

## **Sermon 3-3-19 Jesus' Glory is for you Luke 9:28-36 (Transfiguration Sunday)**

Dear Disciples who see God's glory:

### **You have a life!**

"Complete with summers and songs and gray skies and tears, you have a life. Didn't request one, but you have one. A first day. A final day. And a few thousand in between. You have been given an honest-to-goodness human life." Max Lucado

You have a life!

"This is the true joy of life; the being used for a purpose..." George Bernard Shaw

You have a life! So, what is the purpose of your life, my life?

The Jewish Talmud teaches that every person should fully repent one day before his or her death. The question is asked: "But how will I know when that day is?" The answer: "Treat every day as if it were the day before you last."

Arrange your life around what matters most.

What matters most? What is important? What is my purpose? What makes life worth living?

A monk who lived in the 1600's by the name of Brother Lawrence once said: "If I were to be responsible for guiding souls in the right direction I would urge everyone to be aware of God's constant presence, if for no other reason than because His presence is a delight to our souls and spirits...as we nourish our souls by seeing God in His exaltation we will derive a great joy at being His."

### **Seeing God in His exaltation**

This makes life worth living. This is what really matters. This is my purpose in life.

On Transfiguration Sunday we see Jesus as true God in all His glory.

Jesus' Glory is for you

- I. The glory that gives us life vv28-33

Near the town of Caesarea Philippi in Israel is a mountain. Jesus once took 3 of his disciples up to the top of that mountain to prepare them for the end of his life on earth and his crucifixion on the cross. But before his disciples would see Jesus' suffering and death, they would get a glimpse of his heavenly glory.

As we enter another season of Lent, we too, are preparing ourselves to focus on Jesus' suffering and death for our sins. But before start our journey to the cross, may we see Jesus' glory today.

Jesus takes 3 of his disciples to the top of the mountain. Peter, James and John accompany Jesus to the top. We are told that Jesus goes up to pray. What is he praying about?

- His upcoming suffering for our sins
- His upcoming death on the cross for our sins

While Jesus is up on the mountain praying he begins to show His glory---the glory of heaven.

- Matthew says Jesus' face "...shone like the sun."
- The Greek words describe Jesus' face and clothes as a "bright light, brilliant whiteness, like lightning."
- Jesus' clothes became "white, dazzling" like a flash of lightning

Because of the Gospel writer's Luke's words in v37 many Bible students believe this Transfiguration took place in the middle of the darkness of night. If so, imagine how Jesus' glory must have overwhelmed the dark night.

The disciples saw Jesus' brightness like a dazzling sun reflecting off a newly snow covered landscape. You know what that is like. You need sunglasses to protect your eyes. This is what the disciples saw. Jesus is all of his dazzling glory.

"The whole body of Jesus was allowed to shine with the light and splendor of its heavenly divinity."  
Lanski

The words used here to describe Jesus' glory also are used to describe God's glory in other parts of the Bible...

- "...I saw...flashing lightning and surrounded by brilliant light..." Ezek 1:4ff
- "His face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches..." Dan 12:6

Jesus was visited on top of that mountain by Moses and Elijah. Why these two Old Testament prophets?

- Moses was the representative of God's law. He represented the beginning of Israel's history.
- Elijah was the representative of God's prophecy. He represented the future of God's people.

The Old Testament prophet Malachi speaks about Moses and Elijah as the past and the future of God's people. The appearance of the two Old Testament giants show the disciples that Jesus' coming suffering and death on the cross was in perfect accord with the Old Testament prophecies regarding the Messiah.

Jesus indeed was the Messiah whom they had been waiting for.

Jesus speaks with Moses and Elijah.

- He speaks to them about his impending “exodus” from this world
- He speaks about his death, resurrection and ascension
- He speaks to them about the fulfillment of God’s plan of salvation for you and me

Not only is Jesus in all his glory but so is Moses and Elijah. Jesus gives his glory to his people, to you and me. Jesus prayed that we too would receive glory: **“I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one; I in them and you in me...Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory...”** John 17:22-24

You may not think that your life is very glorious. It is not glorious according to the standards of this world.

We live a common life. No butler drew our bath this morning. No maid laid out our clothes. Our orange juice wasn’t fresh squeezed. We went to the garage and climbed into our common car. We are common and we live a common life. Punctuated by occasional weddings, job transfers and graduations but mainly the day-to-day rhythm that we share with most of humanity is our life. We may feel at times if we are insignificant. We may wonder how common people rate in heaven.

Jesus came for common people like you and me and gives us his glory.

Jesus knows us. He knows that our flesh is weak and frail just like that of the disciples.

The disciples were sleeping while Jesus was speaking with Moses and Elijah. It seems like the disciples are always sleeping at special moments like this. Remember they were also sleeping while Jesus was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane.

The disciples were flesh and blood like us: **“The Spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.”**

The flesh is dangerous. It has the ability and power to take us away from Jesus. That’s why the Apostle Paul wrote in I Corinthians 9:27 “I beat my body and make it my slave so that...I myself will not be disqualified...”

