

The Transfiguration

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Preacher: Harvey Guest

[0 : 00] It was Alexandra who once told me, I think it was sometime last year, I don't know why she did this. She had a bit of time in her hands and she looked up, bottom line, she found out that I've done, I don't know, I've done 60 or more learners' exchange talks over the decade.

And I suddenly figured out that the idea is that if we keep letting him do this, he'll get it right one of these times. That's, yeah, right.

Right, get right down to it in front of you. Just a little bit of Luke's gospel there. It's not the greatest photocopying, not playing the photocopier outfit in Carersdale, you probably know the one I referred to.

So this morning, I just want to spend some time with you together looking at, as announced, the transfiguration story, which is in front of you again, Luke 9.

The version found in the Gospel of Luke starts at verse 28 there, runs through to verse 36. Looking at is a nice metaphor.

[1 : 14] Looking at or pondering, I don't know what word you like to use when you read, attend a scripture by yourself or in a group, or thinking about this passage.

That's what we'll do together. Looking at, pondering, thinking about Luke, Luke's version of the transfiguration story. And then, along the way, asking in no particular order what it is here, if you can ask a question like this, what are we, in fact, looking at when we look at a passage like this? How to seek benefit by looking at a passage like this? What are we doing when we ponder such a thing as the transfiguration story in one of the Gospels?

Today, again, from Luke. A lot of people in our culture might think it's strange for a bunch of apparently grown-up folks like ourselves, looking fairly normal and awake after some coffee. Why do they spend time looking at a story about this kind of, our culture might call it a weird story? Why do we do this? But we are indeed going to do it without apology.

[2 : 36] We think it's an important thing to do, to look at, and here let me turn to prayer. We're going to look, Lord, at the transfiguration of, indeed, you, Lord, our Savior, Jesus Christ.

And, Lord, in your name, we ask that you would teach us this morning. You are our teacher and our Lord, to open the eyes of our hearts that we may see wonderful things in your word.

God, be with us today. Open our eyes, indeed, to see what you would have us see this morning in your holy word. Amen. Amen. So, to the story.

Now, about eight days after these sayings, he took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. 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 and spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

[3 : 50] Now, Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep. But when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. And as the men were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus, Master, it is good that we are here.

Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah, not knowing what he said. And he was saying these things as he was saying these things.

A cloud came and overshadowed them. And they were afraid as they entered the cloud. And 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 they kept silent and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen.

Luke's gospel, the transfiguration story. There it is. What can you say about this? You've heard this a thousand times before. We know it so well.

[5 : 02] Attend, says Paul, attend to the public reading of Scripture. So Scripture commands us. So we've just performed an obedience, haven't we, together as the people of God.

Attend to the public reading of Scripture. And we've done that this morning. So that's all we need to do, right? There is a simple obedience. And it's called for in the life of the Church.

We attend to the public reading of Scripture. Scripture, of course, without controversy, surely.

Maybe it can be fine-tuned a bit, but I'll make some assertions about Scripture.

Scripture is a, or perhaps Protestants would be more inclined to say, the witness to Jesus Christ.

What he, Jesus Christ, is, what Jesus Christ does, is the supreme interest of the Church and of the Christian.

All men so far, I trust. Remember Jesus Christ, says Paul to Timothy. Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descended from David, as declared in my Gospel.

[6 : 21] Again, says the mighty apostle to the Gentiles. The New Testament is, John Webster speaks like this, the great John Webster, alas, passed away a few, a couple of years ago.

The New Testament is the domain or the sphere. It is the place of the apostolic witness to Jesus Christ.

That's what Scripture, the New Testament specifically, is. It's the place where the apostolic witness to Jesus is remembered. That couldn't be more simple, I think.

Jesus, specifically Paul reminds Timothy, I think that's a weighty thing to ponder. Jesus, not just Jesus, if you will, but Jesus descended from David.

That is to say, he is Israel's Messiah. Jesus lives, his meaning is in the mystery of Israel's life. Not anywhere else do we understand Jesus.

[7 : 27] That's his place in the mystery of Israel. Remember Jesus Christ, descended from David. As declared in my Gospel, says Paul, Israel's Messiah.

As such, Holy Scripture, this place of the apostolic witness, is obviously, it's a form of knowledge, isn't it? We've just read a passage of words.

