

The Transfiguration

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[0:00] Well, it is always a pleasure and a wonderful time to come and worship with you all here at Holy Trinity.

! And just to give you a little bit of background, this is August 6th, which is the Feast of the Transformation of Our Lord. Yes, please be seated. And when Father Efe, when he texted me or emailed me and said, Hey, this is late, but sorry for the late notice. Could you come in and supply and preach on August 6th?

And we thought, Sure, yeah, I'll come. And so as my usual manner, I texted him back and emailed him back and said, What are you doing? Anything like preaching a sermon series or anything particular in the lectionary?

What particular that you want me to preach on? And he just said, Well, you just decide. Go ahead. We are going through a series on 1 Corinthians, but you decide. Go ahead.

So, I sat down and I listened to the sermons that he has preached thus far in the series. And it was really, really, really, really tempting just to keep on going. I'll just pick up where he's at.

[1:32] And then I thought, But you know, that's really doing a disservice to Father Efe. I mean, he's really working hard, obviously, to be able to do the sermon prep on these things.

I said, Oh, no, not quite. I'm going to do this. I looked at the lectionary and said, Wait, we're talking about Transfiguration Day, August 6th. And I said, Oh, and I emailed him back and said, We'll consider the glory of God on Transfiguration on this day.

And so, yesterday, I saw a reply email and he said, I'm sorry, I never thought about it being the Feast of the Transfiguration.

So, guess what? Hence, a few little adjustments in the bulletins. He had already made it up. But, so hence, a little bit of a couple changes there. If you want to know, if you want to follow along in our Gospel reading from Luke, which I just proclaimed, it's on page, I think it was 1030 in your pew Bibles.

But Transfiguration Sunday means a lot of different things to a lot of people. Some people really, really just love the Transfiguration.

[2:56] Others, they say, Huh? What? They just don't understand. What the heck is Transfiguration Sunday about?

Or Transfiguration Day about? Now, for me personally, I grew up knowing full well that August 6th was the Feast of the Transfiguration. Not because I have some special knowledge, but because when I grew up, where I grew up in Michigan, the Diocese of Western Michigan, they always had their camp, church camp.

It was in late July, early August. So we always had the Feast of the Transfiguration when I was in junior high or high school, or when I worked as a counselor at the junior high camp or something like that.

And Father Kirk, who was the director of the camp, was a high church charismatic individual. And so we always celebrated and observed the Feast of the Transfiguration on the beaches of the lake there at the camp.

So I'd always knew the 6th of August. When it was, why it was, was still a mystery. In fact, when I was at seminary, I had a chance to talk with him, and I said, you know something, every year we observe the Feast of the Transfiguration, and I went to him one year and asked, why do we do this?

[4:28] It's just a strange story in the Gospel. And why do we do this? And it wasn't until I got to seminary and said, ah, now I know why we do this.

Because this is the day when we can consider the glory of our Lord. The image of our Lord being transfigured into His glory.

The way He looked before the Incarnation. And the way He looked after the Incarnation. And you know, the more and more I've considered this in thinking about preaching on this day, we're almost there.

We're almost there. Because if you notice, in our reading from Luke, Luke 9, 28, how did Luke begin?

It said, now about eight days after these sayings. Yeah, I say, eight days? That's strange. I mean, normally if you think about the Bible, we're talking about 40 years.

[5:39] Or we're talking about three days. Or seven days. We hear a lot about three days and seven days. And even in the Gospel of John, he is, chapters 1, is broken down into seven days.

We know the creation account. We know that. Seven days. Did Luke somehow just get this mixed up? Why eight days?

And looking into a little bit about, throughout church history, a couple individuals you might have heard of. One, Augustine of Hippo. And another was John Calvin.

They addressed this question of eight days in a very logical manner. Now, it's what I'm not going to hang my salvation on. But, it makes sense.

What happened on the eighth day? You think about the creation account and what they talk about, they say, God created heaven and earth and rested on the seventh day.

[6:51] And we have in the Gospel of John, the great banquet, on the seventh day. But on the eighth day was when creation, mankind, and humanity, the new creation, went to work.

It's when they went to work. that who had been called to take care of her and take care of us, went to work. Eight days later, Jesus takes with Him Peter, James, and John, the big three of the apostles.

They go on a hike up the mountain. We're not sure exactly which mountain that is, but they go up the mountain, and Jesus, as is His custom, prays. So, He starts praying.

And as good disciples, Peter, James, and John, while Jesus is praying, what do they do? What comes natural? Sleep. So, then, as Jesus is praying, He is transfigured.