We battle the sins of the flesh: evil thoughts, greed, deceit, envy, arrogance, folly...etc.

The disciples finally awake. V32 They awake just in time to see Jesus’ glory.

- They awake just in time to see the glory that surrounded Moses and Elijah
- Both appear here in their glorified heavenly body
- Someday, we, too will have a glorified heavenly body

The disciples must have been thankful that they woke up in time to see Jesus’ glory and the glory of Moses and Elijah. We need to be thankful that the Holy Spirit woke us up from being spiritually dead and brought us to faith to see Jesus.

The disciples found themselves basking in the glory of Jesus that shone all around them. V33

## Picture of Peter talking to Jesus on the mountain

Peter must have felt as if he and his disciples were near heaven...if not in heaven. They knew they were in the presence of heavenly glory. Peter's desire was to prolong this experience. Peter clearly counts it a privilege to be in on what he was experiencing.

- Peter wants to freeze the moment
- Peter does not want it to end
- This is what we call a "mountain top" experience
  - A moment in one's life that you simply do not want to go away
  - A moment you want to freeze and prolong

The words of Luke explain that Peter was talking foolishly.

- He was just babbling as it were
- Mark says Peter did not know what to say.
- Peter was always the first to speak up but now it appears he doesn't know what to say

Peter doesn't realize that he can't freeze the moment. If he really thought about it he would not want this moment to last. By prolonging this point in time Peter would be standing in the way of God's plan of salvation.

- Jesus had to go to Jerusalem. He could not stay on the mountain
- The disciples had to come down off that mountain and begin their journey to the cross, too.

Can we really fault Peter for wanting this moment to continue? If we were to experience God's glory here on earth we, too, would want that moment to last.

Yet, even now on earth we reflect God's glory. The Apostle Paul tells us: **"We... all reflect the Lord's glory are being transformed into His likeness with an ever increasing glory which comes from the Lord."** II Corinthians 3:18

Jesus' glory is for you

- II. The glory that shows us His deity vv34-36

A cloud appears and covers them on the mountain. Clouds in the Bible denote the presence of God. The cloud descended upon the mountain and it was bright and it came suddenly.

- It overshadowed them and covered them for a brief time
- The disciples were afraid
- They knew they were in the midst of God's glorious presence
- To be suddenly surrounded by a cloud on the top of a mountain can be an eerie experience

Then the voice speaks.

- The Father speaks and explains that Jesus is the Father's elect
- Jesus is the Chosen One to do the great work of redemption for the world
- **"My Chosen One in whom I delight." Isaiah 42:1**

God the Father says literally in Greek "Him be hearing! Listen to Him!"

- Keep on listening to him
- Listen to what Jesus is saying about his death
- Keep on listening to what he is saying about his death
- Hear what Jesus has been saying to you...hear him!

Moses told God's people in the Old Testament: "You must listen to him." Dt 18:15 Moses said that the Messiah, Jesus, has "...living words to pass on to us." Acts 7:38

God the Father focused the disciples attention NOT on the vision they experienced but on the Word of Glory they heard. The memory of visions will fade, but the unchanging Word of God abides forever.

Peter himself speaks about his experience on the mountain top years later when he wrote his epistle. He wrote: "...We were eyewitnesses of his majesty...**we ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with Jesus on the sacred mountain...and you will do well to pay attention to it..**" II Peter 1:16ff

Jesus authority is the ONLY authority.

- He alone is the Ruler of the heavens and the earth.
- He alone is the King
- "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved." Acts 4:12

The disciples are silent. These 3, Peter, James and John were not allowed to tell the other 9 disciples of what they experienced. Jesus speaks clearly to them: "You keep silent about this until after the resurrection" as recorded in the other Gospel accounts of Jesus' Transfiguration. The time was not yet right for Jesus to be revealed as the Messiah publicly.

Peter, James and John were overwhelmed by this mountain top experience.

- Sure, they wanted to stay on the mountain top, wouldn't we?
- But they came to the realization that coming down was the right thing to do and get back to life.
- It was time to be about God's work in the routine of everyday life.
- It was time to get among the people of the world to give people the message of life and hope.

What does this Sunday of Transfiguration mean for us in our life as we live it right now?

It establishes for us the truth that Jesus indeed was the Son of God, the Messiah. Now it was time to get back to everyday life to do God's work among the people of the world for their salvation.

Transfiguration Sunday reminds us that we live and work in the glory of God.

- The life we live is real
- The life we live is joy
- The life we live is trust
- The life we live is hope

We live in the life of the presence of God's glory...

- Now on earth through His Word
- In the future in heaven face to face with God's glory

How do you answer people who ask you: "Why are you so hopeful? What keeps you going? What purpose in life do you have?"

You can say: **"I have been to the mountain top with Jesus"**

"When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory."

- One day we will share in the glory of Jesus
- Now we wait and do the work of God until He comes back

Some people say that sometimes we forget that one day we are going to die and sometimes we forget that we are alive.

- Now we live in God's glory through His Word
- Someday we will die...no...live in the presence of God when we see Him face to face in the glory of heaven.