

Scripture Reading:

Luke 9:28 “28 Now it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, that He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. 29 As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening. 30 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. 32 But Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep; and when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him. 33 Then it happened, as they were parting from Him, that Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah"--not knowing what he said.

34 While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were fearful as they entered the cloud. 35 And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!" 36 When the voice had ceased, Jesus was found alone. But they kept quiet, and told no one in those days any of the things they had seen.

37 Now it happened on the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, that a great multitude met Him. 38 Suddenly a man from the multitude cried out, saying, "Teacher, I implore You, look on my son, for he is my only child. 39 And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out; it convulses him so that he foams at the mouth, and it departs from him with great difficulty, bruising him. 40 So I implored Your disciples to cast it out, but they could not." 41 Then Jesus answered and said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here." 42 And as he was still coming, the demon threw him down and convulsed him. Then Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the child, and gave him back to his father.

43 And they were all amazed at the majesty of God. But while everyone marveled at all the things which Jesus did, He said to His disciples, 44 "Let these words sink down into your ears, for the Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men." ”

"Being Astonished at the Majesty of God"

I assume that many pastors approach sermons on the transfiguration of Christ with a little fear and trepidation! Actually, we should approach any sermon from the Word of God that with fear & trepidation... But here in this account we again have Peter reminding us of what foolish things God's Saints can say!

- **Of course, Peter never forgot this day and uses his experience to admonish the Saints in his final Epistle which we will come back to in just a bit.**

This is another event that is given by all three of the synoptic Gospel writers and here the accounts are very similar though the various details help us understand just what happened that day on the mountain and shortly thereafter. Luke includes it in his "orderly account" he is writing to his friend Theophilus because it not only reveals the glory of the Son of God, but reminds us again that the mission of Jesus is to be the suffering Messiah who will save His people from their sins.

Last week, we saw Jesus privately question His disciples after prayer about who they thought He was and then He teaches them about His death and resurrection

- **This week we see Jesus in His majesty, but still talking about His mission with Moses and Elijah.**

With that in mind, let's consider our text from Luke's Gospel: First we see Jesus taking Peter, John and James as His witnesses: The Bible says we should require the testimony of two or three witnesses. Peter, John and James were present for the raising of Jarius' daughter, they will be present with Jesus as He prays in the garden of Gethsemane and they are the witnesses here: Why these three?

...We are simply not told

As Jesus prays, we see Him changed, transfigured: His glory is described as a brilliant white and as glistening: John will again see the glorified Christ on the isle of Patmos and we will consider that as we gather at the Table this morning.

The word for glistening is used to describe a sword or spear ready for battle, so we see a picture of glory or majesty, rather than pretty" We can think of Mike's sermon from Psalm 110: We serve a victorious warrior Savior!

In verses 30 & 31, Luke gives us details we do NOT want to miss:

"30 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."

- **In the midst of this glorious event Luke tells us what was being discussed... YES, they are discussing the mission of Jesus as the suffering Messiah!**

We are not told the details of the discussion, but I can suggest some homework to ponder: Read together Psalm 22 and imagine how these three might have discussed the meaning of the various verses! There is much debate about why it was Moses and Elijah and what state they were in:

On the later, we again are not told! It is even difficult to even speculate but we know they were really there and having a REAL discussion with Jesus about His coming death!

As to the question of why these two Saints, I don't think we are speculating when we say they represent the Law & the Prophets:

- **Remember the big word we learned last week: Propitiation!**

Paul told us in Romans chapter three that the righteousness of God had been witnessed by the Law and the Prophets – The Old Testament – Represented here by Moses & Elijah

- **As with many things in the Scriptures, there can be multiple meanings without diminishing any of them individually:**

Here Moses and Elijah are clearly representing the Law and the Prophets, but they also represent those who will be raised from the dead and those who will be caught up at the Lord's second coming: We see this as Paul comforts the Saints at Thessalonica: [4:16-17]

**“16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.
17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.”**

- **Moses died before going into the Land but Elijah was taken up into heaven in a fiery chariot. Present with Jesus is one who died and one who was taken up!**

They can also be seen as a picture of the nation of Israel: Moses who delivered Nation from Egypt and Elijah as one of the final prophets sending Israel into exile

- **Luke then turns to the “witnesses” of this mountain top experience: Just as they did in the Garden of Gethsemane, our three “witnesses” fall asleep...**
- **It should remind us that our Savior is very patient with us!**

Luke points out that they fell into a deep sleep and were not quite awake as they took in this amazing event: Here is Jesus appearing as the glorified Son of God speaking with Moses and Elijah:

Although Peter is not rebuked this time, I think there is a lesson we can learn from his reaction: He is not sure what is going on, but as Moses and Elijah start to leave, he just has to say something!

How about we make three tents and everyone sticks around for awhile...

- Sounds pretty silly to us, until we honestly ponder how often we say things just to be saying something when we are not sure what should be said:

Peter will apply this specifically to women in his first epistle, but the principle applies to all of us:

“3 Do not let your adornment be merely outward--arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel-- 4 rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.”

