

The Transfiguration of our Lord

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 27 February 2022

Preacher: Ife Ojetayo

[0:00] If you will, if you will turn your Bibles to page 1030, your pew Bible, or your own personal Bible, I don't know what page, but look 9, starting in verse 28.

! This is one of the five events, sort of unique events of Jesus' life that we'll be studying, that we'll be talking about this morning, that we're commemorating this Sunday, the last Sunday of Epiphany, Transfiguration.

It is the Transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ. We might be familiar with this passage of the Bible, and some people will see this as one of those passages that's so fantastical that it gets explained away as, well, it's just, you know, it's a vision, it's a dream, it's symbolic.

But before we even enter the story, I want us to agree on this point together. Remember, if the resurrection of Jesus is possible, then nothing in this event that we're examining this morning is unlikely.

Can we all agree on that? Amen. Because if this isn't, if the resurrection is possible, anything is possible with God. Right.

[1:25] So, let us enter into it. It's on page 30 in your pew Bible. Encourage you to open to it and follow along. Beginning in verse 28, Luke writes, and by the way, this account is given in all the, in fact, all the Gospels talk about it.

John talks about it too. John talks about it in the first chapter of his Gospel. It's a small statement about, we have seen his glory as the glory of the only begotten Son.

He's likely, he was an eyewitness of this. He's alluding to this. And the other three synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, specifically talked about this event in the life of Jesus.

Luke's account is a little dissimilar to Matthew and Mark's. And so, it's the fact that he gives us some more information. So, let's look at it.

Luke starts in verse 28. Now, about eight days after these sayings, he took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray.

[2:33] And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered and his clothing became dazzling white. And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory as well and spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

Now, there's a very simple, easy narrative passage there, but it's packed full of a lot there.

The passage itself starts off by saying that it had been eight days after these sayings. What the sayings refer to by Luke here is the preceding verses to the passage you're looking at this morning.

Peter adjusts in the preceding verses. Peter adjusts had his great confession that Jesus is the Christ, that is the anointed one of God.

And then, this is after Jesus asked his disciples, who do people say I am? Jesus made this, Peter made this confession. And after that confession, Jesus now began for the first time to disclose to his disciples that he's going to go to Jerusalem to suffer many things, Luke tells us, to be rejected and then killed by the temple authorities.

[3:51] You can imagine the shock that the sack was whiplash. What? We are following the Messiah. And this is not what the Messiah does. And if you remember in the other synoptic gospel account, Peter actually rebuked Jesus at this point, to which Jesus says, get behind me, Satan.

So, these are all the momentous events that have preceded the transfiguration. And it was immediately after that, Jesus disclosed, Jesus also told his disciples about the manner of what discipleship means.

What it means to follow Jesus is to carry their cross and follow him. That they must be ready to do that. That indeed, by laying down their life, even to death, that's the only way in which they can save it.

Jesus had just told them all of this. So, Luke is saying this, eight days after all of these events, preceding events have taken place, all these difficult sayings that Jesus had just told his disciples, you can imagine the weight upon them, the anguish, the questioning, the confusion.

Eight days after this, Jesus took three of his disciples, Peter, John, and James, up a mountain to pray. So, the context of this event is important for us.

[5:14] And Luke tells us that as he was praying, it's interesting that all the events, especially in Luke, all the divine supernatural occurrences in the Gospel of Luke is in the context of Jesus' prayer.

Even in the baptism account that Luke gives us, it was as Jesus, after he was baptized, was lifting his head up in prayer. The theophany happened.

Here, again, as he was praying, Luke tells us, as he was, in fact, as he was praying, his face was altered. And his clothing became dazzling white.

In the original Greek there, Luke is just saying, his face was other. I think it's kind of, lack of a better way to describe it. It was other, altered.

And then the glistening, the dazzling white there, it's like, it's as white as shimmering, as lightning, and pure glory emanating from God.

[6:19] This is Luke's description of the transfiguration of Christ. Christ, as he prayed, he became transfigured. He changed. His physical bodily appearance changed.

His clothing was affected even by the change. And while this was happening, two men were talking with him. These two men are identified as Moses and Elijah.

They also appeared in glory. These are men who appeared. These were the men who appeared in the presence of God. Now, what were they talking about as they appeared before God?

The topic is about the departure of Christ. Again, the departure of Christ. Look at the phrase, in the context that it was speaking.

