

Sermon February 19, 2023

Matthew 17: 1-9

The Transfiguration

Matthew 16: 13-18

*"Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" <sup>14</sup> And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." <sup>15</sup> He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" <sup>16</sup> Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." <sup>17</sup> And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. <sup>18</sup> And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock<sup>[a]</sup> I will build my church, and the gates of hell<sup>[b]</sup> shall not prevail against it."*

*" But who do you say I am"?*

This was the question I posed several weeks back. Peter answered for all the church our church! I will build my church on this, and the gates of hell will not prevail over us! Our church!

**Matthew 17: 1**

***"And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves."***

So now 6 days later took his first three disciples that were chosen by Jesus to go up a high mountain possibly Mount Tabor or Mount Hermon and witnessed a miracle.

The transformation of Jesus was witnessed by just three of the 12 Peter, James and John were the earliest of the twelve and were of his inner circle.

Possibility that these three were going to play a prominent role in the early church and Peter stands out as the most vocal at times.

Origen an early church father asked : *“Both Matthew and Mark record that he was transformed before them. Is it therefore possible to be transfigured before some but not he others? “*

Matthew 17 2-3

***“And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. <sup>3</sup> And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him.”***

The other disciples and the crowds below did not witness this. Do you wish to see the transfigured Jesus?

So, he is seen and can be seen in his glory to us through the Gospels every Sunday every day if you seek him in word and prayer. He shines on us and his church!

Who do you say I am? His face still shines in our troubled heart as it did on that mountain. But this was a teaching moment that Jesus used for the future leaders of his disciples. Peter, James, and John.

For indeed his face and his garments as well were like nothing we can do to convey the brightness of Christ!

Augustine stated this:

*Indeed, Jesus himself shone as the sun, indicated that he is the Light which illuminates everyone who comes into this world. And this is the sun to the eyes of the flesh, that is the sun to the eyes of the heart.”*

And there the three stood dumb struck before a transfigured Jesus their teacher and constant companion with Moses and Elijah all in front of them! What a site! But why and for what purpose. But with God there is a divine purpose and perfect will!

Jesus was changed and brought to this magnificent light to glorify the Cross to show and give witness to his future leaders and bring them to a greater understanding and were destined to speak boldly of the Passion of Christ which Jesus had to accomplish in a short time in Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit instilling on them the highest of power that would take hold of them in due time.

So here is Moses and Elijah standing in brilliance with Jesus, God the Father set before the three trusted disciples both Moses and Elijah who were ready to die ten thousand times for God's decrees and for the people entrusted to them.

Each of them, having lost their earthly life to find a new one as leaders for God and his people. For both of them boldly spoke to tyrants, one to an Egyptian the other to Ahab. They spoke on behalf of heartless and disobedient people.

Both were brought into extreme danger by the very persons who were saved by them. Just as the disciples were learning they too were going to face their own deaths at the hands of tyrants but Jesus was elevating them in this moment to face what Moses and Elijah faced!

Using imperfect people like Moses, Elijah, Peter who was speaking before he was thinking! Like all the disciples just like us!

We are who Jesus uses, ....we are the ones that are also imperfect and also the ones that step out for our faith and seem to encounter our own demons and tyrants!

Matthew 17: 4-5

***4 “And Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.” 5 He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my beloved Son,<sup>[a]</sup> with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.”***

Certainly, Peter was filled with the wonder and awe of the transfiguration and recognizing Moses and Elijah he wished to dwell there in the Glory of Jesus.

But much work had to be done so this was not the time or the place for Peter continue to bask in the glory. Much work and was yet before them as disciples. But Jesus did not rebuke him only the Father as if speak to his children! Listen to him!’ And to us Listen to him in Scripture in the infallible word of God! As Peter goes on to teach the other Disciples in due time and his bold messages to the churches.

The voice of the Father answered for the Son that word of the Lord might be fulfilled in Scripture!

John 8: 18

***“I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me.”***

Matthew 17: 6-8

***6 “When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. 7 But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Rise, and have no fear.” 8 And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.”***

They were terrified from one second, they are in Awe to the next in terror! Like us we find our selves praising God one moment in good times and in the next second of life we find our selves in terror over life's tragedies.

Jesus came to them as they knew him humble kind touches as a Father comforts his frighten children and stated Do not fear!

In Closing Jesus was nurturing his disciples preparing them for what was lying ahead, for them and for us!

Who do you say I am! You are our savior our safety in every storm of Life. You are the light of the word!