

The Festival of the Transfiguration of our Lord  
St. Matthew 17:1-9  
January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024  
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
All Saints Ev. Lutheran Mission, UAC  
Pawleys Island, SC  
St. Bartholomew Ev. Lutheran Mission, UAC  
Fort Myers, FL  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

## After Six Days

*In Nomine Iesu!*

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

### **Sermon Text:**

“And after six days Jesus taketh with Him Peter, and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart: and He was transfigured before them; and His face did shine as the sun, and His garments became white as the light. And behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking with Him.”

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

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

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

My dear friends, the events of today’s Gospel reading from the Apostle and Evangelist St. Matthew takes place six days after another event that should also be familiar to us. The Transfiguration of our Lord takes place six days after our Lord + Jesus had asked His Apostles what the people of Israel were saying about Him. Some said He was St. John the Baptist, some Elijah, some Jeremiah, or one of the other Prophets. Then our Lord + Jesus asks them who they He was. St. Peter makes the good confession that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God. It was then that our Lord began to tell His Apostles why He came down to this earth to take upon Himself our flesh. He came to go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the chief priests, the scribes, and elders. He would be killed, and the third day He would be raised again from the dead.

This was where the whole earthly ministry of our Lord was leading. He came to endure a cross. He came to endure suffering, mockery, and shame. He came to be crucified, dead, and buried. This is where we will be heading in the coming weeks. We will soon be in the midst of the penitential season of Lent where our focus in the first part will be upon our sin and the breaking of the Law of God, and then we will direct our focus upon the Passion of our Lord; His suffering and death for the sins of the whole world—for our sins and transgressions. This is where our Lord was heading, and this is where we will be heading.

But before we enter the penitential season; before we bid farewell to the singing of the “Hallelujah” in our liturgy, we celebrate this Festival which we celebrate today. We celebrate our Lord’s Transfiguration. The connection between the Lord’s Transfiguration and His crucifixion is what happens

on the third day after His crucifixion. After three days, our Lord + Jesus rose again from the dead. After six days, our Lord + Jesus was transfigured before Sts. Peter, James, and John. The Transfiguration of our Lord is a picture—a revealing—of our Lord's resurrection from the dead. The Apostles see Him as He would be after He was raised from the dead. This is what He tells them at the end of the Gospel reading, "Tell the vision to no man until the Son of Man is risen from the dead." They get a glimpse of the risen and glorified Lord + Jesus. We get a picture of what our Lord will be like when we see Him on His throne of glory in Heaven.

Another Gospel tells us this is what Moses and Elijah were discussing with the Lord + Jesus. His upcoming suffering, death, and resurrection. The Apostles get a glimpse of these upcoming events. St. Peter, after his good confession when the Lord began to tell His Apostles that these things were about to happen, pulls our Lord aside and rebukes Him for saying such things. St. Peter was grossly misled to believe that such things could never happen to the Christ. These were the thoughts of man, not of the Lord God. Only Satan would fill someone's head with such lies. This is why He came down from Heaven and took upon Himself our flesh. He came to fulfill the Law perfectly, and then pay the penalty for our sins which we deserve. He came to suffer and die upon the tree of the holy cross.

But His suffering and death was for our benefit, for the benefit of the entire world, especially of them that believe. For His suffering and death destroys death. His Transfiguration on the mountain shows that He will conquer death; He will defeat sin and Satan. His Transfiguration is another truth to which we can point and say that we too will rise again from the dead on the Last Day.

Consider what the Transfiguration of our Lord shows us. First, it shows us that just as the Lord + Jesus has a transfigured body, which shined as the sun and was clothed in white garments which no launderer could get that white, we too will have glorified bodies. Our future bodies will shine like the sun. Our Lord + Jesus bears our flesh in His body, a body similar to ours but without sin. As His body is on this day, so will ours be in the day of the resurrection of the dead. Our bodies are mortal on account of sin. We will die and be buried in the grave. But the bodies that He gives to us will no longer be mortal, they will put on immortality as St. Paul tells the Church as Corinth. Our resurrected bodies will no longer feel the corruption that we have inherited from our first parents, who were created on the sixth day of creation. Nothing shall remain of this body of sin except immortality and glory, just like our Lord shows us in His Transfiguration.