It was the departure of Christ, which he was about to accomplish. That's a funny way of talking about somebody departing. Accomplishing a departure? You just depart or you don't depart.

[7:20] But here, in this context, they're talking about the departure of Christ, to which that he was about to accomplish. The word there is the exodus. The exodus to which Christ was about to, the word for departure is exodus.

So, in here, we have in view a reference to the impending death, burial, and resurrection, which Christ was about to accomplish in Jerusalem.

So, the full whole meaning of this conversation is being made clear to us by Luke. Now, this isn't just a mere conversation. This is a conversation about this redemptive historical reality of God.

God's plan of salvation since the beginning, since the fall, is being brought about. And these Old Testament saints are there discussing with their Lord about this event that is about to take place.

Jesus is seen here to us as the second Moses. What is Moses' role in salvation history, in the life of Israel?

[8:27] He was the one through whom God established the law. He was the premier prophet of God. Jesus is shown to us here, even in this transfiguration, as the second Moses, who establishes a new order in how to relate to God.

Moses had given the people of God the law and showed them how to relate to God through the law. Jesus is coming now to establish a new order in how to relate to God. And also to fulfill the law which Moses is given.

But even more than just being the greater Moses, Jesus reveals that He Himself is the way by which we may relate to God. So, the Exodus as in view, again, the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ.

Can you imagine? This is a remarkable sight. These Old Testament saints, Moses and Elijah, they're accustomed.

These two men are actually accustomed to meeting with God on mountains. In fact, they both had an encounter with God on the same Mount Sinai, hundreds of years apart.

[9:42] Moses, of course, received the law on Mount Sinai when God's glory came. And we have some of that count in our Old Testament reading this morning. And here again, Elijah also had an encounter with God on Mount Sinai.

It was on Mount Sinai when he ran. When Ahab and Jezebel promised to kill him. And he said, I'm the only one who loves God left in Israel. And he ran and he hid. And God fed him on the mountain.

And then God appeared to him. First in the mighty Russian wind. And then the fire. And then the mighty wind. And then in the still small voice. That event took place on Mount Sinai. Here again now, they're meeting their Lord on another mountain.

I don't know how in past reading you've seen this conversation as you read it in the accounts of the Gospels. I used to think upon previous reading of this text that Moses and Elijah were giving instructions to Jesus.

About what it's about to take place. This is what you ought to do. Let's tell you what to make. But in truth, as I read it again, as I prepare for this sermon, I'm realizing it's probably the other way around. [10:55] Jesus was telling these Old Testament saints that he is the fulfillment of their ministry as God's prophets. He is the fulfillment.

And he's telling them the manner in which God's great salvation is about to be accomplished. Remember what Luke tells us. They were discussing his exodus, his departure. Which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Jesus is recounting to these Old Testament sins. This is the manner in which God's great salvation is about to take place.

It's not unlike... St. Clair Fragus was helpful in seeing this. It's not unlike the road to Amir's story after the resurrection. Remember that account in Luke 24?

Luke 24. As these two men were walking and Jesus appeared among them and said, where have you been? And Jesus then... Did you know what all that has happened in Jerusalem? That Jesus was killed and all those things?

[11:55] Then Jesus recounted to them in that passage. How the Old Testament... Both the law... Luke says that the law and the prophets. That's like a catchword for the whole Bible.

The whole of God's revealed word is about himself. Here we have physically Moses and Elijah. The two representations of the law and the prophets. And Jesus is telling them. All of history. All of salvation history. All of God's plan is about to be accomplished.

I am the fulfillment of that. I think that's what's going on in this mountain. Jesus... Can you imagine these faithful Old Testament saints? As they're being... They are hearing disclosure of God's plan. Of God's revealed history. And if you know your Old Testament, there's a lot of convergence here. As I've already said.

[13:00] All of it is pointed to Jesus as the fulfillment of God's redemptive plan. Jesus is the greater Moses. Remember the account that we read in Exodus just this morning?

Of Exodus 34, 29 to 35? About the shining face of Moses? Here we have the transfiguration of our Lord. I can't help but think that Moses as he went up to the mountain on Sinai.

Saw partly, partly the Lord's glory. Was in the presence of God. And he came down from that mountain.