We see it also in Prov. 13:16 **“Every prudent man acts with knowledge, But a fool lays open his folly.”**

Peter acted foolishly: We should pray for wisdom and train ourselves to be prudent...

- AS we would say today: **THINK** before you speak!

Before we see the climax of this event, there is one other interesting question to ask: How did Peter know it was Moses and Elijah? Certainly there could have been good representations of both Moses and Elijah, since they were such prominent figures in the history of Israel. My preference is for those who argue that this gives us a glimpse of the fact that we will all know each other as Saints in the resurrection: As someone who struggles to remember names, I find GREAT comfort here!

Next, Peter, John and James are overwhelmed by what occurs next:

“34 While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were fearful as they entered the cloud. 35 And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!" 36 When the voice had ceased, Jesus was found alone.”

- Once again we see God the Father declaring that we should **HEAR** His Son Jesus!
- More importantly, we see the Law & Prophet have left the scene leaving **ONLY** Jesus!
- The focus is now on the suffering Messiah who the Law and the Prophets bore witness too:

As the writer of the Hebrews says at the beginning of His letter: **“1 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son...”**

Jesus instructs His witnesses to not discuss what has happened until after His resurrection: *Something we discussed last week*

Luke, as the other Gospel writers do, then follows this mountain top experience with another miracle where Jesus heals an only child: Just as He did for Jarius and the widow of Nain

- Jesus saw great faith in the Roman Centurion, but found it lacking in His own disciples

We should take special note of what Luke presents in verses 43 & 44:

“43 And they were all amazed at the majesty of God.

“But while everyone marveled at all the things which Jesus did, He said to His disciples, 44 "Let these words sink down into your ears, for the Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men." ”

- Please note that we are back to the crowds reacting this time to “the majesty of God.”
- Are they finally understanding or will it just create more rumors about the “Jesus show?”

I think we see the answer in the reaction of Jesus: He ignores these crowds and turns again to the disciples with more teaching about His being the suffering Messiah!

In our next lesson we are going to see a sad debate break out among the Disciples about who is the greatest!

- They are certainly not catching on very quickly, but Jesus continues to instruct them as His time to go to Jerusalem as the sacrifice for sin approaches.

Here is a lesson we can, and should, learn from our current presidential race, it is always tempting to follow the crowds and get caught up in the excitement...

NOT Jesus: He had called His disciples – He knew and focused on the task they were to accomplish:

- Humanly speaking Peter has had a couple of pretty bad weeks and we might vote him off the island or kick him off the team in pretty short order:

NOT Jesus: He told Peter that God the Father had revealed to him the truth about Him being the Christ, the Son of the living God.

In John’s Gospel we know that Peter says, on behalf of the disciples that they had nowhere to go because Jesus had the words of life.

Peter will go on to greatly disappoint Jesus, denying Him in His greatest time of need, humanly speaking: And yet, Peter would be restored:

- Jesus appeared to Peter on the day of His resurrection

- Peter preaches the great sermon on the Day of Pentecost
- Peter would be a leader in the early church standing up to the religious leaders he once feared

AND when it was time for him to face the cruel death his Lord had predicted, he admonishes the Saints being the faithful witness he was taken on that mountain to be!

In his final Epistle Peter is saying goodbye and we are going to read his words to these Saints as our practical conclusion this morning:

Peter addresses them as those who have received the gift of faith:

“1 Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, 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.

[Here he echoes the writer of Hebrews saying that God has spoken to us through His Son!]

5 But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, 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. 8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.

[as we saw last week, saving faith is more than mere intellectual ascent or putting on a show: It is denying ourselves and taking up the cross of Christ daily: Remembering the suffering Savior. Peter is warning the Saints not to make his mistakes!]

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.

[how can we share in this blessed assurance? Peter is going to explain that remembering his time with Jesus on that mountain!]

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.

[a reminder for them AND for us!]

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.

➤ Peter has NOT forgotten what happened and what it means...

➤ But how does it apply to us?

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; 20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, 21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

As I pondered some questions to help us think about priorities I thought of contrasting a visit from Jesus with reading our Bibles: Upon reflection, that is not really fair and is NOT the contrast or point that Peter is making here:

BUT there is an example that we often used with our children that does make the point that Peter wants us to understand: *[gold in the backyard]*

Listen again to what the one who REALLY was on that mountain where Jesus was transfigured has to say: "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..."

NOT ONLY is Peter encouraging us to heed what the Bible has to teach us, but since the New Testament was still being written, at this point the MOST familiar Scriptures were those in the Old Testament!

Do we know the first three-quarters of this Book well enough for it to be "a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts?"

As Jesus accepts our gifts this morning, feeds us at His Table and then commissions us to serve Him in this coming week, we must again resolve to be a people of the Word!

Believing what Paul taught young Timothy, that the ALL of the Bible “is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

- **Then we must heed the words of the Father on that mountain: “This is my beloved Son...**

HEAR Him!”

Communion Meditation:

Revelation 1: " 12 Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. 14 His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; 15 His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; 16 He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. 17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. 18 I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen.”