

The Festival of the Transfiguration of our Lord
St. Matthew 17:1-9
February 9th, 2025
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
St. Michael and All Angels Ev. Lutheran Mission, UAC
Augusta, GA
All Saints Ev. Lutheran Mission, UAC
Pawleys Island, 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.

Sermon Text:

“While he was yet speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold, a Voice out of the cloud, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased; hear ye 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 season of Epiphany is the season where our Lord + Jesus reveals Himself to be the Son of the Lord God. He manifests Himself to be the Messiah, the Anointed One of the Lord God. The Man, + Jesus of Nazareth is shown to be not only the Christ, the One sent by the heavenly Father to redeem Israel, but also, He is True God. Our Lord + Jesus is both man and God. If He is not both God and man, our redemption is unsure. For if He is not fully man, He cannot suffer and die. If He is not fully the Lord God, His atonement—His innocent suffering and death—would not pay for the sins of the whole world. Only the Lord + Jesus can fully atone for our sins, and redeem us back from sin, death, and the power of the devil.

This is during this season of Epiphany our Lord + Jesus revealed Himself to be both man and God. This is never more evident than from today’s Gospel reading from the Apostle and Evangelist St. Matthew. The Lord + Jesus takes with Him Sts. Peter, James, and John and goes up into a high mountain alone by themselves. There on that mountain He is transfigured before them. His face did shine as the sun, and His garments became as white as the light. Another Gospel adds that no fuller could launder them to be that white. The Apostles saw the Lord + Jesus in His full glory. They saw Him as He would be after His resurrection from the dead. They saw the Lord + Jesus in all His holiness.

What is the reaction of sinful men when they come into contact with holiness? The Apostles show the answer: they fall on their knees in fear. That which is unholy cannot endure that which is holy. Sinners in the face of the holiness of the Lord God are filled with fear and trembling. This is why when we realize our own sinfulness, we fall on our knees and confess our sins in great fear and humility. We are left with no pride in our own righteousness, because when we see how unholy we truly are, we realize there is no good thing living in us. We have no good works which we can present to the Lord

God as being worthy of His righteousness. Therefore, we fall on our knees in humility, just as these saints did, and confess our sins. We admit we are sinners in need of the Lord God's grace and mercy.

Our Lord + Jesus is not alone, however. Appearing with Him on that mountain are Moses and Elijah. We are told by another Evangelist that they were discussing with the Lord + Jesus His approaching demise. In other words, they were discussing His crucifixion and death. They were discussing the very means by which all those who are unholy may have their unholiness atoned for. He who is completely holy, without sin and hating sin, will atone for the sins of the whole world by His innocent suffering and death upon the tree of the holy cross. While sinful Apostles are shaking in fear so that they do not even know what things they are saying, the Lord + Jesus, and Moses and Elijah are discussing the means by which these sinful men may have their sins paid for.

In this the Lord + Jesus fully reveals that He is the Christ, the Anointed One of the Lord God, for it is for this very purpose for which our Lord + Jesus became man. It is to atone for our sins that the Lord + Jesus was born of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He came down from Heaven to suffer and die for the sins of the whole world. So that all those who cling to Him and His works in faith might have redemption from all their sins. We are justified by our faith in Him, for faith clings to His perfect works, and not to our own failed works.

But my dear friends, not only does the Lord + Jesus transfigure Himself before the Apostles. Not only do Moses and Elijah appear on the mountain discussing our Lord's suffering and death. But as a further testimony to Who the Lord + Jesus is there is also a Voice out of a cloud confirming Who the Lord + Jesus is. The cloud had overshadowed them and said, that this man + Jesus was the Lord God's Beloved Son, the One in Whom He was well-pleased (meaning He was without sin). It was to this One that the Apostles were to listen. Confirming that faith comes by the Word of God.

A Voice from Heaven occurs three separate times during the Gospels. Not only here, but also at the Lord's Baptism by St. John the Baptist in the Jordan River, when the Lord + Jesus began His ministry. There the Voice also said that same things it says today, "This is My Beloved Son in Whom I am well-pleased." The Holy Ghost also descended like a dove and rested upon the Lord + Jesus. We hear the Voice again today, as our Lord + Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem to suffer and die for our transgressions. We also hear the Voice from Heaven during the final days of our Lord before His crucifixion. During Holy Week, the Voice proclaims that He has not only glorified His Name through the Lord + Jesus, but He will glorify it again by the death of His Only-Begotten Son on the tree of the holy cross.

In all three instances the Voice confirms that fact that this man + Jesus is the Messiah, the One sent from the Lord God to redeem His people from sin, death, and the power of the devil. He is our Savior. He is the holy One Who will atone for the sins of the unholy. He will atone for our sins. This is why we cling to Him in faith. This is why we kneel before Him and confess our sins to Him. For salvation is found only in Him. It is found only in His perfect works and in His sacrifice for us upon the tree of the holy cross. As the Voice from Heaven declared, it is to Him we should listen. For He has the words of eternal life. It is He Who will suffer and die to pay for our sins and iniquities.

He discusses His death with Moses and Elijah on the mount of transfiguration, but as He is coming down the mountain with His three Apostles, He tells them that they were not to share the vision with anyone until He had risen from the dead. Not only did He discuss His death, but with His Apostles He shares the wonderful, good news that He will also rise from the dead. The Apostles did not understand any of these things at this time. It was only after the resurrection of the Lord + Jesus that they began to understand all that the Lord had come down from Heaven for.

Our Lord has come down from Heaven to redeem mankind from their sins. He has taken upon

Himself our flesh, so that He might perfectly fulfill the Law of God, and suffer and die in our place upon the tree of the holy cross. But He did not just come to die, He also came to rise again from the dead, to show that He has power over both death and life. He is transfigured before His Apostles on the mount of Transfiguration, and they get a foretaste of the glorious nature of our Lord + Jesus. We get a glimpse, a small picture, of what our Lord + Jesus is in all of His glory today.

But more than that, we get a glimpse at what it will be like for us in Heaven. These earthly bodies will be transfigured into glorious heavenly bodies. Our faces will shine like the sun, and our clothes will be whiter than any launderer can launder. For we will no longer be weighed down with sin and shame. We will no longer be unholy. We will be like our Lord + Jesus on this mount of Transfiguration. We will be without sin. We will be without shame forever and ever.

For our Lord + Jesus has come down from Heaven and revealed Himself to us and all mankind that He is the Christ, the Anointed One of the Lord God, Who has come to redeem mankind back from all their sins. He has come to suffer and die for our sins and the sins of the whole world, so that as we cling to Him in faith, we are made righteous before our heavenly Father. Therefore, my dear friends, let us not despise preaching and the Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it. For, by the pure preaching of the Word of the Lord God we learn about our Lord and Savior, Who has come to redeem us from sin and shame. It is to Him we should listen and hear, for He has the words of eternal life. Eternal life, a life without sin and shame, a life filled with great joy and no more tears, is found only in Him.

Let us, therefore, look upon our transfigured Lord, and sing "Hallelujah." For He is worthy of our praise. He Who made all things, including us, has also made a way for us to enter into our heavenly home. He is truly worthy to be praised above all things. For He has manifested Himself during this Epiphany season to be our Lord and Savior. Let us give Him thanks and praise forever and ever. 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 the 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!