

The Festival of the Transfiguration of our Lord  
St. Matthew 17:1-9  
February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

## A Bright Cloud Overshadowed Them

*In Nomine Iesu!*

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

### **Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:**

Almighty and Everlasting God, we give Thee most hearty thanks that Thou hast given us Thy holy Word as a bright light in the darkness of this present world and humbly beseech Thee, enable us by Thy Holy Spirit to heed diligently the light of the Word, that the Day-star from on high, Thy Son, with grace divine, may arise in our hearts, and as the true Light continually shine, until the night is fully spent and the great day at hand, through the same Thy dear Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Six days prior to the events of today's Gospel from the Apostle and Evangelist St. Matthew we heard St. Peter make the confession to the Lord that the Lord + Jesus was the "Christ, the Son of the Living God." The Lord + Jesus proclaimed that he, along with the other Apostles, would receive the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven. They would all receive these keys after the Lord's resurrection when He breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Ghost, whatever sin you forgive they will be forgiven, and whatever sins you retain, they will be retained." After telling them that they would receive the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven, our Lord + Jesus began explaining to them that He was going to Jerusalem to suffer and die; He would be crucified, dead and buried. To this St. Peter objected and our Lord called him Satan, and said to get behind Him, for he did not have the words of the Lord God, but the words of man. The Lord had come to suffer and die for the sins of the whole world, He did not come to establish an earthly Kingdom, like the Jews imagined the Messiah would do.

These events were six days prior to the events in today's Gospel pericope. The Apostle and Evangelist St. Matthew tells us that the Lord took with Him up into the high mountain, Sts. Peter, James and John. The one who six days before had made the good confession of the Lord being the Christ, and who also bumbled the intention of that confession, went with our Lord + Jesus, and the two sons of Zebedee, up into the high mountain to be by themselves.

He was transfigured before them. He changed his appearance. His face now shown like the sun. His clothes had become as white as the light. His clothes were whiter than any launderer could have ever whitened them. He stood before them in all of His glory. He showed them a glimpse of what He would look like after His resurrection and ascension to the right hand of God, the heavenly Father. St. Peter even wrote about this event in his second epistle when he wrote, "we beheld His majesty." St. John also wrote about his event in the beginning of His Gospel when he wrote, "we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." I imagine that even St. James would have given us his account in some form if he had not been the first of the Apostles martyred for

believing on the Lord + Jesus. These three saw the Lord + Jesus in His majesty and glory that proved that He was indeed the Christ, the Son of the Living God.

These things alone would convince many people who heard about them that the Lord + Jesus was the Christ—the Anointed One—of the Lord God. But our Lord God does stop there in giving testimony that the Lord + Jesus is the Christ. For suddenly appeared with the Lord + Jesus, standing and talking with Him, were Moses and Elijah. We learn in another Gospel that they were talking to Him about His fast-approaching suffering and death at the hands of wicked men, and His resurrection from the dead on the third day. It reveals and manifests to us, and all those who hear, that the Lord + Jesus is the Messiah. This man was the Lord God in the flesh.

But wait! There is more! For after St. Peter once again bumbles the meaning and intention of these events by trying to suggest making three dwelling places for the Lord + Jesus, Moses, and Elijah—saying these things out of fear—a bright cloud overshadowed them and a voice suddenly came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!” The voice from Heaven confirmed the confession that St. Peter had made six days ago. This was the Christ, the Son of God. St. Peter, and all the other Apostles, had confessed it. Now the heavenly Father from Heaven also confirmed that this was the Christ, the Son of God in Whom He was well pleased.

The voice from Heaven had spoken one other time at the very beginning of the ministry of the Lord + Jesus. When He was baptized in the Jordan River by St. John the Baptist, when He had come out of the water, immediately a voice from Heaven proclaimed that this man + Jesus was the Only-Begotten Son of the heavenly Father. He was well pleased with Him then; He is now also still well pleased with Him. He has fulfilled the Law perfectly. This is the only way that the Lord God heavenly Father would be well pleased with anyone.

