

This is My Son

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[0 : 00] This is the evening service at Holy Trinity on the 29th of September 2002. The preacher is Paul Dudley.

His sermon is entitled This is my Son and is based on Luke chapter 9 verses 28 to 36.

I have had no truly bizarre things happen to me. No truly, truly bizarre things that has ever happened to me.

The closest thing that I can think of was when I was in lower high school. We were on our farm. It was a brilliant day. And we were all playing outside, doing some gardening.

I can't remember exactly what we were doing, me and my sisters. And across the valley there was this big hill and coming over the hill were these big dark black storm clouds. Well, it kept on moving across.

[0 : 59] Everything was still. The sun was shining. It was still. It was calm. We were playing outside. But this storm got closer and closer. This big black cloud storm.

And it came sweeping over. And just as it went over the top of us the wind whipped up into a frenzy. It was incredible. It went like it was like black. And we started running around wildly.

Like it just affected us really crazily. We were running around and jumping and doing cartwheels. And it was wild. Not truly bizarre. But a wild thing.

Tonight's passage is truly a bizarre event. face changing. Face changing. Clothes blazing. Ancient heroes chatting.

Men staggering around half asleep. Tent pitching. Clouds descending. A voice endorsing. And then all disappearing.

[2 : 02] In silence. A truly bizarre passage. And I happen to be preaching on it tonight.

What are we to make of such a bizarre account recorded for us? What are we to make of this? Well as we come and look at this passage tonight. I hope I've whet your appetite.

It's a great passage. The Transfiguration. It is a great passage which I've enjoyed wrestling with this week. But why don't we ask God as we come before this passage now to help us.

Let's pray. Father we do pray that you will help us to listen to your word. Father help us to understand it. So that we may understand more about Jesus.

And live in light of this. To bring honour and glory to you. Amen. Robert Ripley used to do little cartoons for the New York Globe back in 1918 he started.

[3 : 07] And it was entitled Ripley's Believe It or Not. They had a television program on some time ago. Believe it or not. Ripley's Believe it or not.

And they used to have these bizarre things on this show. Really bizarre things. And at the end of each one the person would say believe it or not.

Well let me tell you some of the bizarre things that I've found out. Did you know Wisconsin? I think I've said that wrong. But anyhow. There is the annual Sourcrate Festival.

Sourcrate. Crack? Crout? Crout. Thank you. Sourcrout Festival. Crout. What they do is they get cabbage. Finely chop it up. Put some salt on it. They'll allow it to ferment so it becomes sour.

And they have a festival. Of course a part of it is a eating contest. Did you know that there is a dog called Bingo over in Brazil who was given one and a half year jail sentence for biting a truck driver?

[4 : 12] Did you know in Oklahoma, believe it or not, in USA, they have laws forbidding you to feed alcohol to fish?

Believe it or not. Can you imagine if Ripley got hold of this passage? He was there when the transfiguration happened. Can you imagine the field that he would have had with this?

How bizarre is this passage? And you can just imagine him at the end of it going, believe it or not. Well, out of history many people haven't believed it.

Many people have tried to dismiss this passage. Some have sort of dismissed it as just, you know, hallucinations that the disciples had. Or that it was some type of vision that they had.

One person, which has still held some people today, hold that it was actually Jesus after he was risen from the dead. That was the account of it.

[5 : 14] But what they've done is they've mixed the story up and they've placed it back in the wrong spot. The thing is, when we look at this story here, it is reported as though it actually happened.

If you were there, you would have seen it. It's an actual event. There was no argumentation throughout history or disputes from the early believers whether this was just a vision or not.

They accepted it as a historical event. Therefore, as I believe that God is all powerful, I believe that the Bible is accurate.

It is his word. It is trustworthy and faithful. I accept that this is a historical event. A bizarre event, but a historical event.

So, what are we to make of this bizarre historical event? Let's have a closer look at it. You might like to open it up. It's on page 843. The Transfiguration, it is entitled.

[6 : 17] If you look there in verse 28, Luke chapter 9, verse 28. It starts. Now, about eight days after saying these things, now after eight days, the passage starts by talking about the fact that this event, this Transfiguration, it's called, happened eight days after another event.

Luke here is trying to drive us to see that we can't just read this passage in isolation. We need to understand this passage in light of what has just happened before, eight days ago.

Roughly about a week is the language that Luke is trying to bring about here for us. So, let's have a look at what happened about a week ago. The big thing that happened a week ago is this big question of who is Jesus?

Look there back in Luke chapter 9, verse 9. Here is King Herod. He's heard all these things about Jesus and some saying that this Jesus is John being raised from the dead or Elijah.

