

FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION 02/11/18

Mt. Calvary, West View

2ND KINGS 2: 1-12, II CORINTHIANS 3:12-4: 6, MARK 9: 2-9

Theme: Listen to Him

+ Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. AMEN +

Our Text is taken from the continuation of St. Mark's Gospel, the 1st chapter:

And Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for You and one for Moses and one for Elijah." For he did not know what to say, for they were terrified. And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son, listen to Him."

We have been watching Jesus reveal Himself to be both God and Man this Epiphany season, and now we see Jesus in His full glory! This being the last Sunday in Epiphany, it is good, Lord, that we are here to witness the fullness of our God, in the security of time and distance! For as Scripture has declared, *“You cannot see My face; for man shall not see Me and live.”* This makes the miracle granted to Peter, James and John even more amazing. They beheld His glory and lived! Moses spoke with God upon the mountain, but when he asked to see the full glory of God, only got to see His back. Elijah similarly spoke with God upon a mountain, but the fullness of God was revealed not in the power of the mighty wind, nor the earthquake, not even in the fire that was all consuming, but in the whisper, Elijah knew he was in the mighty presence of God and could not lift up his eyes to behold Him. If Moses and Elijah did not behold the great glory of God upon the mountain top, then no wonder Peter reacts the way he does!

Peter confesses that he is terrified at the beholding of the glory of God in all His fullness. There is no doubt in his mind he is beholding God in the flesh. So, what is he to do, scared as he is? Psychologically speaking, when any of us are afraid of moving forward, we get our footing in doing something we know how to do, and then warm up to advancing beyond that. If you are

afraid of heights, how do you start combating that fear? You begin with something you know how to do ó stairs at your house, let us say ó then you advance to more stairs until you are comfortable doing the stairs at the statue of Liberty. If you are afraid of the ocean, you start with a wading pool, and advance to the deep end, then a creek, then a river, then a lake. Surviving all this, you then head out to the ocean, hopefully avoiding the rip tide.

Peter, trying to find something that he can do that can honor His God's presence and also that of the Honorable Moses and the Highly Esteemed Elijah, offers up the building project of three tents. After all he is a carpenter ó no wait, he is a *fisherman*! As far as we know, all he knows what to do is fish! He is still in his training to be a fisher of men! Where did this offer to build anything come from? Well, he could not rightly ask the three of them if they would like to head to the lake for some relaxing fishing exposition. First off, because they would have to leave the mountain. Secondly, where is the material they need for fishing? Boat, poles, worms; wait they used nets. Oh, right. You are going to ask the God of all creation if He would like to do manual labor in pulling in a net! That is a smart thing to do! As for ancient Moses and Elijah, you really want them to have to pull in smelly fish and separate them all? Maybe Peter, James and John could do all the work and the Saintly three can sit back and enjoy their relaxation time, but how much honor is that, really?

No, the closest things Peter knows what to do to honor God's presence is to celebrate the Festival of booths, where they had to build temporary structures to dwell in around the temple. So, it is entirely possible that Peter was quite able to build said booths but why if He wanted Jesus, Moses and Elijah to hang around would his structures be temporary? My assumption is that he expected the Saintly three to be temporary. After all, if you were residing in the eternal dwellings, would you want to come back here to this vale of tears and hang around? Not me.

That is the miracle of Jesus's presence here on earth ó He did not need to come here of His own necessity. He could have left us to our sins and condemnation for that is fully what we

deserve for our folly. We have sinned in thoughts words and deeds ó every single one well known to the Father in heaven. There is no escaping it; we have sinned and deserve His righteous wrath and manifold punishments, yet Jesus came to end all this. Jesus came not to make it a temporary fix, but a permanent eternal removal of sins so that your eternal life may be true and real as your baptism, as His body and blood is here for you to eat and to drink this day. Indeed, there is no work to be done by you for this salvation ó no building of booths necessary. Your faith has saved you now; faith in the Water and the Word; faith in the real presence; faith in the promise of everlasting life for those who repent and believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ living the sinless life that you cannot and shedding His blood to cover those sins forever.

But in order for this faith to save, so that we do not muck stuff up with our own actions or desires, we need to heed again the voice from the enveloping cloud, *“This is my beloved Son, listen to Him.”* Indeed, we need to listen to Him. He alone has the Words to eternal life. We look to no other, no council, no pope, no man to understand salvation, though there are men that can explain it well. Yet, to understand salvation and the purpose of Jesus being transfigured before us, all we need is the Word. We need not Moses’s shiny face, not Elijah’s mantle (or cloak in this new ESV we use), not even an angel’s presence. We need only the Word of God, that is unveiled through faith in the Cross of Jesus. The light truly has shined out of darkness, and made you have knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

To this end, we commend ourselves to service to God and neighbor, for those without the faith in Christ truly are perishing. They will not get some chariots of fire to bring them at the last second in a whirlwind up into heaven. They need to see the image of God for salvation, and that is simply you, living your life in Christ. Doing good when you can and offering the Word in all you do. In His most Holy Name we pray. **AMEN.**

+ AND NOW MAY THE PEACE OF GOD WHICH SURPASSES ALL UNDERSTANDING
KEEP YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS IN UNION WITH CHRIST JESUS. AMEN+

Offering / Prayers

There are only two days on my calendar...today and the day of judgment