

The Transfiguration

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[0:00] The following message was given at a Sunday celebration at Trinity Grace Church in Athens. For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

Well, I'd like to go ahead and ask you to start turning in your Bibles to Mark 9. We're going to be in verses 2-13 this morning, so you're going to begin making your way there.

As you're doing that, I just want to ask you, do you remember the first time that you ever saw fireworks? It might be hazy for some of you, it might be traumatic for others.

But one of my earliest memories was when I was a little kid, and my family went to Stone Mountain Laser Show in Georgia. Some of you have been to this before. If you've never been, there's this big, bald mountain with a large field in front of it.

And during summer nights, hundreds of spectators will sit out in lawn chairs and picnic blankets while they watch this laser show projected up onto the side of a mountain. It's pretty cool. And at the very end of the show, everything culminates with them shooting off hundreds of fireworks.

[1:10] Now, as a little kid, seeing this for the first time, I remember a rush of several emotions all at once. The explosions of color were utterly captivating.

I'd never seen anything like that before. And I couldn't take my eyes off of them. They were spectacular. And, at the same time, it was scary. Right?

Everything was just so massive, and that chest-rattling boom! Those explosions, the sheer magnitude of it all, just absolutely terrified me.

And, in addition to being captivating and being terrifying, it was also very perplexing. There was so much going on that was unfamiliar in that moment.

The intensity of the light, those rapid explosions. It's hard for me to even figure out what was happening. I remember looking around, like, is this good? Is this okay? I see explosions, and it doesn't seem to be bothering anybody else about this situation.

[2:10] And so, I was amazed, I was terrified, and I was perplexed. All those emotions swirling around at once. But, you know, even with all those emotions, understanding the meaning of that event made all the difference.

If I were only familiar with living in a war zone, blinding light and explosions would take on a very different meaning. So, rather than the culminating celebration of a joy-filled family event, it could mean devastation, destruction, confusion.

So, clarity about the event makes all the difference. Well, in a similar way this morning, we are going to behold an event with three good old boys from Galilee.

We'll stand with Peter, James, and John on a mountaintop as they are amazed, terrified, and perplexed. The centerpiece of this event is the transfiguration of Jesus Christ.

And we must join with the pounding hearts and the spinning minds of these disciples and ask, What does this mean? Because clarity and understanding about the centerpiece of this event makes all the difference.

[3 : 30] Who is Jesus? Well, as you know, answers to that question abound. So, I did a quick Google search. I don't recommend this, but I typed in Jesus in the search bar, and just to see what would pull up, it yielded over 1.3 billion results in less than a second.

And I glanced at the recommended images, and I saw a pale white Jesus with a glowing heart in his chest. I saw a black Jesus with tethered hands.

I saw a heavenly Jesus sitting on a cloud while holding a baby. Near the top of all the website recommendations was the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, who believed that Jesus is a God, a God, who received our world to rule over, and we too can become gods and rule over our own worlds if we're faithful enough.

John Lennon once famously said, I believe in God, but not as one thing, not as an old man in the sky. I believe that what people call God is something in all of us.

I believe that what Jesus and Muhammad and Buddha and all the rest said was right. My Muslim friends believe that Jesus was only a prophet.

[4 : 46] He was not the Son of God, and he did not die on the cross. So answers to that question, who is Jesus, are in no short supply. But what we need is clarity and understanding about who Jesus has revealed himself to be.

Understanding who he is radically reshapes the way that we think and the way that we act. We need to lean in with the disciples during this amazing, terrifying, perplexing moment and ask God for clarity on the all-important question, who is Jesus?

So let's read Mark chapter 9, verses 2 through 13. And after this, after six days, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John and led them up a high mountain by themselves.

And he was transfigured before them. And his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them.

And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. And Peter said to Jesus, Rabbi, it is good that we are here.

[6 : 02] Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah. For he did not know what to say, for they were terrified.

And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud. This is my beloved son. Listen to him.