Furthermore, the appearance of Moses and Elijah is also proof that there is another life after this one. For both of these Prophets had shed this earthly coil centuries before they appear with our Lord + Jesus on the mount of Transfiguration discussing His Passion and resurrection from the dead with Him. Just as they were transferred from this earthly life to an eternal life, we too will live an eternal life in Heaven with our Lord and Savior. We will join all those in Heaven who have gone before us. Those who clung in faith to the promise of an eternal life in Heaven, even as we this day cling in faith to the promise of the eternal life and resurrection of the dead. The Transfiguration of our Lord is given to us this day to bolster our confidence and sustain our faith that what our Lord has promised will happen for those who cling to Him in faith.

This is why we should not fear death. Death has been thoroughly conquered by our Lord + Jesus. His Transfiguration shows us that He will defeat death. He will rise again from the dead. He will open up our graves. He will give us an eternal life in Heaven with all of the saints and angels. We need not fear death for it is not an end like this world would have us believe. Death for us is just a sleep for our bodies, and a relocation of our souls to Heaven. The Transfiguration of our Lord shows us that this life is transient and will not last, but our life in Heaven will go on forever and ever. We will be like Moses and Elijah who talked with our Lord + Jesus as one does a brother or friend. We will also know and talk with our Lord + Jesus as a true Brother and Friend of us all.

For our Brother and Friend in His suffering and death has defeated sin, death, and the power of the devil. We know this because even though in our flesh—even though He was made man in our flesh—that He suffered, was crucified, and died in our flesh, He revealed that He defeated death once and for all by His resurrection. For where death is defeated—the consequence of sin—there also is sin overcome. For if the penalty of sin is abolished, sin can no longer harm us. Sin and death are defeated by our Lord's resurrection from the dead. Our Lord's Transfiguration points to this victory.

This is why the three Apostles, Sts. Peter, James, and John were allowed to see this Transfiguration. They would not understand these things until after our Lord rose again from the dead. But afterward they would remember this Transfiguration and rejoice that this provided a further testimony to the Gospel. This is shown us from the Epistle reading where St. Peter in his Second Epistle tells us this same thing. We have also heard this same thing in previous Gospel readings from St. John. They remembered this event after the suffering and death of the Lord + Jesus; after His resurrection from the dead.

The suffering and crucifixion of our Lord would be an offense to them. Just as St. Peter shows in the chapter before the Gospel reading when he told our Lord that His suffering would never happen. All the Apostles forsook Him and fled when He was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives. St. Peter would even deny Him three times before the cock crowed. They would not understand these events until they had been completed. When our Lord + Jesus rose again from the dead, securing our release from sin and death and the power of the devil, they would know and understand that all these things were done so that just as the Christ had died and was raised from the dead, we too would walk in new and glorified bodies in Heaven with our Lord. For our Lord + Jesus is indeed the Christ, the Son of the living God, as St. Peter confessed.

Finally, my dear friends, not only to the Apostles give testimony of the truth that the Lord + Jesus is the one and only Savior of the world from sin, death, and the devil, but on this Mount of Transfiguration we have the testimony of the Moses and Elijah that the Lord + Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ. He testified as the Son of Man by both the Law and the Prophets; by both Moses and Elijah. Furthermore, there is the testimony of all three Persons of the Trinity, for a voice was heard from Heaven declaring Him to be His Beloved Son, just as was heard at His baptism in the Jordan River by St. John the Baptist. The Holy Ghost is also present in the cloud that overshadowed them all. Just as St. Peter gave a good confession that the Lord + Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Here on the mountain, Moses, Elijah, and the entire Trinity proclaims that this Man + Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. He has come to take upon Himself our flesh, so that He might fulfill the Law perfectly, and that He might suffer and die at the hands of sinful man. So that He might rise again on the third day, and open the graves of all those who cling to Him in faith. We who cling to Him in faith—who have been baptized with the Holy Ghost—bear this promise. We will live forever in Heaven with Him in new and glorified bodies. Even though we may die, we will be transfigured into a heavenly band wearing the glorious white robes of salvation that we have been given by our Lord and Savior + Jesus, the Christ through His victory over sin and death.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us rejoice and celebrate this day in which we see a picture of our risen and glorified bodies in Heaven. Let us rejoice and sing "Hallelujah" for our Lord has conquered sin and death. He has thoroughly defeated the devil. We no longer need to fear death and the grave. For we have been promised an eternal life in Heaven. Our Lord's Transfiguration proves to us that this promise is ensured. We will never see nor taste death, but we will join the heavenly choir of saints and angels singing forever "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!" Lord, grant this to us all quickly. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

**Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:**

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

**The Votum:**

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

*Soli Deo Gloria!*