

The Transfiguration of Our Lord  
“A Glimpse of Glory through the Cross” (Mark 9:2-4)  
February 11, 2024  
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Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for this Sunday of the Transfiguration of our Lord is from our Gospel reading, Mark 9:2-4.

**“2 Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. 3 His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them. 4 And Elijah appeared to them with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. “**

So far the text...

Matthew’s account of the transfiguration of Jesus adds the detail that **“His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.” (Matthew 17:2)**

In about two months on April the 8<sup>th</sup>, there’s going to be a special event happening in parts of Texas – a total solar eclipse. The moon will be following a diagonal path from Del Rio to Texarkana. Bob Kaemmerer ,who has been playing the flute during Epiphany, but had to get back to Hillsboro for Lent, said that his city is in the direct path and all the hotels are sold out for this event. It hasn’t been since 1878 that Hillsboro has experience a total solar eclipse. And so people are calling the city “Eclipsboro”. With special glasses, you can look through pin holes and see the moon completely covering the sun for about 3 hours. People say that it feels like the twilight zone.

Now although this is not a scary experience, people have said that it is an emotional experience. For Peter, James and John, on top of not just a hill, but a high mountain, seeing the glory of Jesus’ face shine like the sun and His clothes whiter than any clothes can be laundered, was a fearful experience. Our epistle says these words:

**“4 And Elijah appeared to them with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. 5 Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah”— 6 because he did not know what to say, for they were greatly afraid.”**

Greatly afraid, Peter wasn't making sense as he talked. He just babbled for it was an overload to the senses to see a glimpse of glory of Jesus. And then we hear these details from Matthew's account:

**“5 While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!” 6 And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid.”**

Sensory overload – not only the shining sight of Jesus, but the hearing of a voice from a bright cloud made them fall on their faces in fear. It was too much for mortal men with the sinful nature to bear. The nearness of the presence of God shone around them and His awesome voice was heard.

Those who experience the total solar eclipse will be guarded from the seeing the sun that Jesus created by the moon that He also set into its orbit. And of course, there is no sound in a total solar eclipse. But for the disciples, they saw the face of the Creator shining like the sun He created and heard the voice of the Father speak.

This was Isaiah's reaction in his vision in chapter 6.

**“Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The Lord of hosts.”**

We had a question come up last week in Bible class about the word “woe”, “ouai” in the Greek. It's an interjection that Paul used in our epistle reading last week from 1 Corinthians 1:19: **“woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!”** It is sometimes used to mean sadness or distress in everyday talk. But in the Bible, it's used as a rebuke from God's righteous anger. There is a consequence for man's sinfulness that is revealed by God's glory. And that consequence is God's chastisement for the Christian and punishment for the unbeliever.

So, Jesus says to the people who rejected Him, **“He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent: 21 “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.” (Matthew 11:20-21)**

So, Jesus said of Judas Iscariot, **“woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had never been born.” (Mark 14:21)**

Where there is not repentance and belief in Jesus as the Savior, there is no shielding of His glory and righteous anger for one’s sin. Only through the cross of Jesus, can one be protected from His righteous anger over sin and stand in His presence unafraid. Only through Jesus, could Moses and Elijah, sinners that they were in their earthly lives, stand in the presence of Jesus’ glory in complete peace. For their sinful nature was no more. They were in glory, having been redeemed through the cross of Jesus their Savior.

And this is what they spoke to Jesus about. This we know from Luke 9 where we hear these words:

**“And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, 31 who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.”**

Only through the cross, the death of Jesus, could He accomplish the salvation of the world and bring believers to glory. For Jesus, He had to humble Himself completely, and not use His divine power, but allow sinful men to torture and kill Him. This was the only way to remove the world’s sin, my sin and yours completely! It was the only way to remove the woe of our eternal punishment in hell and give us eternal glory in heaven!

## **2 Corinthians 5:21**

**“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”**

For us, who are alarmed by our sins before the Triune God who is Holy, Holy, Holy, Jesus became sin! For us, Jesus comes down the mountain and goes to

Jerusalem and sheds His blood to give us a white robe of righteousness, washed in the blood of the Lamb.

Jesus gives to our senses not only the sight to read His Word, but the ears to hear His Word. For faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.

**“a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!”**  
The voice was the Father’s voice. And the called on us to hear Jesus words. For in them is not woe, but life.

So Jesus says in John 12:

**49 For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. 50 And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak.”**

Through Moses, God gave the Law, the glorious Law. But the Law shows us our sinfulness where we have not kept it perfectly. SOS – shows our sin. But when the Gospel of Jesus keeping of the Law perfectly in our stead is proclaimed, then our fears are removed and we see Jesus not as a new lawgiver but as our Savior. SOS – the Gospel shows our Savior!

And when this happens, the Holy Spirit creates faith and as we heard in our epistle reading today from 2 Corinthians 3, the veil is lifted to see Jesus! **“15 But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. 16 Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty”**

There is liberty. There is freedom from sin and punishment. And there is eternal glory that awaits!

It is through believing in Christ Crucified, in Him alone that fear is removed. Jesus alone remained after Moses, Elijah and the bright cloud were gone. Hear Him, the Father said, who said before He ascended the mountain these words in Mark 8.

**“31 And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.”**

Through the cross of suffering and death will there alone be the glory of the resurrection! Jesus' resurrection and ours! And Jesus alone, comes to His disciples and touches them and says, **“Arise, and do not be afraid.” 8 When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.” (Matthew 17:7-8)**

Yes, the sense of touch by the Good Shepherd, immediately calms our fears. And Jesus comes to us with His very body and blood that touches our lips in, with and under the bread and wine that we will receive next Sunday and says, “given and shed for the remission of your sins!” Arise and do not be afraid!

Isaiah's lips were touched by a burning coal that didn't burn his lips but forgave him his sin. **“Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged.”**

And then the question is asked, **““Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?” Then I said, “Here am I! Send me.”**

You and I who have seen Jesus with eyes of faith by the power of the Holy Spirit, and heard His Word, and have been united in His death and resurrection through baptism, have the same calling as Paul, to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus. Through the cross, there is glory! Repent of your sins and it is yours.

And one day, God promises all believers in Jesus this amazing truth. Not only will we see Jesus' total glory without fear, we too will be transformed to share in His glory!

**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.”**

As we wait, Jesus says, **“come, take up the cross, and follow Me.” (Mark 10:21)** Through the cross of Jesus, we have a glimpse of our glory too. And Jesus never gives us more than we can bear.

**“28 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30)**

The oddsmakers in Las Vegas can't tell us for sure who is going to win the Super Bowl today and receive the temporal glory of a trophy that fades. But, Jesus tells us for sure that our eternal glory is coming. With all our senses we hear, see, and touch the Word of God that promises us an imperishable crown (1 Corinthians 9:25) and an uneclipsed vision of God's glory and ours. Thanks be to Jesus! Amen!

**“And this peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)**