It means to communicate knowledge to us. It's a form of knowledge. It's a form of knowledge. It's a form of knowledge in the church called, not in the academy necessarily, not in schools of religion, for instance, but in the mystery of the church, it is called revelation.

It's a form of knowledge called revelation. Revelation. And a very specific form of knowledge is revelation. Revelation, says the same theologian, John Webster, I'm leaning on him a lot today for help.

He doesn't anywhere, as far as I know, write about the transfiguration, but I'm taking some of his ideas and hopefully appropriately applying them around and with this passage of Scripture.

[8 : 39] Revelation is the eloquence. I love this sentence from John Webster. He writes weighty theological sentences, sometimes very simply, sometimes not very simply.

Revelation is the eloquence of divine action. That's why I have the word not very eloquently written up there, eloquence.

That's a left-hander getting old and trying to write for public viewing. Revelation is the eloquence of divine action.

Sort of a watchword for my talk today. So again, let us attend to, ponder, think about this divine action that we've just read about.

We can call it that, surely, a divine action. We couldn't do the transfiguration. It's a divine action.

And attend to the eloquence by which, in which, it is set before us this morning and that we have read together.

[9 : 49] Attend to the public reading of Scripture, says Paul. Here is an eloquence about a divine action which is revelation to us.

Very specific form, again, of knowledge. Everything I've said so far, I think, is Bible, Christian, Christian tradition, common sense. But it's good to attend to what we know, make it clear, if you will. Revelation is the eloquence of divine action. So you might want to have the passage in front of you again. Jesus with, again, just entering into this, what our theologian teacher has called a divine action.

Jesus with Peter. John and James. Obviously, from the rest of Holy Scripture, we know certainly the Gospels.

They're an inner circle. They're frequently mentioned, aren't they, as very close to Jesus. Always surrounded by witnesses, Jesus, almost always. Few places in Scripture where there aren't

witnesses immediately with him, but they're very rare.

[11:06] Jesus has this inner circle around him, and they went up, says Luke, on a mountain to pray. They apparently enter what I guess we would call what a hill country.

I've never been to the Holy Land, to Palestine, but there aren't big mountains there, are there?

Anybody here been there and said, oh, no, I saw a big mountain?

I'm sorry? They're big on a bike. They're big on a bike. There you go. There you go. So there's a, on a mountain, a hill country, they go there. A real place, obviously, in our world.

This hill country in Palestine. It's there. I guess you can probably go and guess where it was. Some of you geography people about the Holy Land could tell me. Maybe they know, they can guess where this was, where this happened.

And there, Luke says, as he prayed, Jesus was changed. You notice here. His face is altered.

[12:13] His clothing, Luke says, became dazzling white. There you go. Without elaboration. He just says this.

There you go. His face altered. I don't know what, does your imagination start to work when you read scripture? I need instruction about that.

Maybe from poets, from wise readers of scripture. His face altered. His face altered. His clothing become dazzling white.

This drama, as you know, is found in Matthew, Mark, as well as in Luke. It's in all three, as they're called, the synoptic gospels. That's by way of saying, Luke alone, again, you know these things. Luke alone mentions that it happened, this transfiguration moment happens as he prayed. It's not mentioned in the other recordings of the transfiguration story.

[13:17] As he prayed, Luke says. Prayer is apparently a meeting place with many possibilities. Maybe that's why Luke mentions this detail.

That the others decide for their own reason not to ruin. In the remembering traditions that put together the gospels, if you will, people wrote them. This particular moment of prayer is remembered by Luke.

Prayer. It happened as he prayed. How intense, if you will, must have been our Lord's prayer life. As he prayed. Prayer, this meeting place.

And behold, Luke says. Apparently this is a kind of a rhetoric of wonder. And how appropriate for this story.

A rhetoric perhaps of announcement. Whatever rhetoricians might call this sort of moment when a writer will say something like, And behold. Real attention is called for.

[14:23] And behold. Rhetoric of wonder. Moses and Elijah says Luke. Speak with this altered one.

Jesus. Who again, his clothing is ablaze with light. Isn't that amazing? Isn't that amazing? You just want to go slow as you read scripture, don't you?

Just ponder it. Think about it. Just note the facts with real attention. There it is. This altered one meets with Moses and Elijah.

And then Luke says. It's a sparse passage, isn't it? There isn't too much elaboration. No theorizing here, if you will.

