

The Festival of the Transfiguration of our Lord
St. Matthew 17:1-9
January 25th, 2026
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald P. Dulas

This Is My Beloved Son

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.’ And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.”

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, historically in the Church’s year there were three events in our Lord’s life that were always observed. The first was the Epiphany of the Lord, where the magi, or wise men, come from the east and find our Lord + Jesus in Bethlehem. The season of Epiphany begins with our Lord + Jesus being revealed as the Messiah. This is pointed out by the magi, who had come to Jerusalem seeking the newborn King. King Herod, and all Jerusalem with him, were troubled by this announcement. The Jews were troubled by the appearing of the Messiah, but the Gentiles, who had seen His star in the east, came to worship Him. Even though the Gentile magi needed the leading of a miraculous star to lead them to the Christ. They at least saw the sign, and believed on it, and came to see the Messiah that had been promised in the Jewish Scriptures. So, we have at the beginning of the Epiphany season our Lord being revealed as the Messiah to the Gentiles.

The other event that the Church has always observed is the Gospel which we receive and hear on the First Sunday after the Epiphany of our Lord. Just as our Lord was revealed as the Christ, the Messiah to the Gentile magi, now in the temple at the tender age of twelve-years-old our Lord + Jesus sits among the doctors of the temple, both hearing them and asking them questions. They are amazed at his knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures. This is a revealing of the Lord + Jesus as the Messiah before the Jews. This is His first revealing as the Christ to the Jews with His own words. He was certainly announced to the shepherds who tended their flocks by night on the night of His birth, and He was blessed by Simeon in the temple at His Presentation, which we will observe, by the grace of the Lord God, in a little over a week, and He was proclaimed to all by Anna, as well. These Jews saw the newborn Messiah, and gave thanks and praise to the Lord God.

But here in the temple at twelve-years-old, the Lord + Jesus shows that He is the One sent by the Lord God with His own words, for only the Messiah would have such perfect knowledge of the Scriptures. Therefore, in this second event that the Church always has observed during the Epiphany season, our Lord + Jesus is revealed as the One sent from the Lord God. But He is not yet fully revealed

as the Messiah either in the temple at twelve-years-old, nor when the magi visit Him from afar. Even Simeon's blessing, and Anna's rejoicing over Him, do not yet fully reveal Him.

The same is true of the third event that the Church has always observed in this season of Epiphany. The Octave of the Epiphany of our Lord was always celebrated on January 13th. This is the Festival of the Baptism of our Lord. Our Lord + Jesus is baptized by St. John the Baptist in the Jordan River, in order to fulfill all righteousness; that He might purify and cleanse all water for use in Holy Baptism. At His baptism, we have a similar sign that we hear about in the Gospel from the Apostle and Evangelist St. Matthew, today. At His baptism in the Jordan River, there was a Voice from Heaven declaring Him to be the Son of God. The heavenly Father reveals in a Voice that this man + Jesus from Nazareth was His Beloved Son, and in Him He was well-pleased.

This Voice from Heaven calling the Lord + Jesus the Son of the Father certainly reveals Him to be the Messiah, the Christ. From this Voice, and the descending of the Holy Ghost like a dove upon the Lord + Jesus, two of St. John the Baptist's disciples, left John and followed the Lord. They already began to recognize Him as the Christ. He was already being revealed as the Messiah to His Apostles. This was further emphasized in the Gospel reading we heard last Sunday, but is not always heard during Epiphany because of the changing length of Epiphany, of our Lord turning water into wine. His first miracle caused His disciples to believe in Him. They knew from that event that He was the Messiah. The two disciples of St. John the Baptist who began following Him after His baptism, also were convinced He was the Messiah from the Voice and the dove. He was more fully revealed as the Messiah at His baptism.

These three events have always been a part of Epiphany season, since the Church's year was established. All three events reveal our Lord + Jesus to be the long-promised Messiah. The visit of the magi, the Boy + Jesus in the temple, and His baptism in the Jordan River, all show that the man + Jesus was, and is, the Son of God. Each one gradually made this fact clearer. The pinnacle for the Church's year in this revelation of our Lord + Jesus as the Son of God, was His baptism. From the Festival of the Epiphany to its Octave, the Festival of the Baptism of our Lord, we have our Lord + Jesus revealed to be the Son of the Lord God. The One in Whom the heavenly Father is well-pleased. But even these three events, which the Church had always observed, did not yet fully reveal the Lord + Jesus as the Messiah. We did not yet see His full glory.

