

Vigil of the Transfiguration

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[0:00] The Feast of Transfiguration is an important feast because it teaches us how we are to understand Jesus as the fulfillment of the Old Covenant types and shadows.

In other words, this feast teaches us how to understand the Old Testament with Christ being the very center of its message and its story.

We read that our Lord took Peter, James, and John up on a mountain, Mount Hebron to be specific, to pray. Like Moses, who went up to Mount Sinai to receive the law of God, Jesus is the final word of God, who ascends up to the mountain as Lord over all.

Our Lord then begins to radiate in uncreated light. We read how his clothes glow and glisten with spectacular and marvelous light.

This makes us recall how Moses had asked to see the Lord, but could only catch a glimpse of the back of our God. Now the Lord makes himself known in this overpowering light.

[1:16] And the point is, is that Jesus is Yahweh, the Lord, who has now come in human flesh, come to meet his people.

We then read that there were two men speaking with our Lord, Moses, who represented the law of God, and Elijah, who represented the prophets.

These two also serve as the required witnesses from the Old Testament to verify a claim. And that truth is simply this.

Jesus is God in human flesh. He is the creator of all things who has come to his creation, manifesting his glory here on this mountain.

When Peter wakes up, he beholds this spectacular event. In his excitement, he wants to build three tents, three tabernacles.

[2:16] Peter wants to celebrate that old covenant feast called the Feast of Tabernacles. This was a feast that commemorated God's presence and guidance as the children of Israel made their way through the wilderness, having been set free from their slavery on their journey to the promised land.

Therefore, they would commemorate this event by staying in tents and reenacting God's goodness, his provisions for them on their journey. We then read suddenly how a cloud overshadowed them.

The cloud that guided the people of Israel by day in the wilderness now envelops them. And they hear the voice of the Father who pronounces, This is my beloved Son.

Hear him. So here in this transfiguration, we see how the Shekinah glory flows out of the one who is greater than Moses. He is not only the giver of the law.

He is the fulfillment of the law and the prophets. Jesus is God who has come in human flesh and he is now tabernacled among his people.

[3:28] In Hebrews chapter 1 verse 3 we read that Jesus is the brightness of his father's glory and the express image of his person that he upholds all things by the power of his word.

And this brings us to the second thing we learn about the transfiguration. The second thing we learn is that glory comes only after suffering, after hardship, and even death.

We read when the voice that is from the father had ceased, Jesus was found alone. No light, no Moses, no Elijah, no voice from the heavens, simply Jesus.

Alone. Peter, James, and John now see their great teacher without all the fanfare. And this signifies a major transition in our story and in the Gospel of Luke.

Jesus, without all of his glory, now speaks to what will happen to our Lord. Our Lord is now going to make his way to Jerusalem to complete his earthly ministry.

[4:50] And that's why we go on to read here in Luke chapter 9 those words. For the Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men.

And he, that is Jesus, steadfastly set his face to go up to Jerusalem. You see, it is at another mountain, Mount Golgotha, that our Lord would give his own life for the life of the world. Yes, we see how Jesus fulfills the types and the shadows of the old covenant. But we also learn something very profound about our Lord and about this event.

And this applies to all of us as well. And that is simply this. The cross precedes glory. The cross precedes glory.

As Christians who have been united to Christ through baptism, we now participate in our Lord's life, death, his burial, his resurrection, and his ascension.

[6 : 00] But we too are now called to walk the way of the cross. This happens as we experience suffering, hardship, and yes, eventual death in our journey through this life.

Yes, we might receive small glimpses of glory in this life, but they are few and far between. But the cross is our compass to the road of glory and immortality.

But why? Why do we have to endure the suffering, trials, and the heartaches of this life? Because it is in ordinary life, with all of its challenges, with all of its pain, that God is molding and shaping us to be his people.

People of light who trust in him. It is in our hardships and suffering that Christ now is transforming us from our selfish and sinful ways and teaching us now to put our trust in him and no one else. It is in our hardships and suffering that Christ is making us more like himself. It is when we are no longer slaves to the wants and desires of this life that we begin experiencing Christ's life and joy and true freedom.

[7 : 33] Even now, as we journey in this veil of tears. We hear those words, Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

The light of God grows and overtakes the darkness in our lives as we fix our eyes upon Jesus and his cross. It is when we cling to him in times of distress and pain.

As we conform ourselves more to him rather than this world. His light then begins to shine in us and through us. So while we look forward to the glory that is yet to be revealed, on that day when Christ comes again to judge the living and the dead, let us humble ourselves by looking to the cross and living a life centered on the cross of Jesus.

Because it is through the eyes of faith that we see that the cross is the glory of God and it is the hope of the world.

Amen. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.