And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only. And as they were coming down the mountain, he charged them to tell no one what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead might mean. And they asked him, why did the scribes say that first Elijah must come?

And he said to them, Elijah does come first to restore all things. And how is it written of the Son of Man that he should suffer many things and be treated with contempt?

[7 : 09] But I tell you that Elijah has come. And they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written of him. Well, in this passage, Jesus is showing the disciples, and he's showing us, that he is not just one option among many religious preferences.

He's not just another prophet. He is the unique, all-powerful Savior who has come to save sinners, not first by conquest, but by the cross.

He is the culmination of hope and deliverance, but he shows that the way of salvation is through his suffering and his sacrifice. I believe that the main message for us today could be summed up this way.

Behold the glorious Christ and follow him to Calvary. Behold the glorious Christ and follow him to Calvary. Understanding this mountaintop experience will bolster our hearts and refresh our courage in the midst of difficulty.

Seeing his unique power and glory will amaze us and build our faith as we engage the routines of everyday life. And understanding Christ's mission to go to the cross to lay his life down will give us a clearer vision in the midst of our suffering.

[8 : 32] It will create in us an enduring hope as we follow our Savior from tragedy to triumph, from darkness to light. So we will travel with Peter, James, and John through two points on this journey.

We'll join them on the mountaintop in verses 2 through 8 for point 1, a glimpse of his glory. Then we'll join their discussion on the hike down, verses 9 through 13 for point 2, the Son of Man must suffer.

So point 1, a glimpse of his glory. Take a look with me at verse 2. It begins, And after six days, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John.

Now, as we've all become very familiar with Mark's really fast-paced, action-packed kind of style, it may come as a surprise that as you look at verse 2, it does not begin with, and then immediately.

Right? It's kind of surprising. Instead, we have a rare detail of time included here. After six days. And it begs that question, six days after what?

[9 : 43] Right? Well, six days earlier, Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asked his disciples this question, Who do you say that I am?

And Peter answered him, You are the Christ. This is Mark 28, 8-28. So Mark links Peter's confession of Jesus being the Christ to the event that is about to take place on the mountain.

Six days after he said that, this happened. So Jesus takes Peter, James, and John on a hike. This trio of blue-collar fishermen come to be known as Jesus' closest disciples.

They were previously given front row seats to the resurrection of Jairus' daughter, if you remember that. And this is the second time that we see them in this intimate circle going with Jesus. And where does he take them?

He takes them, the verse says, to a high mountain. Why include these details? Seems kind of random. Well, to the readers of the Old Testament, these details, they triggered memories of other important events.

[10 : 54] The high mountain recalls God revealing his glorious presence on Sinai, Mount Sinai to Moses in Exodus 24. And then again, Mount Horeb to Elijah in 1 Kings 19.

So these details, they alert us to the reality that something big is about to go down while on a high mountaintop. That's what that's saying. Kent Hughes helpfully summarizes what has happened up to this point when he says this.

When they embraced him as Messiah, they embraced a suffering Messiah and a life that included taking up their own crosses. It was a radical, revolutionary revelation.

Totally out of sync with their messianic expectations. It was naturally confusing and depressing. And with what was coming, the Lord realized that it needed to be balanced with some positive realities.

So now he had them in the crisp atmosphere of the alpine heights of Mount Hermon, away from everything, alone with him under the spinning summer constellations.

[11 : 58] They were on top of the world with Jesus. Here they were going to be bombarded with the most stupendous blast of encouragement mortals have ever known.

So here they are, standing, alone with Jesus on the high mountain. And at the end of verse 2, it says, and he was transfigured before them.

And his understated, kind of straightforward Mark style, simply describes what was the beginning of an extraordinary encounter. That word transfigure captures this idea of changing form.

That Greek word is where we get our word for metamorphosis. Maybe some of you are like me. The first thing I thought of when I heard that word was the transformation of caterpillar to butterfly.

The basic idea is that he changed form before their very eyes. And it says that his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them.

[13 : 05] And in Matthew's account of this same event, not only are his clothes radiant, but it says, his face shone like the sun. Can you imagine the disciples at this moment?