And the rest of Aaron and the elders and the rest of Israel. They were afraid. Because why? His face was shimmering. It's just a reflection. Just a reflection of being in the presence of God. And they were afraid. So he had to cover his face with a veil. And then whenever he goes back up to meet with God. He removes the veil. When he comes back out, he puts the veil on his face.

[14:03] Here, that's not what's going on in this passage of the transfiguration. It's not that Jesus' appearance is a reflection of anything.

It is as if the disciples were allowed to see briefly the full divine glory of Jesus Christ. His human form had been veiling it. But now it's unveiled momentarily for them to see. He himself is the glorious one. Here, is that a reflection?

In fact, if you see the account as he's saying. Jesus' face was shining. His clothes were dazzling white. And it did say that Moses and Elijah also appeared in glory.

But their glory is a reflection. It's a derivative of the glory of their Lord to whom they're standing before. This is a marvelous declaration of God's identity and God's person as the Son of God.

[15:10] As God himself. And so the Lord appeared to Moses. And he appeared to Elijah. And he's disclosing to them. And it's also fascinating.

Because you see here the disciples in verse 32. They had fallen asleep. That's marveling to me. But this is not the first time they would fall asleep. When God asked them to go pray. J.C. Ryle talks about it as how. In fact, there is nothing of God that we can do with the power of the flesh. And so we ought to be sympathetic to these disciples here at this point. They were men of flesh. They're limited.

In fact, in some ways, they were so overpowered by God's presence. That they were. Maybe in fact, maybe they were. I don't know.

[16:09] Maybe they were put to sleep. Because the glory was so overpowered. But they were allowed. They woke up. And they viewed some of it. Right? They were not witness to the whole thing. But the part they viewed was they were able to realize the conversation was about the exorcist of Jesus Christ.

And then at this point, Peter says. Even as he's. After they've all awakened. Peter, the bold one. The impulsive one says. As Elijah and Moses were departing. Right? It's in the moment of their departure. Peter said to Jesus. Master, it is good that we are here. Let us make three things. Tens. One for you. One for Moses. And one for Elijah. And as he was saying these things. Right? What does it say? As he was saying these things. There's a voice that came.

Out of the cloud. And overshadowed them. And they were afraid as they entered the cloud. Now the disciples were asleep to most of what had happened. But they woke up.

[17:14] Enough to see the glorious sight. With Jesus, Moses, and Elijah. Although they were formerly heavy with sleep. In fact, some commentators have said it's probably a night that this event happened.

Right? So they would have been tired. Even if it wasn't a night. They were fatigued. There's been a lot of activities so far in the life of Jesus so far in this part of the gospel.

So they had an inability physically in their flesh to focus on the task of prayer. But yet, they were awake to see that something significant was happening before them.

And it's as if Peter wanted to join this glorious conversation that was going on. So as Moses and Elijah were leaving, he became the spokesperson for the other two.

Peter. He didn't want to waste an opportunity. Peter. Peter never wants to waste an opportunity. He wanted to capitalize on what was taking place.

[18:27] So he comments. It is good that we are here. Not really knowing the full implication of his statement. I think Peter meant that he was good that he was there.

So now he could be part of the council so as to direct the Messiah and not to accomplish the hopes of the people. They understood what they've just seen.

They know the significance of Moses and Elijah. And this is the Messiah. They're putting it together. Wow. God's redemptive plan. Okay. Now let's continue with this council.

How are we going to do it? How is it going to come to bed? They know that this was on the mountain.

They understand the symbolism of being on the mountain. They knew that it was a place to meet with God. So Peter is in fact saying, let's continue this sort of council.

[19:28] Let's get a messianic rally going. Let's build a tent for the three of you. Maybe then go back and gather the rest of the people.

And build a following to take power from Rome. Perhaps this is all of what Peter had in mind when he says, let's build a tent.

It's good that we are here. But Peter was again working at cross purposes. Against God's will and God's plan. Peter had a will and a plan. But it was not.

It was not God's plan and God's will. And while he was considering making these plans. To convince the crowd perhaps.

To win the heart of the people. To get a campaign going. Right? While he was doing this. A glory cloud appeared. A glory cloud.

[20:27] Where else have we seen that before? Glory cloud is the physical manifestation of God's glory. Right? So this is a kind of double whammy that's going on here.

They've already seen Jesus. His glory. His transfiguration. His glory being displayed. Being sort of unveiled momentarily. It's true.

It's true identity. And now. Again they've seen the glory cloud. The glory cloud that followed the people of Israel. In Exodus. The same glory cloud.