He starts, I'll say, glowing. His appearance changes. His appearance, his face was altered, and his clothing was dazzling white.

[8:14] And behold, two men were talking with Him. Moses and Elijah. Suddenly, the glory of the Lord was right there in front of them.

Not just the glory, but God Himself was showing Himself. Now, this is not unusual in Scripture.

If you look back at the two companions that just showed up and started talking with Jesus, Moses.

Think about Moses. If you could think about Moses without thinking of Charlton Heston.

But think about Moses. What is Moses known for? leading Israel out of bondage in Egypt. And leading them through the desert.

Feeding them the water from the rock and manna. And led them to Sinai. They got to the edge of Sinai, and as the passage says, this is Exodus 19, and God calls Moses up the mountain to reveal the law to him.

[9:30] And when, after a couple times, when Moses went up there and he gives him the law, God gives him the law, but then Israel kind of messes up and they need to reconsecrate themselves.

And so they're reestablishing the covenant and while Moses is up there, he asks a very bodacious question of God. this is in Exodus 33, he said, let me see your glory.

He goes up the mountain and he said, let me see your glory. A wonderful prayer. A wonderful prayer.

Let me see your glory. And God says, no, no, no one can see me face to face and live.

But, he says, hides him in the crag and the rock covers him with his hands. So Moses, so as God passes, as the account says, sees God from behind or behind him.

[10:34] And then after when Israel continues to move on and we think about, they move on when, whenever God met with Moses, Moses went to the tabernacle and he talked with God, as it says, the scriptures say, face to face.

But when God, when Moses wasn't talking with God, left the tabernacle, Israel, they couldn't look at him. His face glowed.

He had a radiance. You could say that God was shining his, reflecting his glory out of Moses and to Israel. And they couldn't look at him.

He had to wear a veil. God and we see that glory. And we remember it's that when God came down on Sinai in the cloud, the thunder and the lightning, that's the one thing I think Cecil B. DeMille did get right in the Ten Commandments. This awesomeness that was so, so beyond our comprehension. God came down on the mountain.

[11:47] And how did God lead Israel? He led them with a cloud and with a pillar of fire as they were wandering through the desert.

You see a pattern here? Where the cloud is, where God's glory is there, there is his presence. God's presence is there with his glory.

And then, think about, let's go up and forward a few books in the Bible. When Solomon builds the temple, and he's dedicating the temple, and he prays for God to come down and bless the temple and be present in the temple, what happens?

For those of you who are familiar with 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, what happens? God filled the temple with his glory. A cloud came down and entered so much that nobody could stand.

They had to leave. They booked. They had to go. They could not stay in the temple. God's presence was so overwhelming. The cloud descended upon the temple.

[13:08] The glory of God was there. where God is, where his presence is, God's glory, the cloud was there.

It was there. He was there. And Moses was one who was talking to Jesus about the things that were about to happen in Jerusalem, his passion and his death.

he wasn't alone. There was a second witness, Elijah. You remember Elijah? Elijah was on, was there in fighting or arguing with the prophets of Baal.

And what's he tell them? And there, he said, you guys go ahead, you create your sacrifice and do that. Then I'll have my sacrifice and we'll see whose God is better.

it was Mount Carmel. And so, it's really a very comedic passage where the prophets of Baal are doing all the kinds of things.

[14:17] They're dancing and they're cutting themselves. They're doing all this stuff possible.

Yeah, yeah, to have their Baal come down and light the sacrifice and do the sacrifice and do this.

And Elijah is taunting them.

Biblical trash can talk. I mean, really, that's what he's doing. He's saying, oh, really, I don't see anything. What's going on? Does your God have to go to the bathroom now? Maybe you have to wait for that.

He taunts them. And then finally, when they're done, he prepares a sacrifice, he prays, and then he says, by the way, pour water over my wood.

Pour water. Make it humanly impossible to light a fire. glory. And then Elijah prays, and God comes down.

The glory of God comes in the form of water, comes down and consumes the sacrifice. And then Elijah then does what good prophets do.

[15:23] Puts all the prophets of Baal to the sword. with a clear showing of God's glory. And so what they do then?

But Jezebel, Queen Jezebel doesn't like that, and so she says, unless by this time tomorrow, I will make you like them. And so Elijah runs.

He runs. He books. He goes. He runs all the way after being fed by God. He ends up on Mount Horeb.

For all the biblical scholars here, Mount Horeb is also known as Sinai. He's back on the same mountain where centuries before, Moses received the law from God and God appeared to them in the glory of the cloud.

