

**February 10, 2013**  
**Transfiguration**

*"A Breathtaking View of Jesus' Glory"*

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**LUKE 9:28-36**

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*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.*

At the end of January Pastor Proeber and I drove to a pastoral conference in San Diego. We hit rain on 101 near Tarzana. The rain produced the most brilliant partial rainbow I have ever seen. I thought there had to be pot of gold at the base of that rainbow. On the return trip we saw the sun setting off the coast of Ventura. The partial clouds were ablaze with colors of orange and yellow and red. Where the sky could be seen it was brilliant blue that stood in contrast to the orange and yellow. We describe such beautiful scenes in nature as "breathtaking."

Peter, James and John had their breath taken away from them when they saw Jesus transfigured before them on the holy mountain. Peter said to Jesus, "Lord it is good for us to be here." They never forgot what they experienced with Jesus. They carried this with them the rest of their lives.

How privileged we are to be gathered together here in this place to relive and see with our eyes of what Peter, James and John experienced that day with Jesus. Maybe this hasn't been the best week for you. Satan has done a good job of getting into your life. You have pain in your body that won't go away, stress from your job, and there are all these people that drag you down. The joy meter plummets from ten to zero. It's time to take this trek with Jesus up the holy mountain and have our breath taken away as he shows us his glory.

**We see the Savior's glory**

"About eight days after Jesus said this he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray." Jesus needed time to be alone with his heavenly Father in pray. Eight days before this he specifically told his disciple about how he would suffer and die on the cross and rise again. The disciples resisted his words. Let's remember that Jesus was tempted in all parts as we are, yet he remained without sin. The book of

Hebrews tells us how Jesus prayed to his heavenly Father. "During the days of Jesus' life on this earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears from the one that could save him from death." Can't you hear the groans and sighs as Jesus prays? Can't you see the tears? Jesus needed that time in prayer with his heavenly Father. We need more time in prayer with our heavenly Father.

As Jesus was praying, "the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as lightning." Matthew says, "Jesus was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun and his clothes became as white as light." What glory we see in the light of the sun or the stars, or the bolt of lightning, or the brilliant colors of a flower, or even light passing through a laser beam and reading information on a disk. Here is Jesus beaming with a far more glorious light that defies description. It says his face changed. He is radiating the glory he has as God. He doesn't reflect the light of God's glory. He radiates the glory of God. The Book of Hebrews says of Jesus, "He is the radiance of God's glory and exact representation of his being." We confess in the Nicene Creed, "God from God and Light from Light."

You can tell a lot from a person's face. You can see from their face if they are anger, or sad, or happy, or tired. When you look at the transfigured face of Jesus you see the face of your Lord and God. Later Peter would write about this with these words, "We were eyewitnesses of his glory." John would write "We have seen his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

It is good to keep this glory we see in Jesus with us as we enter into another Lenten season. Jesus allows himself to be arrested, then beaten, and taken to the cross. He allows himself to take all our sin upon himself and suffer the wrath and punishment of God for each sin we have committed. The blood that flows from his body is the blood of someone who is fully human but at the same time also true God. I think of the time I visited the lady who used to live next to the church after she was admitted to Marian Hospital for cancer that shortly claimed her life. The first words that came from her mouth were "I am thinking of all the blood that Jesus shed on the cross for my sins." The blood that poured from the cross is the blood of God. "Glory be to Jesus, Who in bitter pains, Poured for me his life blood from his sacred veins." His veins were sacred.

The disciples were sleeping at first. But then the bright light of Jesus' glory woke them up just as a bright light can wake you up when you are sleeping. "Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and two men standing with them." Peter was so caught up with the glory of that moment, he blurts 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." Have you ever said after seeing a beautiful sunset or a rainbow, "Oh, how I wish I had my camera with me!" Peter wanted to preserve the moment. He did not want it to go away.