That was there in the temple. Of Solomon's temple. When God descended in glory. Right? Now. This glory cloud appeared. And enveloped them.

Overshadowed them. The word says. The word overshadowed there. Is the same word. That was used. In that Genesis account. Of God's glory. And Monsani. Overshadowed the people.

[21:27] It's also the same word. Interestingly. That was used in the New Testament. To talk about. Mary. The virgin. As the glory of God. The power of God. Overshadowed her.

At the. At the incarnation of our Lord. This is the same. This same word. That is being used here. This is this glory. Overshadowed them. You can imagine. Luke tells us. They were afraid.

I think Peter. Quickly shut up at this point. And. It was in awe again. But. But look here. That they've just been seen. This is important for us to see.

They've just been seen with their eyes. And hearing with their ears. In some ways. And Peter is trying to interpret. What all of it means. But God in his mercy.

Didn't leave the interpretation. To Peter. Or to John and James. He tells them the meaning. Of what it is that they're seeing. God in his mercy. This is.

[22:24] This is good for us to remember. God in his mercy. God in his mercy. He always shows us. Reveals to us. His works of salvation. In his revealed word. And this is the word.

Now coming. To these three disciples. A voice came out of the cloud. Saying. This is my son. My chosen one.

Listen to him. And when the voice had spoken. Jesus was found alone. And Luke tells us. That he kept silent. And told no one.

In those days. Anything. Of what they had seen. A cloud appeared. They were enveloped by the cloud. It was terrifying. But even more awesome.

Was the voice that spoke from the cloud. The voice. Of God. The father. And he spoke to them. Straight about. What they were hoping to accomplish. They were to shut up.

[23:23] And stop attempting. To usurp the plan of Christ. He had explained to them. Not too long ago. That he would be going to Jerusalem. To die. Remember that Jesus said that.

Peter had confessed him as Christ. But obviously. He thought that he was mistaken. That the Christ would suffer and die. Now the voice came. To set the record straight.

It spoke out. And said. This is my son. My chosen one. Listen to him. The significance of that. Should.

Would not have escaped. These disciples. Especially in the context. Of seeing Moses. Moses himself. Had told Israel. In Deuteronomy 18.

The Lord your God. Will raise up for you. A prophet like me. From among you. Among you. From your brothers. It is to him. You shall listen. It is Jesus.

[24:22] That prophet. That greater Moses. That Jesus. Moses prophesied about. And they had just seen Moses. Listening to that prophet. About God's plan. And now here they have again.

The word of God. God the father himself. Telling them. This is my prophet. It is interesting. That he says. My chosen one. It is an allusion.

To Isaiah 42. About the servant. Of the Lord. Here Isaiah 42. Verse 1. Behold my servant. Whom I uphold.

My chosen. In whom my soul delights. I have put my spirit. Upon him. And he will bring forth. Justice to the nations. If you continue to read.

That Isaiah 42. It talks about the manner. In which. This chosen one. Of the Lord. Will bring forth justice. He will not cry aloud. Or lift up his voice. Or make it heard.

[25:15] In the street. It's not the way. In which Peter thought. He would bring forth justice. A bruised reed. He will not break. A faintly burning wick. He will not quench. He will faithfully.

But he will faithfully. Bring forth justice. He will not grow faint. Or be discouraged. Till he has established. Justice in the earth. And the coastlands. Ways for his Lord. The rest of Isaiah.

Chapter 42. Talks about this. Chosen. Servant of the Lord. So. This has it in view. As. As the voice. Talks about. About who. Who Jesus is. This is my servant. And in the. You have to see this.

In the context of. Peter's prior confession. Transfiguration. And you have. We also have to see it. In the context of. Jesus's disclosure. That he was going to.

[26:11] Jerusalem. To die. We also have to see it. In the context of. Jesus. Having just told. His disciples. That they have to. Carry their cross. And follow in his example.

So the question. We must ask. As we see. Read this. Transfiguration. In that context. Is how do we. See this glorious event. Of the transfiguration. God is saying.

This Jesus. Is the greater Moses. Of whom. Of whom. Moses himself. Prophesied about. The prophet. That God will raise up. The father's own revelation. About the son.

This is. This. As we read this story. You might think. Wow. The moment of transfiguration. Is the focal point. But. The confession. The disclosure. The revelation of God. The father. About the son. This is the focal point. The focal point. Of this. Of this. Of this event. The father tells us. This is my son.