Elijah is up there. And God asks him the question. What are you doing here? What are you doing here, Elijah? And Elijah kind of gives a little bit of a pity party for himself.

[16:31] You know, hey, I was so bold for you and now nobody likes me. They're going to threaten to kill me. And so God tells him there was an earthquake.

There was an earthquake that says the Lord was not present in the earthquake. There was the wind, but the Lord was not present in the wind.

And then Elijah heard a still small voice, the whisper. And he fell on his face, the scripture says, he fell on his face because he knew he was in the presence of God and the glory of God.

No, it wasn't a big cloud, but God knew what Elijah needed and let his presence be manifest with a simple, a simple whisper.

We're reminded of the fact that whenever Jesus, in all the miracles that he did, whether he healed the blind man, he made mud and covered his eyes, or healed the deaf, he touched his ears, or just something simple like raising the dead, when Jesus raised Lazarus, he just said, Lazarus, come forth.

[18:03] He never, never stepped into this cookie-cutter mold. The presence of God, was right there, when God himself in Christ performed these miracles.

God spoke to Elijah. He appeared before Israel in a way that Israel would understand. And even today, he comes into our presence, and we enter his presence in the same way.

Some of you might at one time be saying, Lord, just please, show me your glory. Do something. Do something. And then, maybe something totally obscure.

It happens. God reveals himself. What is common to Moses, what is common to Elijah, and what is common for us today.

When we enter God's presence, when we enter him, his glory is there. The question he places before us isn't, am I there?

[19:20] are you listening? Are your eyes open? You know, we come today, and we gather, but there are so many things that the world kind of throws at us, and we're so distracted.

We're so distracted with our Facebook, with Twitter, or whatever they're calling it today. We're so distracted with our jobs, and with the things that go on in our family.

Do we take the time just to sit in the presence and the glory of God? May not be a cloud, may not be thunder and lightning, just be a still, small voice.

God invites us to come into His presence. You get that into His presence, and to give glory to Him, and allow His glory to come down upon us, to seek Him.

And here, in a little bit in our service, after the operatory, what are we going to do? We're going to sing the doxology. Doxology. You know what doxa means?

[20:49] Glory. Praise. Think of the doxology. Oh, many of us just love the old 100. We sing it, and what do we sing? Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.

But did you ever think about those words? Do we recognize it, and we enter and praise God, entering His presence, allowing Him to be here, sitting in each and every one of these pews, sitting up here, sitting over with the choir, maybe downstairs, preparing for coffee out, for us.

God is present here. And where His presence is, so is His glory. And on that day, when Peter, James, and John were there, and Jesus was transfigured, they saw the glory of the Lord, not because it was reflecting off of some trees or the mountains or something, because this is God. They saw Him. they saw Him. And then He said, don't see anything until my work is accomplished. And as the Gospels say, particularly the Gospel of John, the crucifixion, His passion, His resurrection, was His glory.

[22:35] He was about to enter into Jerusalem as a human. God was about to enter as a human being and be spit upon, be whipped, so that we would see the true meaning of glory as He sacrificed Himself for us so that our sins can be forgiven or will be forgiven.

If there is a moral that we have from Transfiguration Day, if this is the day we recognize the presence of the Lord and His glory that we see in the presence of the Lord isn't always or just all the nice big clouds, it's a fact that God Himself took the whip.

He allowed His creation to take a crown of thorns and mash it on His head. He took that whip, He carried that cross all the way on Golgotha and took the nails and the spear in His side.

That, my brothers and sisters, was the end result of the Transfiguration. This is the glory of God which He revealed to us and we today remember that we have life not because of something that we did, not because of some great mountaintop experience, but because of Christ's experience on that mountaintop.

today, the transfiguration, we see there was a visible transfiguration changing in Jesus.

[24:52] The apostles and the disciples then saw Him and we can experience and see Him today in His presence here with us.

unless we forget on that ascension day, Jesus was raised up and what does it say?

He entered into the cloud. He entered into glory from whence He came to go to prepare a place for us.

And so today, we gather in the presence of God with joyful expectation that someday He will welcome us into that place where He has prepared to be in His presence, to be in His glory. So let us, as this Luke 9 continues, let us take up our cross.

[26 : 12] Let's take up our cross and follow Jesus. Let's take up our cross and reflect His glory. His glory to those around us.

Not as what we just want to do something nice, but let's take up our cross and live in the presence of the Lord because He took up His cross which is His glory for us so that we can share with those around us.

Amen. about the work and to go to the other and the one and the he in the the B and the we that and the lip lip lip the lip the lip the as lip and the and lip lip lip lip