

The Transfiguration of Our Lord February 27, 2022

The Lessons: Deuteronomy 34:1-12
Psalm 99
Hebrews 3:1-6
Luke 9:28-36

The Hymns: # 814 *O Bless the Lord, My Soul*
415 *Jesus on the Mountain Peak*
417 *Alleluia, Song of Gladness*

The Collect: O God, in the glorious transfiguration of Your beloved Son You confirmed the mysteries of the faith by the testimony of Moses and Elijah. In the voice that came from the bright cloud You wonderfully forshewed our adoption by grace. Mercifully make us co-heirs with the King in His glory and bring us to the fullness of our inheritance in heaven; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reign with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

The Sermon:
Transfiguration of Our Lord
Hebrews 3:1-6

The Epistle of Hebrews 3: "Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house."

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,
The celebration of Our Lord's transfiguration follows the celebration of Epiphany, the revelation of Jesus, and precedes the season of Lent. It truly is the link between Epiphany and Lent. The transfiguration recalls the glory of Jesus the Christ. And its inclusion in the church calendar serves as a reminder that, as Jesus and the disciples return from their mountaintop experience, a different kind of Epiphany is about to begin in Lent. We have been following Jesus like the disciples, learning more and more about how special He is.

I.

As Jesus comes down from the mountain, He begins His journey to the cross. As the road to the cross nears, there is a special glimpse of this glory, and we hear the voice of the Father telling us to listen to Jesus. The more we hear and listen to Jesus, the more we know that He is truly the one who deserves all glory.

So, this Epistle for this wonderful occasion, TRANSFIGURATION, provides us with something we are told that we ought to consider. "Consider Jesus," the author of Hebrews says in verse 1, and then tells us something so important that it takes up a line in verse 3: "For Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses." Yes, Jesus is Greater Than Moses.

As we read the narrative of Christ's transfiguration in the Gospel of Luke 9:35, Peter, James, and John "consider" Jesus as God's "apostle" - His Son whom He has chosen and sent to speak His saving Word and to do His saving Work.

These three disciples consider Jesus their "High Priest." And just as Moses did, Jesus went up to the mountain to pray and intercede for them and others.

These disciples see how Jesus' glory is greater than the glory of Moses and Elijah. Likewise, the recipients of the Epistle of Hebrews, like our congregation, consider Jesus as their High Priest who brings God to them and gives them access to Him in the Divine Service.

As Peter, James, and John shared in Jesus' heavenly calling, we too have access to the heavenly calling by being with Him and listening to Him, where we join Moses and Elijah.

Consider Jesus, the author of Hebrews gently implores us. Consider Him. The voice of the Father was more absolute. Clearer and less of an invitation and more of a command, as we heard from the Gospel of Luke 9:35, "This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!"

However, we sometimes find ourselves drifting...instead of listening to Jesus, we listen to the voices of the WORLD: the negativity, the catastrophe, the darkness of this WORLD. Yet, when we were faithless in SIN and DISOBEDIENCE, CHRIST is still FAITHFUL. Yes, Jesus abides in us. We abide in Him. He keeps and preserves us in the faith. Yes, as we confess in the Apostles' Creed, He will come again in GLORY and He will GLORIFY US.

Indeed, Jesus is more worthy of glory than others who were and are revered (idolized). Jesus is greater! Consider Him! Peter had reasoned with Jesus: What if we stayed here for a while? Is it a wrong question? Did Peter mean this is a good opportunity for them to glorify Moses and Elijah? Did they not recognize that they had followed up and will soon follow down the mountain the glory of God Himself in the person of Jesus? Maybe.

Listen to Him! My Son! Consider Jesus! So much more worthy of glory than Moses!

2.

Of course, what we know, and what Peter, James, and John would soon learn, is that God's version of glory looks surprisingly like what you and I might consider shame (the suffering, the crucifixion). They don't know that yet. At least they don't know the magnitude of it at this moment.

I wonder, on the way down from the mountain, what they thought about what they could tell their families and friends about Jesus...

Look, consider Jesus, who is more worthy of glory than Moses:

You see Moses is from old, goes way back; people have been following him for years! But Jesus was with God in the beginning.

Look what Moses did! Separated the sea! But Jesus walked on water. Moses caused bread to be found on the ground after taking his concerns to God! But Jesus is the bread of life. Moses made water flow from a rock! But Jesus is THE living water.

Moses wrote all these sacred words! But Jesus is the Word. The very Word of God. And really, if you hear Moses correctly, he's whispering to you that you ought to consider Jesus. That glory the disciples saw also on Moses' face there on the mountain—it's the reflected glory of Jesus. That Promised Land toward which he journeyed, that's rest in Jesus.

Moses took our people from slavery toward freedom! But that exodus, as glorious as it was, is just not even on the same level as the exodus Jesus performs, through death to life, with the promise of the same for His people. Slavery conquered, not to old Pharaoh in Egypt but slavery to sin and death and the power of the devil. The LAW brings death and condemnation; in Christ, we have life and liberty. Live and believe in Him, and you'll never die.

I don't know about you, but I like to have some rules in my life...a checklist to follow...and cross the checklist off. Yes, this method does work in our day-to-day life...having a grocery list, to-do list, etc. But I tend to see my faith development in this way...as a spiritual checklist...for example: Did I pray today? Did I read my Bible? Did I go to church?

Every time I cross off my spiritual checklist, I feel as if I have achieved...earned...something towards my salvation instead of trusting in the Lord, the author, and perfecter of my faith. The Word of the Lord is telling us this morning to listen to Jesus...to rely on Him...to trust Him...instead of relying on ourselves or on our achievements.

3.

The author to the Hebrews ends our reading today with these words: Moses was faithful as a servant in God's house. But Jesus was faithful over God's house . . . as a Son. And the difference, you might ask? John explained the idea so beautifully in chapter 8 of his Gospel: "A servant doesn't remain in the house forever, but the Son does, he remains forever. So, if the Son sets you free, you are free indeed" (John 8:35–36).

So, do consider Jesus who has given us that freedom today. Freedom to live in Him and die in Him. And considering Him, do heed the voice of God, and listen to Jesus. Not just what He says about you and your life but also the words He had spoken to His disciples just days before the transfiguration—and then again on the way down the mountain—that He must die and rise and lead from the cross the most glorious exodus the world has ever seen. Your exodus from death to eternal life.

Jesus is worth more glory than Moses. And you know that....I know that, of course. Yes, we will consider Him the next time we think about the greatness we've seen and heard about today. Even the great gifts of faith heroes that God has placed around you and me...we will still be thankful for them but we know that Jesus is worthy of even more glory.

Consider Him! Listen to Him! Follow Him! And we know that steps down the mountain can be unpredictable. If you and I remember only the view and forget to watch where we're going, well, we'd fail to see Him walk to the cross. Follow Him to Calvary often. And consider Him, who was with God in

the beginning, who is the glory of the Father among us. He has dwelt among us and brings light among us and says to all who believe in Him that you, too, are the daughters and sons of God. And if He says it, it's true, because if the Son has set you free, you are free indeed. Amen.