It says that Moses and Elijah were talking to Jesus about his departure that would take place in Jerusalem. Moses was there representing the Law. Elijah was there representing the Prophets. The word for departure is the word "exodus." Just as God miraculously led his people out of Egypt to the Promised Land through the waters of the Red Sea, Jesus leads us to our Promised Land by his miraculous departure from this life. Jesus prayed for strength from his heavenly Father to make it through his departure. How much easier

it would have been to come down from this mountain top and not go to the cross for us. The Father answered his prayer by having Moses and Elijah minister to him, just as angels ministered to Jesus when he was praying the Garden of Gethsemane.

Moses and Elijah also minister to us this morning as well. Moses died 1500 years before Jesus was born. Elijah was carried to heaven in a fiery chariot 900 years before Jesus was born. Both miraculously stand before Jesus and minister to him. They also minister to us because they remind us what will happen to us after we die. When we die our souls go to be with Jesus. On the last day our bodies will be raised to life again no matter how much concrete surrounds us, or how much dirt covers us, or where our ashes may be scattered or interred. Will we recognize each other in heaven? Peter, James and John recognized Moses and Elijah. One dear widow lady told her pastor how much she missed her husband Bill. They had been married for over 60 years. She said, "I used to get the dinner ready looking forward to that moment when he would walk in the door so we could be together again. All those years I waited for him to come home to me. Now he is waiting for me to come home to him. The Apostle Paul said, "So shall we be with the Lord forever." The Lord will take our breath away when he comes again in glory to raise us to life on the last day.

### **We hear the Father's voice**

We see the glory of Jesus and now we hear the voice of the heavenly Father speaking from that mountain. "While he (Peter) was speaking a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud." God used a cloud to lead his people out of Egypt. The cloud of God's glory filled the holy of holies in the tabernacle and temple of the Lord. God uses this cloud to speak to Jesus. "A voice came from the cloud saying, "This is my Son, whom I have chosen. Listen to him." Peter was afraid of the cloud. The presence of God's glory struck fear into him. Don't point an accusing finger at Peter. If a cloud of God's glory suddenly filled this place, we would also react in fear because of our sinful condition.

God the Father proclaims his love for Jesus. He says, "This is my Son." The Father was totally pleased with the life that Jesus had lived. He would show he was pleased with the sacrifice Jesus made at the cross by raising him to life again. This holy and perfect God who appears in the form of a cloud can never find anything in me or you that could qualify us for his love. You may see a beautiful sunset and joyfully thank God for the beauty that you have seen, and the next moment you utter angry words at the driver that has just gotten too close to you on the freeway. Sin must be paid for and forgiven before we can escape the judgment to come and join Jesus and Moses and Elijah in the place that Jesus has prepared for us. God the Father chose his Son Jesus to be the perfect and pure source of forgiveness and peace and salvation for you. "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

This past week Zsa Zsa Gabor turned 96 years old. Many years ago she was once asked by British journalist David Frost why she was so generous with her money. She batted her thickly lashed eyes and said in a somewhat condescending tone of voice and with a Hungarian accent, "Well, David, you know that the more rent you pay now, the better apartment you will have in the future." Poor girl doesn't know how far short her life falls of God's glory and how much she needs to hear the Father point her to his Son as the only

hope salvation. The Revelation tells us that "Salvation belongs to God."

This morning we hear our heavenly telling us to listen to Jesus. By listening to Jesus the breathtaking glory of this holy mountain becomes as real for us as it was Peter, James and John. After telling us how he heard this voice that came from heaven, Peter tells in 2 Peter 1, "And we have the word of the prophets made more certain and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts."

I don't know when I will see another beautiful sunset or another rainbow, or another mountain valley so beautiful that it takes my breath away. I do know the words my heavenly Father tells me this morning are true for me and also for you. When you listen to Jesus speaking here in his Word, he will take bring you close to him and let you see his glory. May every day of your life here on this earth be a mountain top experience with Jesus in all of his glory! Amen