[27:10] My chosen one. And then he tells us. Listen to him. It is as if the father. Was saying. To us. Sit at his feet. So you can learn from him.

The way to me. Jesus is the chosen one. Of God. He is the final word. Of God. In the tradition. Of the prophets.

And he must be heard. He is the greater Moses. And the greater Elijah. And the voice of the father. Bears witness. To the reality. That Christ. Is preeminent.

Supremely preeminent. And his words. Are to be preferred. Above all other voices. This. Is the focal point. Of this. Of this story.

Archbishop Ramsey. In his book. The Transfiguration. He writes about this. And he says. This event. Stands as a gateway. To the saving events. Of the gospel.

[28:06] And it is like a mirror. In which the Christian mystery. Is seen. In its unity. Here. In this event. We perceive. That the living and the dead.

Are one in Christ. That the old covenant. And the new. Are inseparable. And he lists three things. That I want to bring to our focus. As points of application. He says. That the cross. And the glory. Are of one. That is what Jesus.

Is trying to show these. It's kind of a. A mercy. These are the same. Three disciples. That will see Jesus. As he's agonizing. In Gethsemane. About to go.

Accomplish. The exodus. About to go. Be the. The atonement. For our sins. These three. Same disciples. Will see Jesus. In anguish.

[29:03] In his human. Humanity. Weakened. The weight. Of the world. Literally. On him. Right. And. And. And.

And. They see that. But they've. They're the ones. They've also seen. This. Transfiguration. So. The. The message to us. Is that. We.

We want the glory. The transfiguration. This is a. Kind of a. A. A preview. Of. What the resurrection. Will be like. But.

The weight. To the glory. Is. By the way. Of the cross. There's another thing. That. Should be. As a point of application. To us. That the age.

To come. That kingdom. Of God. That will be consummated. When all. God will reconcile. All things to himself. That age to come. Is already here.

[29:58] The kingdom. Has already been established. It is. Not yet. Consummated. Finalized. But it's. Established. Our human nature. This is the reality.

For all of us. As people of God. Our very. Human nature. If you're in Christ. Our human nature. As a destiny. Of glory. Do you believe that?

Last. We just. In our. Sunday school. We just talked about. The Lord's prayer. That will be done. On earth. As it is in heaven. As we pray that prayer. As the people of God.

We should have this in mind. That. When that will of God. Is finally accomplished. And God reconciles. All things to himself. We. We. Were in Christ.

Our destiny. Is a destiny. Of glory. But now. It might not look like a way. Again. Think of the way. The way to glory.

[30:52] Is through the way of the cross. And thirdly. As a final point of application. We ought to see that. In Christ. The final word.

Is uttered. And in him alone. In him alone. The father. Is pleased. So how do you get to the father? Through Jesus. How do you hear God's word? Through Jesus. This is what.

The revelation. The testimony of God. The father himself. Is about the son. The glory of Christ. Is publicly revealed. In this.

In this. Event. Of history. But it's. It's. It's just the preview. Of the glory. That will be. That will be revealed.

[31:54] In all of creation. As all. Cosmos. Is transfigured. And changed. And we.

Beheld. Face to face. With. We've sang in our hymn. The glory of our Lord. This is our destiny. In fact. This is our destination.

salvation. But. In the meantime. The challenge. To the three disciples. In fact. To the twelve disciples. To all the followers of Jesus.

The call. And the challenge. To them. Is also the challenge. To us. The word of the father. About the son. He is the chosen one. Of Christ.

We are to listen. To him. We are to follow him. We are to cling. To him. So as we enter. In this. In this. In this coming week.

[32:49] Into the moment of Lent. In the time of Lent. And then. And then we celebrate. The resurrection. Of our Lord. I want to encourage you. Hear the word. Of the father here. Cling to Jesus.

Listen to him. Listen to him. In his word. That's. God is speaking. To us. In Christ. He's revealed himself.

In scripture. Peter himself. Who saw this. Eyewitness event. Tells us. As he recounted. In second Peter. He says.

We have a more. Perfect thing. To cling to. He's not relying. On the. Experience. He's calling. The rest of us. Who haven't seen it. To rely.

On the word. Of God. Revealed to us. And so. Let's hear. The word of God. Let's hear. The word of God's. Prophet.

[illegible][illegible]