This is if that initial blast of the fireworks has just gone off and that boom is rattling their chests for the first time. They would have been thinking about Moses on Mount Sinai in this moment.

Because when Moses encountered the glorious presence of God on Mount Sinai, the skin of his face shone. And he had to temporarily wear a veil because he was freaking all the people out whenever he talked to them.

He was glowing. But the light on Moses' face was a secondhand reflection of God's glory. And eventually it faded away. But on this mountaintop, Jesus is not reflecting glorious light.

He is the very source of the glorious light. So in this transformation, there's a crossing of the line between the human and the divine, between the natural and the supernatural.

[14 : 12] Jesus is, in a sense, he's pulling back the veil of his humanity just for a moment to reveal his full deity. This was not a change of his nature.

It was this outward, visible demonstration of his true nature. It's this event that John has in mind when he wrote in John 1, 14.

You probably are familiar with this. We beheld his glory. The glory as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. But it doesn't end there.

This spectacular display grows even more amazing with the appearance of two guys. Jesus and Elijah pop up in verse 4. There appeared to them, Elijah and Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.

Why these two guys? Has it ever plagued you, made you wonder? Why these guys, all the guys that could have popped up? Well, it's been argued that these two represent the entire prophetic tradition.

[15 : 22] I like the law and the prophets, Moses and Elijah. Together they functioned as a summary of the whole Old Testament. Well, not only is it stunning that these guys are present, because they're long dead, for one, but they are portrayed as subservient to Jesus in this moment.

Moses and Elijah are speaking with Jesus rather than Jesus speaking with Moses and Elijah. So imagine if I were to get clearance and gain an audience with the President of the United States after one of his speeches.

I mean, that would be pretty cool. That would be an honor, right? But imagine, I was speaking somewhere, I was speaking somewhere, and Lincoln and Washington show up.

And they're seeking an audience with me afterwards. Wouldn't that be crazy? So that speaks of something of the significance of this encounter here that we're seeing.

It was Moses and Elijah testifying to the significance of Jesus. And then from the sidelines, a voice rings out. Look at verse five.

[16 : 29] And Peter said to Jesus, Rabbi, it's good that we're here. Let us make three tents, one for you, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.

Don't you just love Peter? I mean, come on. He's always been this like ready, fire, aim kind of guy, right? You know people like that. He just felt compelled to add his voice in this moment.

And this unparalleled, majestic moment of God's messenger speaking with the transfigured Jesus who's literally radiating light from his clothes and his face, Peter pipes up to let them know what he's thinking.

Hey! Hey, it's good that we're here! Now let me tell you what we can add to this. It's like, oh, we may shake our heads at Peter in this kind of moment, right?

But let's be careful to criticize him too quickly. He's a very relatable character. Haven't we spoken too soon with too little understanding?

[17 : 43] Is it really necessary that we chime in on every single debate? Is it really necessary that we always add our voice? So often when we attempt to add, we really just take away.

So maybe before we just give in to that urge to speak, we restrain our tongues and take another look at Christ. As James says, let's be a people who are quick to listen and slow to speak.

Why did Peter mention making three tents anyways? Well, verse 6 says that he didn't know what he was saying because they were terrified.

He may have just gone into sensory overload and just fritzed out. And he just starts babbling the first thing that came out. But maybe that's the case, but I really think that something different is going on here.

When Peter recommends making tents, he's not thinking of setting up a campfire and roasting marshmallows with these guys. That's not what's going through his mind. The tents he's referring to are meeting tents.

[18 : 53] So in the Old Testament, the word for this was tabernacle. And this was the place where God would meet and commune with his people. So in recommending making these tents, it appears that Peter is completely misunderstanding the situation.

He recommends making three tents, which implies that he thinks that Moses, Elijah, and Jesus are all equals. Wow, Jesus is hanging out with Moses and Elijah. That's pretty cool.