These conversing ones speak about our Lord's departure. As it says here. The footnote.

[15:22] The little note at the bottom of the passage in front of you. tells us that literally this means his exodus. The Lord's departure.

The Lord's exodus. His death is approaching. And these two from the distant past. Moses and Elijah speak to Jesus about his approaching death.

As they appear in glory. As his face is altered. And his clothing is ablaze with light. divine action indeed.

Just think about it. Holy scripture puts this in front of us. His exodus. They appear in glory.

Again, these two from the distant past. Peter, James. Peter, John and James. saw their friend and leader changed here.

[16:25] They are called upon to be with him in this hill country. And to witness this. And they saw in glory. At the same time. Luke tells us. Moses.

And Elijah. I just want to. Again. Do you enjoy going just slow and looking at what's in front of you here? Like stopping a movie frame and saying, wow.

That's worth looking at for a long while. Simple. It's obviously a simple story. Would you agree? Don't think there'd be too much disagreement that's simple. In its presentation.

I also find in its simplicity. Do you? I find it beautiful. Scripture is often beautiful. Often it has an eloquence about it. It's.

I find it's compelling. And it's beautiful. Divine action. Again. As the theologian would have it. Would describe it for us.

[17:26] Our brother in Christ. Who. In the church. Has a ministry of. Thinking about scripture. And its meaning. Theologians do. Do a bit of. Theorizing.

About the. The bare text of scripture. They know they're theorizing. They would tell you. A good theologian like John Webster. Stay close to scripture. Don't make the. My discourse.

First. Scripture is always first. Always scripture. Scripture. Always scripture. It's simple. It's beautiful. Witness is always first.

Always. And of course. The divine action with witnesses. Witnesses. Called. To witness the action. This is the way revelation happens.

Divine action. Witnesses called. To watch it. And. This in turn. Again. Pointing out the super obvious.

[18:21] Aren't I being simple and obvious today? This. Takes. A. Written form. Otherwise. We wouldn't have it. To read together today. So.

We're. We're. Plugged right. We're right. Into this story. At this point. Though. Apostolic witness. To the divine action. Takes a written form.

So. It's in front of us. Today. And so. The apostle says. Make sure you attend. To the public reading. Of this. It's really important.

That you. Do this obedience. In fact. It's so important. This particular story. If we can say this. Is that it's. The spirit decided. Should we speak that way.

About the spirit's ministry. And. With holy scripture. Three times. We'll put this. In front of the church. Interesting that. John's gospel doesn't.

[19:16] There's a story. There are. Somehow. John's gospel does not include. The transfiguration story. That's an interesting fact. It's almost as if the whole gospel of John.

Feels like a transfiguration story. In a sense. But there you go. Three times. This story is put in front of the. In front of the church.

For. For reading. And on occasion. For its public reading. The fact that the scripture. That. That this action. Back in a hill country. This divine action.

With witnesses. Surrounding it. And the fact that it takes a written form. Is almost taken for granted. I think I do. I have. I'm casual. I own a few Bibles.

I hope. Maybe you do. Well. I can pick up this one. Jerusalem Bible today. RSV. New English. Whatever. You know.

[20:11] I said. But the word of God. Has taken a written form. Almost. Again. Take that for granted. It seems important to remember.

Where I need to be reminded. At least. That. Again. Here's another theological assertion. I hope in the. Discussion time. You can tell me. If these are. Wise.

Unwise. Better stated. Whatever. But scripture is a part. Of the mystery. Of salvation. Do we really. Remember that. As often. As we should. Again.

I have Bibles. I pick it up. Read it. And maybe. I belong to a group. We read it together. People would listen to scripture. But scripture is part of the very mystery of salvation itself.

That's why Paul says. Attend. To it. Read it. Read. Mark. Learn. Inwardly. Digest it.

[21:08] Says a wise man. From the 16th century. Remember Jesus Christ. Paul says. Attend. To reading. If I may abbreviate his words a bit.

Attend. To reading. Revelation. Again. Is the eloquence of divine action. It has taken a written form. How we should attend to it. Therefore.

We're doing that this morning. Peter. To continue on in the story in front of us. Peter. I always want to call him.

As I get older. Dear. Dear. Peter. The apostle. And again. I. Do you ever think of the apostles. As our brothers in Christ.

