

The Transfiguration of Jesus

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Our Savior's Way Lutheran Church

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God wants you to know Him! This is the extraordinary news that we celebrate this morning in our worship. God is constantly revealing Himself, but we often overlook the signs of His presence. I love to take walks in the evenings with my wife, Bobbie. Quite often we will see a sunset that makes your heart skip a beat it is so beautiful. When I see the beauty of creation it affirms to me that there has to be a God. Like a great artist, God has left His signature all over His creation. It is in a sunrise and in a sunset, in the birth of a child, when two people fall in love, in the presence of a friend, but most of all God revealed Himself in Jesus Christ. The Apostle John wrote, ***"No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made Him known."*** (John 1:18)

What we know through faith, that Jesus Christ is Lord, the world wants to know through concrete evidence. The world wants real proof that Jesus Christ is God and Jesus' teachings are true. Fortunately, the evidence is there. Unfortunately, people can't always see it. Sin puts blinders on our spiritual vision. Paul writes, ***"For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities...his eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse."*** (Romans 1:20) Because of the blinders sin has placed on our spiritual vision, Luther said, ***"I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith."*** We believe because God makes Himself known to us in His word and sacraments and He empowers our faith with the help of the Holy Spirit.

We owe a great debt to the skepticism of the disciples. The disciples refused to believe anyone who claimed to be the Messiah or claimed to be God. When Philip told Nathaniel he found the Messiah, Nathaniel refused to believe him. He said, ***“Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”*** Nathaniel tested everything against the word of God. But when he met Jesus, Nathaniel confessed, ***“My Lord and my God.”*** Thomas too, tested what he heard about Jesus. Thomas refused to believe Jesus rose from the dead. But when Jesus confronted Thomas with the evidence and invited him to touch His hands and feel His side, Thomas confessed, ***“My Lord and my God.”*** We should never be afraid of our questions about our faith. God will show us the answers to our questions.

Peter assures us that our faith is built on a solid foundation. Peter wrote, ***“We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received honor and glory, from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, ‘This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.’ We ourselves have heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.”*** (1 Peter 1:16-18)

In today’s Gospel lesson Matthew tells us Jesus led Peter, James, and John to the top of a high mountain. Jesus did not bring them with Him just because they were His friends. In Jewish law, for something to be established as true you needed two or three witnesses (Deuteronomy 19:15). He wanted them to testify to something that was about to happen. The glory of God radiated in Jesus’ physical body. Matthew said the light was so bright it was like the sun. The light was so glorious that even Jesus’ clothes glistened. And as Jesus’ body was shining with divine glory, Moses and Elijah appear with them and start talking with Jesus. Peter not knowing what to say or how to react, blurted out in true Peter fashion, ***“It is good to be here, Lord. Do you want me to build a shelter for you and for Moses and Elijah?”*** But before Peter was able to finish what he was saying,

a bright cloud enveloped them. And the voice of God spoke to them from the cloud. ***“This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!”*** (Matt. 17:5) At that point, the disciples fell to the ground terrified because they were in the presence of God.

Jesus is Lord! What does this mean for us today? For Peter, this revelation caused him to fall on the ground and worship Jesus. Worship means more than just singing a few hymns, it means to love Jesus with all of our heart, with all of our mind and with all of our strength. The voice of God from heaven said, ***“listen to him.”*** To worship Jesus means making a commitment to know His Word and to yield our life to God’s will. To worship Jesus means to surrender ourselves, our goals and our ambitions is to be His disciple and to serve Him in everything we do.

Peter wanted to stay on the mountain top. He said to Jesus ***“It is good to be here.”*** But mountain top experiences are never an end in themselves. They are given to us so we can go out into the world and share God’s love. Jesus left the mountain top to go to Jerusalem where He suffered and died to pay for our sins and to save us. The transfiguration helps us understand the enormity of God’s love, that He would lay down his glory and power and die for us on a cross. How great is God’s love! This morning we are invited to follow Jesus and go into the world to share the love we have received from Him. People of Our Savior’s Way...**Do you believe Jesus is God?** Then listen to His Word. **Do you believe Jesus Christ is your Savior?** Then proclaim Him and share His love. **Do you believe Jesus Christ is Lord?** Then commit your life to Him and live as His disciple.

Service Notes: The Transfiguration of Jesus

1. God wants us to know Him! Name two ways God has made Himself known to us.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____

2. Why is it so hard for people to believe in God if God makes Himself known to us?

3. Fill in the blanks: Luther said, "I believe that I cannot by my own _____ or _____ believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or _____ to Him, but the _____ has called me by the _____, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and _____ me in the true faith."

4. Why did the disciples believe that Jesus was God?

5. What does it mean for us to believe Jesus is Lord! List three things we should be doing if we believe in Jesus Christ.