Even though we sin daily and much, He is also well pleased with us. Not because we are successful at being “good Christians.” We fail miserably at being that. We fail miserably at obeying His Commandments. We fail miserably daily at both stopping ourselves from committing sin, and from doing the good things that He would have us do. On account of our faith in the Christ, however, the heavenly Father is well pleased with us. It is because through faith—through putting on the works and merits of the Christ—that He is well pleased with us. He is well pleased with us, because when He looks at us, He only sees His Son + Jesus. Just as the Lord + Jesus is His Son, we through Holy Baptism, and the faith that that sacrament bestows through the Holy Ghost, we are also His adopted sons.

We have a heavenly Father Who desires to dwell with His children. We have a Lord God Who desires to dwell among His people. This is why the Lord + Jesus has come to this earth. He has put on our flesh to dwell among us. He does this so that all those who believe on Him will also live with Him eternally in Heaven. He wills that we dwell with Him not as spirits, but with our bodies as well. He also gives us in His transfiguration a foreshadowing of the glorious bodies that we will have in Heaven. Like His shining face and bright white clothes, we also will have bodies like this in Heaven, because this is how our Lord God desires to dwell with His people. This is what He desires for us for all eternity.

When Moses led the people of Israel out of the land of bondage and slavery—the land of Egypt—they were led by the Lord God in the form of a pillar of fire and night, and a pillar of cloud by day. The Lord God led His people out of bondage by being with them, and leading them. Elijah was also taken up into Heaven to be with the Lord God, when the chariot of the Lord brought Him up into the clouds. A cloud of smoke filled the tabernacle when Moses had completed it, so that no one could enter from the Lord God’s majesty. A cloud of smoke also filled the temple of Solomon when He dedicated it, so that the priests could not enter. In the Old Testament this was how the Lord God could dwell with His people—in a cloud.

Here on the mountain the Lord God once again appears in a bright cloud, and proclaims that this man + Jesus was the Son of God; His beloved Son in Whom He was well pleased. Through this man + Jesus, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, God the Lord would dwell with His people. No longer would He be unapproachable. No longer would He only be able to not be able to dwell with His people on account of His glory and majesty. No longer would a thick cloud prevent His people from being with Him to worship Him. We can now dwell with and be with our Lord bodily in Heaven.

Until we are called to our eternal home in Heaven to dwell with our Lord God forever with new and glorious bodies, we able to dwell with our Lord + Jesus through His means of grace. We are able to be with our Lord and Savior through the waters of Holy Baptism, when He forgives our sins through the lips of the minister, when He speaks His words of comfort through the preaching of the Gospel—of what He has done for us—and especially when we gather at this altar and receive Him in His Body and Blood given to us in bread and wine. He has promised to be with His people whenever two or three are gathered in His Name, even as we are here today.

Through our Lord's means of grace, we behold His glory and majesty. We see that He is truly the Christ, the Son of God, and with our lips we sing and proclaim that our Lord + Jesus is the Messiah, the One Anointed by the Lord God to save His people from their sins.

My dear friends, let us give thanks to the heavenly Father, and His Only-Begotten Son + Jesus, the Christ, Whom He has given to us to free us from sin and death that we may dwell with Him forever. And let us give thanks the Holy Ghost Who proceeds from the Father and the Son, and Who brings us into the household of the Lord God through His means of grace. For our Lord God has confirmed that we have a Savior both by the voice from the bright cloud, and through the confession of St. Peter, St. John, and all the Apostles. Our Savior from sin, death and the power of the devil, is the man Who is the Lord God—the Christ—our Lord + Jesus. With Him we will dwell in new and glorious bodies for all eternity. Thanks be to God! In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:**

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory! I will extol Thee, O Lord, and I will praise Thy Name forever and ever. Amen.

**The Votum:**

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

*Soli Deo Gloria!*