Peter is my brother in Christ. I hope you think of him. As he's your brother in Christ. Dear. Dear Peter. He is in this story. Big time. Isn't he? Peter shows up in the gospel.

[22 : 03] So frequently. He's an important guy. In the mystery of salvation. In the mystery of salvation. Isn't he? This eloquence. From heaven. Is in front of us.

As Mr. Webster. Would remind us. But you may have noticed. In the reading. Peter. Is not eloquent. No. Peter. Is not eloquent. Peter. Often.

Puts his foot. Famously. Puts the foot. Right in the mouth. Awakening from sleep. With James and John. He sees this glory. In front of him.

What a privileged fellow. Peter was. To be. Called to be. Such an intimate witness. To the mystery of our Lord. Wakes up from sleep. With his buddies.

This implies. I think. That it was a long time. Our Lord was in prayer. It gave Peter. James and John. Time to nap. Apparently. Fell asleep.

[22 : 57] And as he wakes up. Famously. He immediately decides. That the best thing to do. Is to suggest to his Lord. That. Three tents. Or three shrines. Or three somethings.

Should be built. To remember this. A remarkable moment. Perhaps it was to freeze. If you will. The moment. Right. This is. This is important. Jesus.

We better. Do something. To remember it. Shall we? Three tents. Three shrines. Three.

Remembering places. Where we'll. We'll remember that you.

And. Moses and Elijah. Were talking. This divine action. Perhaps. Has overwhelmed him. I wonder if I would have fainted.

If I'd seen such a thing. There it is. Peter. Not eloquent. He wants to freeze the moment. Peter speaks.

[23 : 52] Luke says. Does Luke have a sense of humor. Do you think? Peter speaks. He says. Not knowing what he said. It often happens in life. You ever. Caught you.

This wouldn't happen to people like you. But it has to me on occasion. I. Talk. And I. It's pointed out to me later. That I didn't really know what I was talking about. But my mother used to say that to me on occasion.

This is no passing detail. When a theologian. Again. Theorite. Unpacks it. With some. Some. Theological pondering.

And again. The. The unfolding of scripture. Will take another form of discourse. From scripture. If. Theorizing is the right word. A theological discourse.

That helps us attend to scripture. Again. No passing detail. That Peter speaks. But he doesn't know what he's talking about. Much speech about transcendence.

[24 : 48] Is of course. Void of meaning. Our culture right now. Is filled with. Talk about transcendence. Our culture famously now. Point out the obvious.

Loves spirituality. And there's a lot to talk about it. But probably we can safely say humbly. And perhaps. With a sense of disappointment.

That most of it's noise. It's speech. But we don't know what we're talking about. The world of transcendence. Has been ruled out of order.

In fact. In our culture. Speech. Speech about it. Is out of order. It cannot be known. In our realm. Since the enlightenment. That world is just unknown.

That's why we become deists. A God who made me started things. But. We have no knowledge of him. Here below. And then deism. Naturally becomes atheism. Since we can't say anything about him.

[25 : 43] Why don't we just say he's not there. But we still love spirituality. So we do a lot of talk about spiritual things. Sometimes language simply as Wittgenstein.

Alexander said I should quote the odd philosopher. Wittgenstein. I think it's a very helpful metaphor. Sometimes language just. He says idols. It's like a machine. That's supposed to take a car somewhere.

But sometimes it just idols. It's not going anywhere. Language idols. That's a very. It happens all the time when people speak. We have heard again.

That revelation. Is. The. Eloquence of divine action. Further we can say. This will get back to Peter in a moment. Revelation.

Is. A majestic act. Of God's freedom. Says a theologian. That's why the word freedom is in front of us now. Revelation. Is a majestic act.

[26 : 42] Of God's freedom. We couldn't command the transfiguration moment to happen. It's an act. Of the divine transcendent mystery of God.

Deciding in his mysterious freedom. To do this. Revelation. Is a majestic act. Of God's freedom. Tend to the reading of scripture. Because it will tell you. What God in his freedom has done. To speak to us. Out of his majestic holiness.

We do not. See this gets you back to Peter. We do not step forward. As equal dialogue partners with God.

God. But God. God. Establishes. Us. As knowers. I love that little phrase. God. Establishes.