And Herod says, John, I beheaded. But who is this about whom I hear such things? Who is this Jesus? Herod's asking. In Luke chapter 9, 18, just on the next column, we see there Jesus asking the same question.

[7 : 34] But this time he's asking it to his disciples. Who do you say that I am? This is the big question that's right at the centre of this book. Who is Jesus?

Well, Peter, being the spokesperson for the disciples, he answers. He answers that you're the Messiah. You're the predicted king.

The one that is to come. You're the one to bring about the kingdom. And rightly so. Peter has seen the great things that Jesus has done. The miracles. The words. All the things that he has done. He recognises that Jesus is the Old Testament predicted figure. The Old Testament looked forward to this great king. A king in his kingdom. We see it's from Psalm 2.

One who would rule the nations. Peter recognises that Jesus is the Messiah. Peter's only got a partial picture of it all. I don't know if you've ever seen Catchphrase.

[8 : 35] But a part of Catchphrase is they give you a picture and they only give you little segments of it. So you might see an arm. You just don't get to see the whole picture yet. You've only seen a little bit. And they try and guess what it is.

What it's trying to say. Just from the little bit of the picture that they've got. Peter's got a picture of Jesus. But he's only got part of it. He's only got the part that he sees that Jesus is the Messiah.

And Jesus wants to start feeling out the picture. Trying to help them to understand the full picture of who Jesus is. So if you look there in verse 21. He says these words.

He sternly ordered and commanded them not to tell anyone. Saying the Son of Man must undergo great suffering. And be rejected by the elders. The chief priests. And scribes.

And to be killed. And on the third day be raised. Here Jesus is talking about the fact that he was going to suffer. Jesus is saying that he is the suffering servant.

[9 : 33] Back in Isaiah in the Old Testament. Isaiah looked forward to a person who would come and be the suffering servant of God. God's Son. Who would deal with the sins of the world.

Jesus is this one. Jesus is saying I am the one who is going to suffer. I am going to die on a cross. And more. When we look there in verse 23 through to 27.

The cost of following him is also death. We must follow him. Take up our cross daily. For those who wish to save their life will lose it.

And those who will lose their life for my sake will save it. You can imagine Peter and the disciples after hearing these words from Jesus trying to put the two pictures together. Here they have Jesus as the great Messiah.

The king bringing about his kingdom. And they were going to be a part of it. Can you imagine being a part of God's kingdom? The power. The authority.

[10:32] It was going to be great. And then Jesus says once they've got that right. Jesus says but I'm going to go and die. I'm going to suffer. And if you want to follow me you've got to take up the cross.

You can imagine him. Messiah. Suffering. Kingdom. Taking up a cross.

You can imagine him struggling with this. They've just seen this man of a great authority. How do they put these two things together? Well the rest of Luke tries to help the disciples to understand that.

Try to understand this picture of who Jesus is. And so we move into the transfiguration. Into this bizarre little passage. Let's have a close look at it.

We see there that Jesus takes a small group of his followers. We've got Peter, James and John. And they go up the side of a mountain. And at the top of the mountain they're in prayer.

[11:34] Praying away. And then we read what happens in verse 29. And while he was praying the appearance of his face changed. And his clothes became blazing white.

Suddenly there were two men. Moses and Elijah talking to him. They appeared in glory. And were speaking of his departure. Which was about to be accomplished at Jerusalem. Jesus' face changed.

His appearance changed. His face changed. We see there in the parallel passage in Matthew. That it actually says there that his face shone like the sun. The glory is coming out of him.

His clothes are blazing white. It reminds us of the picture of Moses. When Moses goes up on the mountain to meet God. And there the reflected glory of God comes off Moses.

And we can see the glow coming off Moses' face in clothes. But here something is different. It's not a reflected glory. Jesus, the glory is coming from him.

[12:39] It is the divine glory. Here we see Jesus in his transfigured self. In divine glory.

His inner being has been made transparent for all to see. All get to see his true nature. His true glory. But it's only just a glimpse. It's only a glimpse.

A breaking in of what is to come. When God would bring about his kingdom. God bring about his kingdom. Here is the glory that the disciples see.

Of the kingdom breaking in. Well there's two figures there that we see. Both highly respected figures. We see Moses and Elijah. Now Moses was a great figure in the Old Testament.

Here is a man, a prophet, a great prophet. Who leads the Israelites out of Egypt. With the great miracles. Through the Red Sea.

[13:37] And then we come to Mount Sinai. There the prophet is given the law. And he passes it on to his people. The Bible holds Moses up as a great, great prophet.

And then there's Elijah. Here we see this figure. Elijah. Who also is related to the law. You see the Elijah figure there is one who's trying to bring people back.

