**Hear Him!**

**Matthew 17:1-9**

Transfiguration of our Lord

02.06.2022

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

Jesus is transfigured before the eyes of three of His disciples. He shone with magnificent glory, not the borrowed light as in the reflection of sunlight on white clothing –it was a veiled radiance of Divinity – did the disciples get it? Then Moses and Elijah showed up and spoke with Jesus – did the disciples get it?

It is clear from our text, that the disciples did not understand the significance of this event. They certainly thought God had selected Him for a special task, but did they see Him as God? Did they understand what He had come to accomplish?

Six days earlier Jesus had asked His disciples who the people said that He was. Some thought He might be Elijah, or John the Baptist returned, or one of the other prophets. Jesus asked them who they said He was. At that time, Peter confessed that Jesus was “the Christ, the Son of the living God.” But did He fully understand what He was confessing?

From Peter’s confession onward, Jesus began explaining that He was going to suffer at the hands of the chief priests, scribes, and elders, be killed, and be raised on the third day. Peter got upset, he did not want to hear his friend talking about His being killed, and he rebuked Jesus for saying such things.

Six days after Peter’s confession, Matthew brings us to this mountaintop. Jesus is transfigured in the glory of God. Peter thinks this is wonderful. Then Moses and Elijah show up. How much better could this get. But did the disciples understand the conversation between these two men of antiquity and Jesus? At that time? Probably not!

Matthew does not tell us the content of that conversation, but Luke says, they were speaking of His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. In other words, they were speaking about Jesus’ coming suffering and death. They discussed how Jesus was going to fulfill all the Law and the prophets – how He was going to fulfill Moses and Elijah. He was going to fulfill ALL righteousness for ALL people.

Peter, James, and John, want to put up tents for these great men. They want to stay on the mountain. As Peter is still speaking, a bright cloud suddenly overshadows them and a voice speaks from it. At the sound of that voice, they fall to their knees terrified.

Moses and Elijah are the embodiment of the Law and the Prophets – the old covenant. The disciples were comfortable with the Law and the Prophets. They were familiar with the Law and the Prophets. The Law and the Prophets told them how to live, how to worship, and they had become comfortable in these things.

However, as were many others, they were confused. Were Moses and the prophets a guide for how to live a good life or did they point forward to the coming of God’s Christ? Many did not understand why God’s Christ had to be born of a virgin. They did not get that God, in Christ Jesus, had taken on human flesh to fulfill the Law and the Prophets, to fulfill all righteousness.

As the voice speaks from the bright cloud another attitude overcomes them, an attitude of fear and trembling – the attitude of repentance.

Christians today are somewhat comfortable with the Law and the Prophets. They understand God’s Law as what tells them how to live a good, Christian, God-pleasing life. The law is comfortable to many Christians because they simply see it as their guidelines to living. But in most cases, the accusatory and condemnatory nature of the law and the prophets has been lost to the hearts and minds of people.

Dear friends in Christ, you know that one of the purposes of the Law is as a mirror to show you your sins. Jesus told the disciples that He was going to suffer and die. They heard, as you have, that He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. They understood the sacrificial nature of that title given to Jesus. They knew that a sacrifice needed to be made for sin. They knew the slaughterhouse smell associated with the Temple, the many animals killed on a daily basis. They understand that without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness. (Heb. 9:22)

Before these three men stood the Law of God embodied in Moses, and the call to repentance sounded in the Prophets, embodied in Elijah. They rejoiced! They wanted this event to last, to stay there. They wanted this glory to continue. Peter also did not want to face what Jesus had predicted. He did not want his rabbi, his teacher, his friend, to die.

So many believers today want the same thing. They are comfortable with the laws of God – or at least their own watered-down versions of them. They believe they are justified by the law. People like to live in their own little world, isolated and thinking that they have, in some manner, satisfied the requirements they have set. They justify themselves, believing they have no need for Christ crucified.

Most are like Peter when Jesus told of His imminent death, “God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to you!” Jesus had to rebuke him saying, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but man’s.”

Most Christians want the crucifixion of Jesus to show them how to love, not a necessary event to pay for their grievous sinfulness. They think they are good and decent people, living God-pleasing lives. They are satisfied that they are in some measure able to stand in the presence of God’s holy law.

Then the bright cloud envelopes them and the God speaks. Before the presence of God all self-justification fails. All pretensions fall into dust. It is face to face with the living God that we realize God’s requirements are perfect and holy. This is when true believers falls facedown before God, terrified.

Dearly beloved of God, that is the response of those who realize their sinfulness, the prostrate response of those who truly understand God’s Law. True Christians see their sinfulness reflected in the perfect mirror of the Law, their unworthiness to stand in the presence of God. Believers come before God only on a bended knee of repentance.

Prostrate, we hear the Father speak. “This is my Son, whom I love, with Him I am well pleased. Listen to Him!” For today, I like the translation, “Hear Him!” After this command from the Father, Jesus says to His disciples, "Rise, and have no fear."

Jesus’ Word is saying, “You have confessed your sin, it is removed, there is no reason for fear.”

Do you understand? The Father sent His Son to fulfill what is required in the Law and prophets – in Moses and Elijah. God envelopes Himself in human flesh to be the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, to purchase forgiveness with His suffering and death. In Him all fear is removed.

The disciples wanted to erect shelters to remain on the mountain. They wanted to remain in the presence of the glory of God without being consumed. They also realized, when the voice spoke, that they could not remain in the presence of the glory of God so stained as they were with sin. So, the voice of the Father speaks, He tells them how they might remain in the presence of God’s glory, on His holy mountain, for all eternity, “This is My beloved Son with whom I am well pleased; Hear Him!”

For them to remain in the glory of God, they need to come off the mountain. Jesus needs to do what He had proclaimed would happen – that He must suffer, be killed, and rise on the third day.

You want to ascend to that mountain and bask in God’s eternal glory? Do not look to Moses. Do not look for men of God to prescribe how to live good Christian lives. There is no life in the Law. It is the Son who gives you life. He lifts you to that mountain in His flesh, “Hear Him!”

Through water in the Word of Christ, you are baptized. You are transfigured in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit, from sinner – to sinner and saint. Today, Kendrick was transfigured by the Word of Christ and water, made a child of God. Sins were removed from him and he was made holy. Baptismal transfiguration takes place in you by daily contrition and repentance, whereby you cling to Christ.

There is no life in the Law, nor in obedience to it. There is life only in Christ. Hear Him! “Rise, and have no fear – your sins are forgiven you.” The very Son of God is that living Word which comes to you. He speaks to you and the reality of His Word overshadows you. On the cross of Calvary, the blood of the Son was shed. In hearing Him, it is poured out upon your mind and heart as He speaks to you today and you are cleansed of all sin and your fear is removed.

“Hear Him!” says the Father. Jesus speaks, “Rise, and have no fear – Take eat; this is my body. Drink of it, all of you; this is My blood of the New Testament, shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.” You are transported to the cross where the cup is filled, and you eat and drink that which was given and shed for the forgiveness of your sins.

Would you like to ascend God’s holy mountain? Would you like to see Jesus in all His glory and tabernacle there with Him for all eternity? The Father says, “This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased. Hear Him!”

Today you see a glimpse of that glory as the Son of God speaks to you. He is the Word of Absolution! He is the preached Word! He is the Word which brings you His Body and Blood. Hear Him! “Rise, and have no fear, forgiveness and salvation are yours in Christ Jesus unto life everlasting. Amen.