

Transfiguration C
Luke 9:28-36
February 26, 2017

Have you ever considered the ebb and flow of the Christian church year in terms of preparation? Let's start by doing that this morning. The penitential season of Advent prepares us for Jesus' return in glory and for Christmas. Christmas prepares us for Epiphany. Epiphany prepares us for Transfiguration. Transfiguration prepares us for Lent. Lent prepares us for Easter. Easter prepares us for Ascension. Ascension prepares us for Pentecost. Pentecost prepares us for the time until Jesus returns. And then it starts all over again with Advent preparing us for both the 1st and 2nd comings of Christ. What has been going on in our lessons, hymns and prayers since January 8th is that Jesus has been revealing his glory by opening his mouth and speaking his Word. He has been revealing his glory by his miraculous deeds. Today he does that again, but for his disciples he does more. But the purpose of the festival of the transfiguration is the same for them as it is for you. Today your Savior prepares you for his passion. As he does, this is our prayer: **Lord, Prepare us for your passion. 1. Let us see your glory as God's Son. 2. Let us hear your Word.**

The account before us this morning is one of the ways that our Savior prepared his disciples for the most important event in the course of human history. For three years, Jesus had taught them, training them to be his spokesmen. He prepared them by preaching and teaching his powerful word. He prepared them by performing powerful miracles where he revealed his glory as the Son of God by his dominion of sickness, disability, sin and death. Think of all of the preparation...the listening to his Word, the blind receiving sight, the discourses and parables, the raising of the dead. And now consider what they are about encounter in Jerusalem...the bitter passion and God-forsaken death of their friend and Savior.

Jesus took his three closest friends with him to the holy mountain to pray. These are the three who had been with him when he had healed Jairus' daughter. They would also accompany him and see first hand the anguish Jesus suffered in the Garden of Gethsemane. Our ever-loving and ever-instructing Savior was going to give these three men much needed strength in preparation for his suffering and death.

But there was more to ascending the mountain than prayer. As Jesus was praying something amazing happened. Jesus was transfigured. That is his appearance changed. Jesus allowed his disciples to catch a glimpse of what was fully and rightfully his as the eternal Son of God. His face changed and shone like the sun. His clothes became as bright as a flash of lighting. Mark tells us that Jesus' clothes became whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. The divine glory that will be fully visible in heaven was shown to these three men.

We must take a moment here and remind ourselves of the nature of our Savior. At the same time, he was both fully God and fully man. He was both true God and true man in the same person. Though he was eternal God, he took on the same flesh that you and I now have. In short, God became man. Now even though Jesus looked exactly any other human being, he was still true God. He had in his possession all the attributes of God. He chose not to make full use of those powers while he was on earth. Someone once described the unique person of Jesus Christ like this: Just as the worm covers the fishing hook so that the fish cannot see it, so also Christ's humanity hid his deity from human eyes.

Why do we mention this? There is a reason Jesus set aside his glory for a time. There is a reason Jesus took on flesh and blood. There is a reason true God humbled himself to be born into world. He came into this same world in which you and I live to save sinners. He came into this world to save you from death. He came into the world to earn forgiveness and heaven for each and every one of you.

So now we've seen how our Savior prepared those three disciples for his passion. We now make this plea: **Lord, Prepare us for your passion. 1. Let us see your glory as God's Son.** Unless our Savior comes to judge the world today or unless he takes you to your heavenly home, you are not going to see his glory with your eyes. You will not witness that which Peter, James and John experienced. Moses and Elijah will not miraculously appear before you to speak with your Savior today. So are we going to

see the glory of our Savior today? Yes, we will. We will but for now it is hidden. We will see that glory in the eyes of faith. In fact, that is the second part of the sermon this morning. It shows us how we see the glory of God's One and Only Son. Let us then plead: **Lord, Prepare us for your passion. 2. Let us hear your Word.**

We now hear God the Father speak, *While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. 35 A voice came from the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him."* God says, "Listen to him." A more literal translation of that would be: "Continually listen to him." The very fact that you are here today is a miracle of God. You are listening to the Word of God and in doing so, the glory of the Son of God is revealed to you.

Yet the Father's words bring cause for much self-examination. Are we in fact, "continually listening to him?" Did you listen to him at all yesterday? Are you making the most of every opportunity to listen to what he says in his Word? When you do listen to what God says in his Word, is your mind and heart always and 100% there? What happens when it is a chore to listen to God's Son? What about the ways we show we don't love the Words of Christ perfectly? Are you continually revealing the glory of God's Son to your children...to your friends...to unbelievers?

Any and every sin against what God says in his Word is damnable sin. Every sinful neglect of what he says is a despicable trespass. Think of all the excuses the devil gives us to not hear what God says in his Word. Now think of what the Bible is. Is it something that makes our life here on earth easier and better? No. Does God want us to study it so we can be better people? No. Does God want us to treasure it, to hear it and to learn it just for inspiration? No. What we have in the Bible is the very Word of God. It is where God reveals the glory of his Son. It is the only place where God saves. Think of standing before God and saying, I don't want to listen to what you have to say today. I don't think any one of us would have the audacity to do that. Yet you and I do just that any time we make even the tiniest excuse to go against what God has revealed to us in his Word.

So do we want to hear God's Word because we feel guilty if we don't? Of course not. We want to hear this Word because in it, God reveals the glory of the Savior to each and every one of you. In the Scriptures, God opens his mouth and says, "I have forgiven you. You belong to me now. I love you so much I sent my Son to die and rise for you. I have a spot reserved especially for you in heaven." That is why we plead with our God that we hear his Word. The good news of salvation prompts us to deeper study. That same good news then comforts guilt stricken and fear ridden consciences and hearts. And that same good news strengthens faith and empowers holier living.

In three short days we will gather here again and usher in the season of Lent. As we do, we plead with the Lord, **Prepare us for your passion.** We make that our prayer because as we view Jesus make his way to Jerusalem, make his way to the cross, make the way to his tomb, he doesn't look so glorious. This is exactly why we make this our prayer because the only way that God reveals his saving glory to us is through his Word. So our plea stands as this: Prepare us Lord. Let us see your glory as you reveal it in your Word. Amen.