[27 : 36] Us. As knowers. About what we're supposed to know about God. That's what the whole mystery of Israel. And Jesus. And the church. Is all about. Salvation history.

Is what God wants us to know. About what he's doing. With his errant creation. Now he's going to bring it back to himself. He's given us understanding. God.

Establishes. Us. As knowers. We don't reason cleverly. Here. About God. And say. Oh yeah. That's what God must be like. No.

God will establish us. As knowers. Peter. You see. In this story. What is. What Peter. What should Peter have done.

Do we dare to see that. Does this passage. Inform us. About this sort of thing. Peter. Just needed. Apparently. To wait. He didn't need.

[28 : 31] To speak. About his own. Guesswork. Knowledge. About what's going on here. Lord. He just needed. To wait. For God. To establish him.

As a knower. But he needed. He blurted out. His own knowledge. About what's going on here. This moment. This moment.

In scripture. The transfiguration. Is one of those moments. In scripture. Which evidently. Unites the testaments. Doesn't it. It's a beautiful. Uniting of the testaments.

I love this kind of thing. When it happens. Simply. As we see here. Jesus. With. Moses and Elijah. Elijah. It's not with Socrates.

And Plato. Or Aristotle. He's with. Moses and Elijah. Remember. Jesus Christ. Descended from David. Paul says.

[29 : 26] He's part of. Israel's story. He's Israel's. Messiah. He's in fact. Israel's meaning. He becomes. Israel.

For Israel. Israel's God. If you will. So remember that. Moses and Elijah. commune with Jesus. On the Mount of. Trans. On this Mount of.

Transfiguration. Concentrated. Abbreviated. Pictures. Or symbols. Of the whole Bible. Are in scripture. And I find them. Very helpful.

Very probing. They. Really bring. The whole horizon. Of. Of scripture. Before our eyes. I. I. I love it. When it's done. From the pulpit.

I love. When teaching moments. When. When. When this sort of. Thing happens. It's lovely to see. I hope you'll agree. The whole horizon. Of scripture. Suddenly. There in front of you. It's beautiful.

[30 : 21] I love it. I've heard. Marvelous moments. In pulpits. Harry Robinson. Used to talk about. The three trees. Of scripture. In the garden. The cross. And then the tree.

That heals. The nations. And the apocalypse. A vision. There's the whole story. God is telling us. A whole story. The Bible's not just. Little fragments. Of this and that. It's one big story.

That God is telling us. Again. I find them very. Very helpful. Jean de Lubac. Again. I'm supposed to quote people. So I'll do it again. A great. Jesuit thinker.

Who was. He's said to be the big. One of the big minds. Behind Vatican II. Wonderful Jesuit. Great believing man. You read his writings. He. He.

He. One of his. One of his. Somewhere in his writings. He. He. Puts together. The testaments. By just simply. Talking about. Babel.

[31 : 15] The tower. Of. Which. Is the very. Picture. On a. Abbreviated. He uses that word abbreviated. I find it very helpful. The abbreviated symbol. Of how sin.

And rebelling against God. Brought judgment. On the nations. And at Babel. The nations were. Were dispersed. In confusion. They couldn't act together. Anymore.

They're broken up. But then. At Pentecost. The nations. Hear the gospel. These scattered nations. In abbreviated form. Pentecost.

Announces. That God. Is going to bring the nations. Back together. Again. So. Babel. Tower of. And Pentecost. Unite. Unite. The. The.

The testaments. Find that. That's another beautiful picture. Of what our God's doing. He. Throws the nations. Into confusion. But then again. In abbreviated. Symbolic form.

[32 : 09] He announces. At Pentecost. I'm bringing the nations. Back together. His judgment. Will be. Will. Be. Followed. By mercy. If you will. Peter.

Peter. At Pentecost. Finally. Back to Peter. At Peter. Peter. At Pentecost. Is indeed eloquent. He's been transformed. He didn't know what to say.

On the Mount of Transfiguration. But at Pentecost. He knew what to say. At Pentecost. Dear. Dear. Peter. Is the Lord's obedient service.

A servant. And he is eloquent. He announces to the nations. God is now bringing you back together. That's. That's an amazing transformation. That has occurred.

In. In. In this. Dear. Man. Peter. Tom Wright sees. As. I've never come across. The picture of that.

[33 : 04] In a writer. How. The testaments. Are united. And Tom Wright's. The depiction. Of things. In the New Testament. Does it for me. As. With great power.

