fire, and Moses who was buried by the Lord on Mount Nebo after he was given a glimpse of the Promised Land. We know what they were talking about, because one of the other gospel accounts says they were talking about Jesus death and resurrection. They were talking to Jesus as their Lord and God but also talking about his work as the Savior of the world.

What if Abraham Lincoln came back from the dead on his 200 birthday celebration and spoke to our country and its leaders? What if he read in person again the words of his Gettysburg Address or words from his Emancipation Proclamation about the great freedom we enjoy in America? Jesus was there talking to Moses and Elijah about freeing the world from sin by his death and resurrection. In spite of all the bad news in the economy and the bad news you have about your job or your retirement account, the greatest blessing is still your freedom in Christ. That's what we need to talk about more to each other. We need to wake up every morning and be led by the words of Psalm 103: "Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits-- who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion." Jesus, God's Son has redeemed us from the pit. Even in the most stressful of economic times that's the best news you will ever hear.

**We love to hear the glory of our Father's voice**

We love to see Jesus shine in all his glory as God and hear Moses and Elijah talking with us as our Savior. We also love to hear the voice of the Father speaking from heaven about his Son. "Then a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud: "This is my Son, whom I love, Listen to him!" Jesus needed to hear these reassuring words from his heavenly Father. Remember, dear Christian, that Jesus, Lord and God, was also fully human, even tempted in all parts as we are. He needed his heavenly Father to assure him of his love, just as you and I desperately need people in our lives to tell us, "I love you." When my mom was dying she would periodically wake up and have a brief lucid moment. How special it was to hear the first words from her lips spoken to us as she woke up, "I love you." You cannot overdo saying, "I love you" to your husband or wife, mom or dad, or to the children. Think of the loving words Jesus spoke to his mother as he was dying. Here the heavenly Father calls Jesus the Son whom he loves. The Father could say this about Jesus, not just because Jesus was his Son from all eternity, but because Jesus lived a perfect life, free from sin, in everything he did.

What a glorious moment this is for us personally to hear the Father speak these words to his Son! I cannot see anything in my life this morning that would move my God to be my Father, and to say that he loves me. In our Bible class this past week we were studying Psalm 73. We heard the Psalmist Asaph confess that he was a brute beast for the way he complained against the Lord. How awful it was to hear about that chimpanzee that went berserk and tore apart a poor woman that came to visit her friend. There is a wild animal in all of us that lurks within our hearts that can suddenly manifest itself like a brute beast. The sins we commit in secret are so shameful to God, the sudden outbursts of anger along with all those moments we fail to show kindness love. There is nothing in me that makes me loved by God. Jesus did it for me, and for you and for the whole world. His perfect life that was so pleasing to our Father has now been given to you and credited to you through faith. His perfect death wipes out every sin of the past that is so awful and odious to a perfect God who cannot love us the way we are. Romans 5 says, "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand." Could anything be more beautiful, more splendid and more glorious than knowing we have direct access to our God through Jesus? We have direct access to him in prayer and direct access to his voice that constantly tells us, "I love you." Listen to the Father speak to Jesus. This is my Son whom I love. He is also speaking to you and telling you how much he loves you through his Son.

### **We love to know the glory that will be ours**

When Peter saw Jesus in his glory with Moses and Elijah talking to him, he wanted that moment to last. That is why he said, "Rabbi, 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 wanted the moment to last, even though the amazing display of God's glory filled them with fear.

There are certain moments in your life that are so awesome and so amazing you want them to last and linger for a long time. We use our cameras to preserve such moments. We preserve them in writing or even poetry. We relive them in our minds. We want to hang on to them and not let them go. If you take all the best moments of life and distil them down to a moment of sheer joy, I don't know if we could stand such a moment because it would simply be overwhelming. Someday when Jesus comes in clouds of glory, he will

take us to the place he has prepared for us, and we will see him face to face and share in his glory. In this life he gives a rainbow after the storm, a moment with someone you love as they face death, these special moments alone in the Bible when you realize how much you are loved and how amazing it is.

I close this sermon with this amazing prayer Jesus prayed to his Father the night before he died in John 17, a prayer that where he asks that we might someday see his glory. "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world." Amen.