To adhere to the law. To the vision of God. He's the one who comes just before the end of time. We see there in both of these figures. They both have strange endings to their life.

We see. They are men. Who are in the times of God's transition. Bringing about God's purposes. They are great people in the Bible.

And here is Jesus in the midst of these two. Moses, Elijah and Jesus. When we look at this picture. The three of them there.

[14:39] In glory. We see that Jesus. Here stands in the same line as Moses and Elijah. Moses and Elijah were bringing about God's plan of deliverance.

Jesus. Jesus is in that same plan. Jesus is the great prophet. The one to come. It's appropriate that the three of them should be together.

But also. When we look at it. We see the superiority of Jesus. We see that. He is far above Moses and Elijah.

The glory is coming from him. He is the divine son. He is the one to bring great deliverance. He is the great king of kings. Here we see.

The affirmation of Peter's understanding. Jesus is indeed the great Messiah. The great king. But notice the conversation. That Moses and Elijah have with Jesus.

[15 : 37] They appeared in glory. And were speaking to him of his departure. Which was about to be accomplished at Jerusalem. They are speaking about his departure. The Greek word there is Exodus.

Jesus is Exodus. For those who know the Bible. The Exodus brings back the picture of Moses leading the people out of Egypt. The great deliverance.

They are in slavery. In bondage to Pharaoh. But Moses brings them out. In the great Exodus. God leading the way.

Here. They are speaking to Jesus' Exodus. They are referring to his death. That is about to come in Jerusalem. It is there that Jesus will bring about great liberation.

It is there he will bring about great deliverance from bondage. Here we see Moses and Elijah affirming the words that Jesus has just spoken to the disciples.

[16 : 43] That Jesus would indeed suffer. That he will be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed. And on the third day be raised.

Well there is two responses to what we have seen so far. We see there Peter's response in verse 32.

Here we see Peter's viewpoint from what he had just seen.

He is weighed down by sleep. But he is just barely awake. He manages to keep an eye on what is happening here. And in that moment of this sleepiness.

He sees the moment slipping away. We see the two figures starting to go away. And Peter in his effort to try and capture hold of that moment.

[17 : 52] Not to let it slip. He says, Jesus it is good for us to be here. Let us set some tents up. Let's set up some dwelling places. Let's just hold you going off.

We don't want you to go quite yet. Now many have seen in this picture of Jesus. Of Peter wanting to set up these tents. A festival that happened as a part of Israel's history.

Called the Feast of Tabernacles. In this feast what they would do is they would once a year set up little tents. Little shacks. Temporary dwellings.

Just to go and sit in for a week. To remind them of what God had done. The way that God had brought them out of Egypt. The way that God cared for them. And the way that God brought them into the promised land.

Here Peter is seeing that God's kingdom is about to be broken in. They see that here is this moment. Let's set up these little tents for you.

[18 : 53] Let's hang on to that moment. He wants to hang on to that mountaintop experience. Now Luke, the author of the book, reprimands him.

And makes the point that he did not know what he was saying. He doesn't have a full picture of what Jesus is and what he came to do. The words that he's just uttered are foolishness.

He's trying to put Jesus on the same level of Moses and Elijah. He calls him master instead of Messiah.

Not only that, Peter is trying to capture that moment. Thinking that now is the time of the kingdom. Well, after this outburst of Peter, we hear God speak.

His interruption is interrupted by God. And we see God's point of view. We see a cloud descend over all of them. Let me read it for you.

[19 : 54] In verse 34. While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them. And they were terrified as they entered the cloud.

Then from the cloud came a voice that said, This is my son, my chosen. Listen to him. A cloud descends on Jesus, Moses and Elijah and the disciples.

Here we see the presence, the divine presence coming over all of them. They're brought into God's power and radiance. They're given a glimpse of what it was like.

It brings back the pictures in the Old Testament of the great cloud over Mount Sinai, where Moses was given the Ten Commandments, where God spoke from. And rightly so, we see that they're fearful as the cloud descends on them.

And then a voice speaks out, words so full of meaning. This is my son, my chosen one. Listen to him.

[20 : 58] This is my son. This picks up the Psalm 2 passages. This picks up the idea that he is the Messiah. Here is God saying, yes, Peter, you're right.

This is my Messiah. The great king. The king about to enter his kingdom. But he's also my chosen one.

Here God speaks the words of Isaiah 42. The suffering servant. Here God says and affirms that Jesus will have to suffer. That the way to the glory is through the suffering.

Jesus is the suffering servant. And then finally he says, listen to him. Words spoken about a prophet that would come after Moses in Deuteronomy 18.