He must be a prophet, a great prophet like them. And in wanting to make meeting tents, he's wrongly assuming that this is the end. Jesus is the Messiah and he's starting his earthly reign right now.

It's happening. That's what he's thinking. Peter's anxious to get started and is hopeful that Jesus will get busy whooping up on all of Israel's enemies.

That's what he's thinking. But Peter is completely missing it. He did not understand the meaning of this event. Peter wanted to experience the promised glory right now.

[20 : 00] Prior to the sufferings, Jesus had announced as necessary. He did not understand that the transfiguration was only a temporary glimpse of glory.

But the blessings of that new age could not be secured until Jesus accomplished his mission at the cross. Peter's making the same mistake as when he rebuked Jesus in chapter 8.

He did not understand why the Messiah must suffer. But had he listened more closely, rather than speaking, he would have heard the dialogue that Jesus was having with Moses and Elijah.

In Luke's account of the event in chapter 9, verse 31, it says that they spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem.

So the central point of their discussion was Christ's impending death. all Moses and Elijah wanted to discuss with Jesus was the cross.

[21 : 05] And all that Peter wanted to avoid discussing with Jesus was the cross. He did not understand. Well, it's widely believed that Mark's gospel was largely a firsthand account given by Peter himself.

And if this is so, then it's really pretty poignant that we have verse 6 in here. So perhaps it was an aged Peter looking back over the impulsivity and ignorance of his youth and he confesses he did not know what to say.

Then verse 7, and a cloud overshadowed them. The cloud through the Old Testament was a sign and manifestation of the presence of God the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night went before Israel in the wilderness in Exodus.

This was the cloud that passed by Moses as God covered him in the cleft of the rock with his hands so that Moses only saw the afterglow. This was the cloud that covered the nearly finished tent of the meeting and it filled the new tabernacle with God's glory so that Moses could not enter it.

It was the same cloud that filled Solomon's temple on dedication day so that the priest could not enter the temple. Now, as Jesus in his inner circle stood on top of the mountain, this cloud swallowed them up.

[22 : 33] It engulfed them. It overshadowed them. And then a voice comes out of the cloud. This is my beloved son. Listen to him.

We've heard similar words before, haven't we? Is that kind of ringing a bell from earlier? At the beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry when he was baptized by John in the wilderness, this voice from heaven breaks out saying, you are my beloved son.

With you I'm well pleased. The declaration in that case was directed right to Jesus. Here, the voice is directed for the benefit of the observers and for us.

this is my beloved son. Listen to him. That voice confirms and clarifies the centerpiece of this event.

Not Moses, not Elijah, not all this crazy stuff going on. The centerpiece, everything is culminating to bring our attention to Jesus.

[23 : 39] Jesus is radiating like the sun. He does not reflect the glory. He is the source of the glory. Jesus is visited by the representatives of the prophets who are eager to gain an audience with him.

Jesus does not need a tent of meeting because the very presence of God comes down and envelops them all in a cloud. Jesus is singled out by that voice of God, the Father, and everyone present is explicitly commanded to listen to him.

And then in a moment, everything is gone. And all that remains is Jesus. Everything was pointing to Jesus.

William Lane writes, when the cloud lifted, Moses and Elijah had vanished. Jesus alone remained as the sole bearer of God's new revelation to be disclosed in the cross and the resurrection.

Moses and Elijah had also followed the path of obedience, but having borne witness to Jesus' character and mission, they could help him no more.

[24 : 51] The way to the cross demanded the submission of the Son, and Jesus must set out upon it alone. in this moment, Jesus is highlighted as the ultimate hope.

His glory brilliantly displayed, and the Father's command was left ringing in the ears of the disciples as they made their hike down the mountain. Listen to him.

Listen to him points to Jesus' uniqueness, and it calls us to heed his words. This is an amazing fulfillment of Deuteronomy 18.

Check this out. Deuteronomy 18, speaking about Moses, it says, the Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me among you from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him.

I will raise up from them a prophet like you and among their fellow Israelites. I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him. Listen to him.