He sees. United. Of the testaments. As. At the very center. Of the gospel. Which is an obvious truth. The Lord's death. Is indeed. The perfection.

Of the exodus. Moses and Elijah. Speak to him. About his death. His exodus. He's going to take. The exodus story. And. Reveal. Its true meaning.

He will perfect. The exodus story. On the cross. As indicated. Quite clearly. In this story. They spoke. To him. About his exodus. About his death.

Right. Unfolds. The mist. This mystery. With deep insight. It seems to me. Christ. Crucified. Is Israel. Going into. Her final. Exile. Exile.

[34 : 01] What did Israel. Cry out. To God. It's all over the place. In scripture. When she was in exile. She cries out. Why have you. Forsaken us. That's what Jesus.

Cried out on the cross. Why have you. Forsaken me. He's Israel. Crying out again. Why have I been abandoned. But it's a deeper. Abandonment. A deeper exile.

It's the fulfillment. Of the exile. Motif. In scripture. Why have you. Forsaken me. Christ. Raised. Is Israel. Finally. Coming to her. Perfect.

Obedience. Her covenant. Obedience. Is perfected. By Jesus. Yes. The. All the New Testaments. Are woven.

Right together. Their very meaning. Is woven. Together. Jesus. Perfects. The Israel story.

Remember. Jesus Christ. Descended.

[34 : 55] From David. Those are not. Idle words. From the apostle. Never. Never. Abstract Jesus. Out of the story. Of. Israel. Out of the Old Testament.

Mystery. Otherwise. You'll get him wrong. He'll become a Jesus. Of. Mystical. Pursuit. Or something. It's all over the place. In our culture. People talk about. Oh I. The Jesus idea.

The Jesus. Mystery. It. Abstracts him. From. Israel. And therefore. It begins to get him wrong. Badly. Very badly. I won't.

I won't. Talk any more about. Tom Wright. Other than. Saying. That he does. In one place. In his writings. This is from. A memory. But I clearly remember.

He thinks. When he looks at. The transfiguration story. Traditionally. And it's not a bad tradition. To hold on to. I would think. But it's just. He thought. Oh well. When we see the transfiguration.

[35 : 51] That there. We have proof. That Jesus is divine. Right. He's altered. His. His clothing. Goes ablaze. He talks. With long dead. Old Testament.

Mighty figures. Like Moses. And Elijah. Wright thinks. That's probably wrong. What we really see. On the mount. Of transfiguration. Is. If it's not.

Overstating. His point. Here. I might be a bit. I don't think so. What we're really seeing. Is our own future. The. The point. Of Jesus.

Transfigured. Is. There is the future. Of humanity. Here is the son of man. Beginning to be unveiled. In front of his witnesses. There is the second Adam.

If you will. Being revealed. In his glory. That's the revelation. Of what humanity. Is called to be. And will be. When all things.

[36 : 45] Are perfected. In Christ. There. We. Are prefigured. The second Adam. Again. Is here. Moving right along.

Peter. In the story. You'll recall. I should have. Noted my. Verse numbers. For easy. Looking. You'll notice. Though. That Peter.

Now. The. Uneloquent. Peter. Is. Simply. Interrupted. On the holy mount. God. Will sometimes. Interrupt people. It's a nice thought. I think. We've all met people. Who would be. Fun to interrupt them. But maybe not. Courteous. But God.

Interrupts. Peter. I don't think. He goes far. As he says. To Peter. Be quiet. But God. Will interrupt. Peter. It is the holy mount. By the way. It's in.

[37 : 39] Second. Peter. Chapter one. Verse 18. Where Peter. Recalls. A Petrine tradition. I think. It was Peter. Himself. Recalls. This mighty event. And calls it. We were on the holy mount.

There. He calls it. Holy mount. As he was saying. These things. Dear Peter. As he was saying. These things. Luke tells us. A cloud. Came and overshadowed them. And they were. Afraid. As they. Entered. The cloud. Luke tells us. For sure. They were. And a voice. Came out of the cloud. Saying. This is my son.

My chosen one. Listen. To him. Says. The father. Of our Lord. The God. Of Israel. Listen. To him. Variation. On. If you will. Attend. To the public. Reading. Of scripture. The witness. To Jesus Christ. Has taken.