Listen to him. He is the great prophet that was predicted. Well then suddenly, after hearing these words of affirmation about Jesus, God's divine approval of Jesus, everything returns to normal.

[22 : 06] This sleek preview that we have ends. And who's left centre stage? When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone.

Who's centre stage? Jesus. He's left there. All have departed. All have gone. He's left to fulfil his journey that is before him.

Notice at the end there, the summary statement at the end of verse 36. How does Luke wrap this section up? And they kept silent in those days, told no one any of the things they had seen.

The disciples were silent. There was a blanket of silence. They said nothing. They'd been given a little glimpse of who Jesus was.

Their eyes and ears had just a beginning of the understanding. It was not time to Jesus' resurrection did they fully understand what they had seen. Did they fully come to understand the full picture of Jesus?

[23 : 10] For now, they remained in silence. In ignorance. You see, even after seeing this full vision of Jesus, they still did not fully understand.

It's only as we move through to Jesus' resurrection do they fully understand. That their eyes and their ears were opened. They came to understand that he was indeed the Messiah.

The one to bring about God's glory, God's kingdom. He was to continue God's work. Like Moses and Elijah. But he was the greater. They saw a glimpse of his glory.

But the way to glory, which has been affirmed here in this passage, is through the cross. Through dying for people to bring about the forgiveness of sins.

And at the end of it, Peter is told to listen to him. What we get from this passage here is the importance of understanding the full picture of who Jesus is.

[24 : 15] Let me tell you a bizarre story I heard. In Sydney, what do you think is the most stolen item in Christian bookstores?

What? What? What? What? What? What? What? What? Yes. No, not Bibles. It's the little bracelets and little necklaces with WWJD.

What would Jesus do? These little bracelets that they have, you know, and little necklaces that have this WWJD, it tries to remind people that you live a life, you're trying to live a life the way that Jesus would.

You'd make decisions the way that Jesus would. They're the things that have been stolen. These little bracelets, it's kind of bizarre, isn't it?

The thing is, we're meant to be following Jesus. Many think that this is just these little WWJDs, you know, it's a little bit trite, you know, a bit of a pious way of understanding things.

[25 : 30] But I think in reality there's a lot of truth in the saying WWJD. What would Jesus do? We are called to follow him, to live a life like him.

But there's a big problem. The big problem is we don't understand what Jesus would do. We don't understand who Jesus fully is.

I think one of the big problems of what we want to do is we want to make Jesus in our own image. I have a friend. When I was talking to him about Christianity and talked to him about Jesus, for him, Jesus was a good man, had some good things to teach.

And the great thing that he came to teach was that we should love one another. And this was his way of getting around his immoral lifestyle, of living in homosexual relationships.

As long as he was loving, then he was obeying Jesus. He was turning Jesus, only taking one element of the love that Jesus came to talk about and forgetting all the rest of Jesus' sayings and the rest of the picture that we have of Jesus.

[26 : 39] He was just taking that one element. We turn Jesus into what we want Jesus to be. We want to only accept one part of it, perhaps. Do you accept Jesus as King, Lord over every part of your life?

Do you listen to him in every single thing that you do? What about, do you see him as the suffering servant? Do you see the reason why he had to die?

Do you trust in him utterly because of that? I was at a funeral this week having a conversation with someone and talking to him about the fact that I was a youth worker, not a youth worker, a social worker, and that I felt like I was giving kids band-aids to their social problems.

I wanted to tell them about Jesus, I said to this guy. He said, well, don't you think it's a bit odd? Shouldn't we be just telling them about how great humanity is? Trying to help them to understand the goodness of humanity, give them their self-worth.

I said, what, sort of like September 11th, that type of humanity? Sort of like the war that's going on at the moment? He sort of looked at me and said, yeah.

[27 : 52] Yeah, I guess that's probably not the best way of going forward, is it? Do you recognise your great need of Jesus?

The fact that he needed to die for you. Have you taken that out of the picture? Just reflect for a moment. How are you living your life?

Are you living your life the way that Jesus would? What would Jesus do? Are you living it that way? Just reflect for a moment the week that you've just had.

Reflect a moment also on who you see Jesus is. Who is this man Jesus? Who is this man?

Who is this man? This is my son. My chosen. Listen to him. Listen to him. if you're living, he was, he is alone.

[29 : 21] This man is a person in shake with me. It was a woman, sir. I have to show you, my toma on your cause. Alright, let's show you my body. He's hmm. Listen to him. Listen to me. You're listening to him.

Listen to him. Listen to him. Listen to him. Listen to him. Listen to him. Listen to him. Listen to him.

Listen to him. Listen to him.

Listen to him in high Señor.