[25 : 53] But what is it they needed to hear? Listen to what? Can you imagine they're walking down from this glorious mountaintop and they're probably wondering, why are we leaving the glory behind?

Well, James Edwards helpfully notes, the one who calls disciples to follow him does not abandon them for glory, but turns from glory to accompany them on the way to Jerusalem and the cross.

Amazed, terrified, and perplexed. We join Peter, James, and John on the way down the mountain as they try to make sense of the event.

Point two, the Son of Man must suffer. Look at verse nine. And as they were coming down the mountain, he charged them to tell no one what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

Why would Jesus charge them to be silent about what they observed? Wouldn't they want to tell everybody? Didn't he want people to know that he was the Christ? Well, you can see that there is a condition placed on that command there, right?

[27 : 18] It says, be silent until, what? Until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. They were told not to tell anyone else yet because they cannot grasp who he is truly apart from the cross.

He must be seen as the suffering servant. They're still under the impression that Jesus is going to be some kind of triumphalistic political ruler, but they are mistaken.

His glory can only be truly known at his death, but a suffering Messiah just seems incomprehensible to them, especially, especially after just seeing the glory on the mountaintop.

How could there be a suffering Messiah? How is that even possible? They were perplexed. The disciples continued discussing this topic of the resurrection, and then they turned to Jesus and asked him in verse 11, why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?

Well, there is this long-standing tradition that believed Elijah would come back before the ultimate judgment in order to set everything right.

[28 : 34] The expectation comes from the last two verses of our Old Testament. The last two verses. Malachi 4, verses 5-6 say, Behold, I will send you Elijah, the prophet, before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes, and he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with decree of utter destruction.

So here it is. That's what's in their minds. There is this expectation that Elijah would come as a forerunner to the Messiah before the smackdown happened. Okay, so even to this day, when Jews, they practice the Seder meal, some of you maybe have participated in one of these, it commemorates the Exodus from the Egypt, they leave an empty chair and a wine cup for Elijah during the meal.

Well, I went to a Jewish website to get their perspective on this. This is like just a couple days ago, I was looking at this, trying to see what they would say about the cup and this empty chair for Elijah. And this is what, in their own words, it says, it symbolizes, from a Jewish perspective, the Exodus launched a millennia-long journey that will culminate in the Messianic era.

Until injustice, violence, and greed disappear, we remain enslaved. Until God makes his home on earth, we have not truly left Egypt.

Each Passover empowers us to complete what has begun so long ago, the last of the biblical prophets declared that Elijah will herald the ultimate redemption.

[30 : 16] So his cup at our Seder encourages our march from every form of internal and external slavery, and it re-inspires our faith in the coming of Messiah.

They're still waiting in anticipation of Elijah. They're still waiting to be released from slavery.

They're still waiting for the Messiah. This, what you just saw on the screen, is exactly the tradition Jesus is being confronted with in our passage right here thousands of years ago.

Peter, James, and John were confused about why Jesus was saying they needed to wait until he was raised from the dead before they said anything about the transfiguration.

They were confused because they had a category for, yes, a general resurrection from the dead on the last day, but they did not have a category for a separate, specific, single resurrection.

[31 : 21] So in their minds, Elijah would come explicitly and he'd clean up shop, and then, boom, here comes the Messiah, and he would come in triumph and judgment, bam, usher in the kingdom and all God's people would be resurrected to reign with him forever, just like that.

So the presence of Elijah at the transfiguration up on the mountaintop here and Jesus' reference to the resurrection made them think that the end is now. Tracking?

But if that was true, they were trying to figure out where Elijah went. Can you imagine? They were probably thinking, hey, didn't he need to stick around for a little longer?

Didn't he need to prepare people for the coming judgment of God? Well, the question was probably really masking an objection to Jesus' announcement of his suffering and death.

Because the restoration that they were expecting Elijah to bring just prior to the end would mean Messiah's suffering was unnecessary. Smackdown.

[32 : 31] That's what they're thinking. But Jesus responds in verses 12 through 13. 12 and 13. He says, to be sure, Elijah does come first and restore all things.