[38 : 35] A written form. It's part of the mystery. Of salvation. When you spend time. Today. With an inadequate. Leader. Looking at a passage. Of scripture. You're doing something. Really important.

We're called. To do this. That's what the church's. Liturgies. And hymnody. And prayer. Is saturated. With scripture. It should be. It has to be. Attend. To the public. Reading of scripture. They were afraid. Says Luke. Understatement. Peter again. Is interrupted. In modern. Forms. Of spirituality.

Just to. Look at that point. Again. I think it's worth. Emphasizing. These things. Are simply. Unknown. More. More than that. They are.

Are rejected. A God. Who would. Interrupt. Me. During. My. Spirituality. Quest. Yeah. God might. Interrupt. You.

[39 : 28] We hear a lot. What's your spirituality? What's your. What's your beliefs. About the Christ. Then. No. We're to attend. To what God says. Read. Scripture.

Paul says. Attend. To it. That is God speaking. Let God. If you will. I say to myself. Interrupt me. A lot of thoughts. About God. They're.

My mind. Idols. I need to hear. What God says. About God. That's the way. The church lives. There it is. I am encouraged. To believe.

In our culture. That I am indeed. Quite adequate. To speak. About divine mysteries. It's. It's all over the place.

In bookstores. TV. Shows. Spirituality. Galore. Everywhere. But revelation. You see the importance. Of a good theologian.

[40 : 22] In talking. With the church. Revelation. Is an act. Of God's. Freedom. To speak. God's. Very. Freedom. I like.

Is it. Ian Proven. Who generalizes. I think it's. Ian Proven. Who says somewhere. That God has revealed. That he is dangerous. To approach. He can interrupt you. And make you afraid. As he did.

On this occasion. God's dangerous. To approach. But. In God's. Unthinkable. Love and grace. He has given us. A way.

To approach him. I am the way. Says the. Transfigured one. On this mount. I am the way. To God. He's dangerous. To approach.

But I am the way. To approach him. God is the way. To approach. A God. If you will. I am the way. Says this one.

[41 : 17] On the mount. So today. I'm glad the time is. Pretty good for us. It's moving along. But. So today. I just wanted to talk about. If you will.

With you. Reading. Scripture. There is. I find this kind of language. Helpful. I hope you do. There is. What. Can be called. An act. Of reading. Scripture. It's intentional. It's a set apart activity. It's something.

Paul says. To attend. To. There's a public. Reading of Scripture. Perhaps in your own life. There's a scholarly. Reading of Scripture. Sometimes. Historical. Critical.

Issues. Such as they are. But there's. For the believer. A prayerful. Humble. Teachable. Act. Of reading. Scripture. Lord.

[42 : 11] Teach me. There's an act. Of reading. Scripture. That we should be. Aware of. That can be. Unfolded. First off. As. Reading is.

Attentiveness. Think about. When you read something. It's. When it's important. It's attentiveness. Mr. Webster. Will go so far.

And I think he's right. The more you think about it. The essence of attentiveness. Is. Abandonment. Are. Do we intend.

To abandon. Ourselves. And allow. Something like. The transfiguration story. To envelop us. And to speak to us. In its profundity.

It is. Oh. I like that passage. Of scripture. No. It's not that. Oh. I like it. It's. I am enveloped. By it. I attend to it.

[43 : 10] It. Properly understood. Not to merely dramatize. I'm. I abandon. Myself. To this reading. This is God. Speaking. Revelation.

Is. The eloquence. Of divine action. Am I listening. To this. Eloquence. God's eloquence. Speaks to us. Attend.

To the public. Reading. Of scripture. Keep. It's. The. To Israel. Was given. The privilege. Of. Bearing. The oracles. Of God. In the world.

Amazing. The gospel. Therefore. Is a kind. As I draw to a close. The gospel. Is a kind. Of. A shock. As it was. To Peter. Oh. I'll build three boozes.

For you. Shut up. Peter. Listen. To God. Speaking. It's a shock. It's an interruption. We are both. We are meant. To be both. Perplexed.

[44 : 06] And delighted. By the mystery. Of the gospel. I like that thought. Don't be. Don't be too worried. If sometimes. The gospel. And scripture. Perplexes you.

God is a bit. Perplexing. For folks. Like us. We've. Stepped away. From God's ways. And scripture. Is. In a certain sense.

