

The Transfiguration of our Lord
February 19, 2023

“Jesus’ transfiguration – a majestic confirmation of God’s prophetic Word to you!”
(2 Peter 1:16-21)
By Rev. Ed Weber

Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,
Amen.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for the Transfiguration of our Lord is
from our Epistle reading 2 Peter 1:16-19

**“16 For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to
you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of
His majesty. 17 For He received from God the Father honor and glory when
such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: “This is My beloved Son,
in whom I am well pleased.” 18 And we heard this voice which came from
heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.**

**19 And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed
as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star
rises in your hearts;**

Here ends our text.

“We...were eyewitnesses of His majesty”.

Who is the “we”? Well, on this day that we celebrate the transfiguration of our
Lord, we know that 3 men went up a high mountain. Those chosen 3 were Peter,
James and John. Which mountain that was is not named in Scripture. Traditionally,
Mount Tabor which has a height of 1800 feet is selected, also because it was near
Nazareth. And a top this mountain has been built the church of the Transfiguration.

Mount Hermon is also a possibility because it is near Caesarea Philippi where the
previous events in Matthew 16 took place and because it reaches a height of 9200
feet.

But the name of the mountain is not what is important, but what took place on top
of the mountain, of which Peter, James and John were eyewitnesses. And what
they saw Peter made sure to write down so that we would have a sure account of
God’s Holy Word. That we would God’s infallible, unbreakable, Word of promise,
inspired only by the Holy Spirit as men were moved by Him to give to us His most
precious and majestic truths!

And these truths which Peter confirms to us don't need to know the name of the mountain, but we do need to know the name of the One transfigured on top of the mountain, who created all mountains, who spoke His commandments on top of Mount Sinai making all man's sin known to him and then fulfilling those commandments for all men on top of Mount Calvary to remove all sin once and for all!

Who did this? None other than the humble man from Nazareth who climbed the mountain with Peter, James and John. He is the One who asked the disciples in the previous chapter, Matthew 16:

“Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?”

14 So they said, “Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

15 He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”

16 Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

17 Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”

That is the blessed answer. The only answer of which all Scripture confirms and which the voice from heaven, the Father, confirms Jesus Christ. He is the Son of God – the Christ, the Messiah. And only by faith in Him can one answer with Peter and profess that Jesus is the Savior. On this rock of Peter's profession of faith is the church built upon, the readers in Asia Minor of Peter's epistle and all believers, you and I and especially Lee Roy Veland who makes his profession of faith this day in Jesus His Savior.

This truth was accompanied on top of the mountain with glorious light. Jesus face shone like the sun and His clothes were white as light. And a bright cloud overshadowed them from which Peter, James and John.

A lot of the conversation these past couple of weeks has been about what has been overshadowing us from above. What are these UFO's that the military has been shooting down with ½ billion dollar missiles. People want answers and there is fear of the unknown.

Well, as Peter, James and John gazed up at the bright cloud, they cowered in fear. For in the glorious presence of God, our sinful nature is so apparent, and we cannot bear His glorious unshielded light of His Holy divinity.

But the Father's words from the bright cloud tell us why we need not fear. **“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!”**

God the Father is pleased in His beloved Son because He came to fulfill His Father's will of cleansing the world of all sin that makes us fearful. He is well pleased because the Son humbles Himself to descend the mountain and go to His death in Jerusalem for the sins of the whole world. And there is no fear where sins are forgiven. Yes, hear Him for He has the words of eternal life as Peter said in John 6.

The light of Jesus shines in the “dark place” of sin and overcomes sin by keeping it perfectly in our stead with His holy life. And for that reason, when all the glory disappeared, only humble Jesus remained. Only the One who could defeat sin, death and the devil remained, and His Word remained. And His word said, **“Arise, and do not be afraid.”**

“Hear Him” who also says that He will rise again from the dead. For He assures Peter, James and John of this when He says, **“Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead.”**

And when Jesus rose from the dead, the apostles would also be eyewitnesses of His risen glory!

Now, Peter makes sure that he records these things. Listen to the verses preceding our text.

12 For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. 13 Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, 14 knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. 15 Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease.”

Peter knew that his time on earth was nearing its end. His earthly body would be folded up like a tent. So also, we live in this temporal tent of our mortal bodies that must be put off. And this in itself could be cause for fear if one didn't know the truths of Scripture about the resurrection through faith in Jesus.

But listen how Peter begins his second letter to you and me and all believers.

“To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:

2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, 3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”

You have been given a most precious gift, your faith by the righteous life of our God and Savior. It is not just for the apostles but for all who believe in Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit. And this faith so unites us with Jesus our Lord that His divine power gives to us all things that pertain to life and godliness. All things!

So also we heard Paul tell us this in 1 Corinthians 3.

“For all things are yours: 22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come—all are yours. 23 And you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.”

All things are yours in the present and the future. Our near future in this tent, but most importantly our glorious future of everlasting life. It’s all yours by faith, whether you live or die. You too will be given a new glorious body like His in the resurrection from the dead.

Philippians 3:21

“who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.”

Even now, Peter says that you are partakers of the divine nature having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. You have a new spirit within you in which we heard Paul tell us last week that we are the temple of God. The Holy Spirit lives in you!

And so, Peter tells us to be diligent to heed the precious Word of God. **“And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed”**. As Peter says in the opening verses of this chapter.

“add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.”

Jesus has given us His Word and sacraments, baptism and the gift of His very body and blood in the Lord’s Supper to receive often to forgive us and strengthen us as we await his final coming in glory.

And through this forgiveness His spiritual gifts are added to you that you make your election sure as Peter continues.

“10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; 11 for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

Yes, humble Jesus was proclaimed to be the beloved Son of God by the voice of His Father at His baptism, at His transfiguration, and shortly before His death. Jesus fulfilled all righteousness to give us His righteousness through our most precious faith. And through this faith all things are yours and you also will be transfigured like Him.

When? When the light of the morning star rises on the last day and your hearts are gladdened to see His coming. So we read in Luke 21:

“27 Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28 Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.”

Great glory! Your glory comes. He who is the **“the Root and the Offspring of David,”** according to His humble humanity, is also **the Bright and Morning Star,”** according to His divinity, we hear in Revelation 22. **“Come Lord Jesus!”** Maranatha! Amen.

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your heart and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)