Today, however, my dear friends, on this Festival of the Transfiguration of our Lord, our Lord + Jesus is seen in His full glory. Sts. Peter, James, and John could no longer doubt that He was the Messiah, for His full glory, His divinity, is revealed to them on the Mount of the Transfiguration. And make note, my dear friends, that this Gospel reading that we now observe as the last Sunday after the Epiphany, was not part of the historic lectionary. The main text that needed to be observed in the season of Epiphany, even when there was only one Sunday after Epiphany, was the reading of the Boy + Jesus in the temple. This is still the case. If there is only one Sunday after the Epiphany, it is not the Festival of the Transfiguration that is observed, but the reading from St. Luke, chapter two, of our Lord in His Father's house.

This is because this Festival that we observe today is not a part of the historic lectionary. This addition to the Church's year is strictly a Lutheran addition. But, my friends, having this Gospel in the Church's year, we cannot but help to see that it is meant to be a part of the Epiphany cycle. For in the Gospel reading from the Apostle and Evangelist St. Matthew, our Lord + Jesus no longer veils His divinity. His full glory, power, and honor, His full divinity is revealed to Sts. Peter, James, and John. Both St. John and St. Peter mention this event in their writings. We heard St. John's description on Christmas Eve in the First chapter of his Gospel. They beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father. St. Peter talks about this in the Epistle reading for today. They were eye-witnesses of His glory. He says, "For He [that is, the Lord + Jesus] received from God the Father honor and glory,

when there was borne such a Voice to Him by the Majestic Glory, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased:' and this Voice we ourselves heard borne out of heaven, when we were with Him in the holy mount."

He had through His works, and His preaching, revealed that He was the Son of God; that He was the Messiah sent from the heavenly Father, to redeem Israel from their transgressions. Many saw His signs and wonders and believed on Him, believed He was the Christ, the Son of the Living God, even as St. Peter confessed, when the Lord asked His disciples who He was. But it was not until now, on this mount of Transfiguration that our Lord + Jesus is fully revealed to be both the Son of Man, and the Son of God. Everyone could see that He was a man. He was + Jesus of Nazareth, Son of Sts. Mary and Joseph. For many, this is all they saw. They only saw a man. They only saw a great teacher, or prophet. Some honored Him because of this, and others hated and reviled Him. But here on this mount of Transfiguration there can no longer be any doubt about Who the Lord + Jesus is, and what He is. He is the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed One of the Lord God. He is the One sent to redeem us from sin and death.

This is why this Gospel text was added to the Church's year in this place at the end of the Epiphany season, the season wherein our Lord + Jesus is revealed to be the Son of God, come into this world to redeem mankind. The other events observed by the Church throughout her centuries, revealed Him to be the Son of the Lord God, but it is only in His Transfiguration that He is fully revealed to be Who He is. There had been a deficiency in the Church's year, until we as Lutherans fixed it. This is why you will not find a sermon for the Festival of the Transfiguration in Doctor Martin Luther's writings, or even one from Johann Gerhard in the next century after Luther.

Therefore, my dear friends, we have this Gospel reading that shows that the man + Jesus is fully and completely the Lord God. We could see His manhood, along with the Jews, before, but now on the Mount of Transfiguration we see Him fully and completely as the Lord God. He is both man and God. He is man so that as a man He may perfectly fulfill the Law of God for us. He is man that He may suffer and die, as a man, for us poor, miserable sinners. He is a man that as the perfect and sinless man He may atone for the sins of the whole world. But He is also God, that His atonement may be for all people, and not just Himself. He is God that He might raise Himself from the dead on the third day, and offer up His life as a ransom for us all. He is God that the heavenly Father may accept His sacrifice and offer Him the throne of His father David.

He now reigns in Heaven for all eternity. He will come again as both God and Man in the One Person of the Christ to judge both the quick and the dead. All those who cling to Him in faith will be received by Him into the eternal heavenly realms. We will be united with Moses and Elijah, and all those who have gone before us in the faith. We will not abide in tabernacles made with hands, but we will reside in the mansions our Brother has gone into Heaven to prepare for us. There we will worship and adore the One Who is both God and Man, the One Who has been revealed to us to be the Savior and Redeemer of us and all mankind. The One Who is the Beloved of the heavenly Father. The One in Whom He is well-pleased, and Who makes for us a pathway into Heaven, so that we may rest eternally with Him through His grace and mercy. 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!