Agonistically. Fighting. Us. Back. Into a relationship. With him. So there's. A fighting. About these things. We need to be. Interrupted. And. Delight.

Again. In these amazing. Things. Carl. Barth. Is quoted. As saying. Theological. Intelligence. There's a man. Who spent his life.

Attempting. Theological. Intelligence. Theological. Intelligence. Is no more. Than a deepened. Form. Of reading. Do you want. To be.

[44 : 59] Theologically. Intelligent. For hopefully. For good reasons. So you can know. And love God. More. Well. It's a deepened. Form of reading. Theological. Intelligence. There you go.

Just a footnote. Or two. First John. Chapter one. Opens with the words. That which was. From the beginning. I should open this up here. That.

Do you remember how. First John. Opens. That which was. From the beginning. Got it here. That which was. From the beginning. Which we have heard.

Which we have seen. With our eyes. Which we have looked upon. And touched with our hands. Concerning the word of life. The life was made manifest.

And we have seen it. And testify to it. Hear those words. Heard. Looked upon. Seen with our eyes.

[45 : 58] The eternal life. Which was with the father. He goes on to say. And one John. Made manifest to us. That's what we're. Those words describe.

The kind of event. That the transfiguration story was. They went up onto. A little hill country area. And they saw.

The Lord transfigured. They saw. Sometimes philosophers help. With this kind of thing. Maybe not often. This is not the language.

Of explanation. It is. The language. Of perception. That which we have. Seen. I don't have an argument.

For you. But I have a witness. That which we have. Seen. Isn't that amazing? The whole gospel. Is a form. Of witness. God has ordained.

[46 : 54] That it should be. That way. Not an argument. There's a lot of. Arguing that goes on. About the gospel. It's truth. It's claims. A plethora of things.

But at its core. At its basic. A presence in the world. It's a witness. It's a witness. As Richard Baucom. Says to a novum. An N-O-V-U-M.

An utterly unique. Staggering thing. Happened in Palestine. 2,000 years ago. A man named Jesus. Was there. And ever since.

Things have been changing. In the world. A church has gone around the world. A witness to him. Just continues. And it contains things. Like the transfiguration.

Story. God acts. He forms witnesses. To see the act. He calls witnesses. Around the act. And he gives the gift.

[47 : 50] Of a. Of a. Written witness. To it all. Which we. Today. Have been given. By God's grace. A moment or two.

To attend to. Attend to the public. Reading of scripture. This divine action. Is God's free act. God freely chose.

That on a given day. In Vancouver. A group of people. Would attend to his word. We're part of God's divine act. We. Are not blundering.

Ones like Peter. Demanding to get it straight. On our terms. God calls a people. Because of his witness. And we're. We are now. Responding to the witness.

We now. Stand here. In belief. Inadequate. Fumbling. Hopefully growing. But it's a good thing. Attend to the public. Reading of scripture.

[48 : 46] One last footnote. There's always. I learned this from Jim Packer. You don't say footnote. I'll add another footnote. Sometimes you become elated. By things like this.

Okay. Okay. I got. I got the message today. I'm going to go. I'm going to start memorizing. Maybe the whole New Testament. Or I'll memorize the book of Isaiah. This coming weekend. Well those are good intentions.

I feel elated sometimes. By good intentions. But elation. Peter Taylor. Forsyth says. It's misleading. We have this treasure in earthen vessels.

Paul says. The divine word comes and meets guys like Harvey. Who's. As you know. Getting old. You know.

His mind's going a bit. His body's weak. He hardly remembers one. How does a weak little guy like me. Well. God's grace. Will speak this mystery into an earthen vessel.

[49 : 43] Like me. His church is an earthen vessel. It's messy. It's. But the divine word. The eloquence of it. Still works in us. So we attend to the public reading of scripture.

That's all I wanted to do. Today with you. It's on an honor to attend to the public. The public reading of scripture with you. And a few. A few. A few moments of pondering it together.

So it's 10 to 10. Methinks. If that's the right time up there in the wall. So. Lord. Thank you for being with us. Thank you for putting your word in front of us. And. May we always.

Treasure this treasure. And the earthen vessels that we are. We thank you Lord. And we. Our God and father. We pray in the name of our. Our Lord. Jesus. Amen.

Amen. Amen.