And if you skip down, you'll see this. It says, but I tell you, Elijah has come. What? What?

That's startling news for these guys. Because they were sure that Elijah coming would be kind of like an alarm system going off. It'd be very explicit and obvious.

When Elijah comes, we'll know to prepare for the Messiah now. But Jesus is saying, you're still looking for Elijah, but he's already come. Well, in Matthew's account of this conversation, the disciples realized later that he was referring to John the Baptist as the one who prepared the way for the Messiah, not an explicit fanfare, but as a subtle voice in the wilderness preparing the way.

What's more, Jesus asked them a question in verse 12. You look at this question. He flips it to them. And how is it written of the Son of Man that he should suffer many things and be treated with contempt?

[33 : 59] Well, now he's reframing their understanding of both Elijah and the Messiah. Neither one of these guys can be rightly understood apart from suffering.

Well, how is it written that the Son of Man should suffer many things and be treated with contempt? Jesus is pointing to the suffering servant of Isaiah 53. It says this in verse 3.

Hundreds of years before Jesus came, he was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering and familiar with pain.

Like one from whom people hide their faces, he was despised and we held him in low esteem. So the disciples are left wondering.

If he's the Son of Man, which we quoted at the beginning of this service, if he's that guy, how is he going to die? They were confused.

[35 : 01] Was he the glorious Son of Man or the suffering servant? was the Messiah's fate one to be of glory or of suffering?

That's the question that they're confronted with. Well, Jesus did not resolve the tension of that question on the walk down the mountain.

But from this moment, he set his face toward Jerusalem to demonstrate the answer. He marched from that high mountain to a lowly hill called Calvary.

The one who was surrounded by Moses and Elijah would soon be surrounded by two thieves on crosses. His glorious white robes would be stripped down to nakedness and a crown of thorns.

The private display of his glory would be replaced with a public display of his humiliation. The intimate proximity of his disciples would be replaced with isolation at his execution.

[36 : 23] That affirming voice of his father would be replaced with deafening silence as he cried from the cross. And why? All this because the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

He willingly laid down his glory to purchase sinners like you and me from the penalty of death so that all who would place their hope and trust in him for the forgiveness of the sins might be declared righteous.

Elijah has come and he's prepared the way. a prophet greater than Moses has arrived. The glory of God has come to dwell with us wrapped in human flesh.

The Son of Man has come as the suffering servant and died just as it is written of him. He has put to death the curse of death by his death but it did not end there for there is an answer to this question is his fate one of glory or of suffering?

The answer is both. It's both. It's suffering and then glory for he did not stay in the grave.

[37 : 38] He was raised to life. He was the first to rise so that all who are in Christ have hope to be raised on the last day.

He is in the highest place of honor at the right hand of the Father right now. He is preparing a place for those who claim him as king. He has reclaimed his glory and is radiant and he is waiting.

Suffering and then glory. It has been the story of the Savior all along. Isaiah 53 10 the same text about the suffering servant says this yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and to cause him to suffer.

and though the Lord makes his life an offering for sin he will see his offspring and prolong his days and the will of the Lord will prosper glory suffering and then glory after the resurrection Jesus appeared to two disciples on the road and said this in Luke 24 oh foolish ones and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and then enter into his glory and beginning with Moses and all the prophets he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself suffering and then glory he is the suffering son of man and the glorious Christ so what can we learn from the transfiguration!

the discussion on the way down you like me maybe struggle with a sense of envy about the experience of Peter James and John on that mountaintop maybe you think it would be way easier to believe if you saw with your own eyes maybe you think you had to be there in order to be encouraged by that but that's not true the other nine disciples were not there Mark's readers were not there an aged Peter wrote to a completely new generation of believers who were not there if you met Peter and you told him you wish you could have been there you know what he probably say to you yes

