

Transfiguration 2022 - When we live in Anticipation of God's Promises we are never disappointed

- I. This week we close the Epiphany season and enter into Lent by celebrating the Transfiguration when Jesus revealed His divine glory to Peter, James and John while speaking with Moses and Elijah
 - A. As we delve into our readings for the day, I want you to think of something that hope is an experience that we've all had - the anticipation of fresh baked bread when you're hungry
 1. You know that aroma that fills the kitchen
 2. The warmth and softness when it comes out of the oven
 3. The taste of that first bite – something so simple yet full of such delight
 - B. Now imagine the disappointment at not being able to enjoy that bread.
 1. Perhaps, you're on a diet or maybe it was made for your friends, and you can't have any because you'd ruin the loaf.
 2. It just doesn't seem fair, all that yummy goodness right at your fingertips, making your mouth water and you can't have any
 - C. Now remember how disappointed we can be over something so trivial as you consider Moses in our OT lesson.
 1. This episode occurs at the end of his life and God takes him to the top of Mt. Pisgah to gaze over the Promised Land but he's not able to enter
 2. Moses had been God's "right-hand-man" for 40 years (facing Pharaoh, leading Israel through the desert, etc)
 3. But now he's not allowed to enter the Promised Land after one little incident at Meribah years before as our reading tells us
 4. Moses had lived in anticipation of God's promise to enter the Holy Land and now that was all over, what did it mean for Moses?
 - D. Numbers 20 gives the details of Moses' "sin"
 1. The children of Israel were in the desert, complaining to Moses as they always did, this time about water.
 2. Moses prays to God Who tells him, **"Take the staff, and assemble the congregation, you and Aaron your brother, and tell the rock before their eyes to yield its water."** (Num 20:8)
 3. And here's what Moses did, **"Then Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock, and he said to them, "Hear now, you rebels: shall we bring water for you out of this rock?" And Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock with his staff twice, and water came out abundantly."** (Num 20:10-11)
 4. That's it, does that sound bad to you? But hear the Lord's response, **"Because you did not believe in me, to uphold me as holy in the eyes of the people of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land that I have given them."** (Num 20:12)

II. So now imagine Moses' disappointment in not being able to enter the Promised Land because he struck the rock in frustration instead of speaking to it after **years** of being harangued by the Israelites.

- A. Moses was, as text tells us, one who knew God face to face, the friend of God (Ex 33:11), yet he did not make it.
1. That's the Law, he had one command, he failed to do it, so there were consequences.
 2. This vignette highlights the difficulty we have comprehending God's justice.
 3. God is absolute, He does not make mistakes so therefore He cannot tolerate ANY mistake or ANY flaw great or small.
 4. However, we are not absolute, we live in a relative world where we judge right and wrong on a relative scale – some things are worse or better than others, we grade on a curve.
 5. To our minds Moses was on the whole faithful; he only slipped up a little bit especially when compared to the people He was leading, to our minds he deserved to enter the Holy Land but God doesn't grade on a curve

B. Now consider yourselves in light of Moses

1. Any of us spoken with God face to face? Any of us veiled our faces to hide God's reflected glory lately? Any of us called the friend of God?
2. Scripture records this one sin of his, yet that kept him from Promised Land
3. What hope do you have if Moses didn't make it? He just hit a rock. What have you done?
4. When we see God's righteous judgment and intolerance of sin – even just one and we can begin to understand just how dire our eternal outlook was before Christ

III. But the story doesn't end there (Praise God!) for Moses or any of us because **when we live in anticipation of God's promises we are never disappointed!**

- A. At first glance God taking Moses to the top of Pisgah looks like a final taunt, but it's not.
1. While there were earthly consequences for his disobedience, Moses was reassured that God keeps His promises the Israelites would enter the land
 2. Further Moses knew he was not cut off: God buried him, He still loved him
 3. The text says, "**And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face...**" (Deut 34:10)
 4. And then our Gospel text confirms that Moses remained in God's favor as we see Jesus, the only prophet greater than Moses, speaking with him on the mountain.
 5. Moses lived in anticipation of God's promises, and they were fulfilled.
- B. We too live in anticipation of God's promises, we're not going to get a glimpse of our heavenly Promised Land through the words of Scripture and not enter.
1. Yes, we've sinned, yes we deserve to die outside of the Promised Land
 2. But One like Moses, yet greater than Moses is our deliverer.

- C. Where even Moses failed to deliver Israel fully Christ never did!
1. Moses struck the rock in the desert and was excluded from the Land, Jesus overcame Satan in the desert and was righteous
 2. Moses reflected God's glory and veiled his face, Jesus is God's glory and shines as a light in the darkness.
 3. Moses placed a serpent on a pole so that those who looked to it lived, Jesus was the One who bore our sins on the cross so that we might look to Him and live eternally. (Jn 3:14-15)

- D. This is the Last Sunday of Epiphany, liturgically we can look from the mount of Transfiguration to Mount Calvary where our Savior made possible our entrance to the Promised Land of heaven through the blood of His sacrifice.
1. In our Gospel we catch a glimpse of our eternal destiny and likeness in Moses and Elijah who radiate the glory of God
 2. Just so, we live in anticipation of God's promises revealed in Scripture and we know that our hopes will not be disappointed because God keeps His promises as He did for Moses
 3. Therefore, we enter the season of Lent beginning with Ash Wednesday where we recall the sufferings of Christ for our sins
 4. It will culminate on Good Friday, our Good Friday, the only time any of us can rightly call good the day someone dies, where victory was secured – the Promised Land won

IV. Dearly beloved in Christ, unlike our example at the start, there is no disappointment when we live in anticipation of God's promises

- A. The promises are not a carrot to tease us, but a foretaste of the eternal good that is to come
1. And God continues to give us tangible proof of His promises to fortify our faith throughout our earthly pilgrimage.
 2. The sacraments of baptism, communion and confession give what God promises – life, forgiveness, strength, and a glimpse of the good things to come the heavenly high feast that knows no end.
 3. What God promises, God delivers – that promise is sealed in the very blood of His Son so that as Paul says we might receive the full rights as sons
- B. You are children and heirs of the Most High, and no eye has seen or mind conceived the Heavenly Jerusalem that He has prepared for live in anticipation of what He has promised and you will not be disappointed!