[40 : 32] I was an eyewitness but we have something even more sure than that experience reflecting on this Peter himself writes to encourage believers in 2 Peter 1 for we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty he received honor and glory from God the father when the voice came to him from the majestic glory saying this is my son whom I love with him I am well pleased this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain we also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable and you will do well to pay attention to it as to a light shining in a dark place until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts so even though

Peter saw the glory of Christ in the transfiguration you know what he's saying here the prophetic message the word of God is even more glorious than that why why was he saying that well Peter is highlighting the reality that we now have the vantage point to make sense of the question who is Jesus apart from the resurrection there is a crucial misunderstanding of who Jesus is would Jesus agree with the Mormons that he became a god and others can be gods like him if they were faithful enough would he agree with that would Jesus agree with John Lennon's assessment that he is saying basically all the same things as Buddha Muhammad would he say that would Jesus agree with the Muslims claim that he's just another prophet who is not the son of God!

and he did not die on the cross Jesus cannot be rightly understood nor embraced apart from his suffering and his glory C.S.

Lewis famously said that Jesus' claims here force us to choose one of three options he is either a liar he is a lunatic or he is Lord who is he to you this morning Jesus has revealed himself to be the suffering son of man who alone can take away the sin of the world by dying on the cross if you're not a Christian this morning I invite you to turn from your sin and trust in Jesus for forgiveness he alone can do this we now can see with understanding clarity this this shapes the way that we read our Bibles this is an encouragement we have the glorious vantage point now to make sense of that question who is Jesus by reading the word the

Bible this book right here is not a mixed bag of books and ideas only loosely related to each other the Bible tells a story the story of a God and his relationship to his creation in general and to humanity in particular and at the center of this story is Jesus Christ and his saving work on our behalf even this morning we saw connections to Moses and Elijah and Isaiah and Malachi and the tabernacle and the glory cloud all of these and more can be traced to and from the centerpiece of the cross Jesus is not only the centerpiece of the scriptures he's the centerpiece of our lives reading the bible with a thirst to see Christ's glory and his work at calvary will fill your reading with wonder and anticipation and it will help you live in light of his grace what's more is that this passage that we have in front of us opened up on our laps it can transform our everyday lives we have a savior who walked through suffering into glory he is a

[45 : 05] Christ of suffering and he is a Christ of glory both suffering and glory animate the Christian life if you only have glory you will not be prepared for suffering and if you only have suffering you will not endure in this life but we have not been abandoned we have the glorious Christ and God the father invites us to listen to him with every step of every day listen to him is the invitation we have a savior who walked before us we have a savior who taught us to pick up our crosses and to follow him to Calvary knowing that we will experience glory for all eternity with him that's how

Paul could say to live is Christ and to die is gain no matter the situation we have already been freed like Gil said from the tyranny of sin and death and all we have before us is gain in eternity that's all we have so you can hear the tough news of the doctor's diagnosis you can lose the house and the job you can refuse to cut corners you can take a costly stand you can lose friends opportunities prestige you can be reminded suffering and then glory all I have is gain ahead we're following the footsteps of the suffering son of man and we will be forever with the glorious

Christ for the Christian knows that there is light after darkness gain after loss strength after weakness there's a crown after the cross sweet after bitter hope after fears home after wandering praise after tears sheaves after sowing sun after rain there's sight after mystery there's peace after the pain there's joy after sorrow there's calm after blast there's rest after weariness there's sweet rest at last near after distant there's gleam after gloom there's love after loneliness there's life after the tomb there's a long agony a rapture of bliss but right is the pathway that leads to this he is a glorious Christ so let's behold him and let's follow him to Calvary knowing we will be with him forever father you are kind to us and we are so grateful to be here this morning to be reminded of the truth it is so easy to forget that you are with us and you are beckoning us to listen to him he's our hope he's our salvation he gives us the endurance that we need he gives us the courage to do what we need to do each and every day oh thank you so much that we have a glorious

Christ who leads us into triumph through suffering and then to glory forever with you praise you in the name of Jesus amen you've been listening to a message at a Sunday celebration at Trinity Grace Church in Athens for more information about Trinity Grace please visit us at