

Transfiguration
Luke 9:28-43a

Grace and Peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. May the words of my mouth and the ears of our hearts be open to the word of God this day. AMEN.

Today we gather on the verge of Lent. We stand with Peter, John and James watching Jesus on the mountaintop and the lectionary also adds on a section of the disciples down in the valley watching the glory of God. It is transfiguration Sunday. The last Sunday of Epiphany. The season that started with the magi following the star to the Messiah child, and now the light of glory shines forth once again on the Messiah as he prepares to go towards Jerusalem and the cross. We stand as onlookers with Peter and John and James and hear the glory of the Lord revealed to us in this reading.

Just like many times before Jesus went away from the crowds alone to pray. Only three disciples follow him up the mountain, and while he is there praying, while their eyes are heavy with sleep, suddenly Jesus' face shines as bright as the sun and his clothes are radiant like lightening, becoming dazzling white. Snapping more awake the disciples see Jesus speaking with Moses, the law-giver, and Elijah the prophet and they want to hold on to that moment. But even as they acknowledge and ask to hold on to the moment by building shelter, a cloud sweeps down over the mountain obscuring their view and terrifying them. But in their fear they each hear a voice as clear as they saw the light of the glory of Christ, they hear "This is my Son, my Chosen listen to him." And then the moment is over the cloud leaves and the two great patriarchs are gone and they hold back off down into the valley of life. The next day they come upon a man who has a child sick with seizures. But Jesus' disciples could do nothing to help the boy. So Jesus has to act, rebuking the faithlessness of his generation and their inability to listen to what he has shown them. Instead he rebukes the unclean spirit healing the boy and giving him back to his father.

Now do you think these two stories impacted Peter, James and John at all? They had seen and heard the glory of Christ on the mountaintop and they had seen and heard the power of Christ there in the lowest point in life. But did they really hear or more importantly did they truly listen?

There is a difference you know when you hear something and when you finally listen. I can hear a noise, but that doesn't mean I comprehend it. I can even hear someone tell me how to do something, but that doesn't mean I am gonna do it. Kids are really good at this, they learn to tune out the speaker. They hear it and nod or say yeah, yeah, but did they

really listen? No because you have to go back and tell them again and then again and again. Until you turn into your parents when they use to stand there and say Child Listen to me!!!

When you heard that you knew now was the time to truly listen up and hear and react accordingly. The difference in hearing something and truly listening is in the action. We can hear about faith, and hear the stories of scripture, and hear about God's love, but until we truly listen and act accordingly it isn't changing us at all.

In the Gospel reading the Lord is insisting that the Disciples Listen. Comprehend and act accordingly. Live it and know who it is you follow.

We know that this story must have impacted the disciples, because only three are there, but the story is told in all three synoptic Gospels. So they must have gone forth sharing this message. Peter, James, and John truly heard what the Lord said, and witnessed the power of God on that mountaintop of glory when Jesus was transfigured and even in the valley of darkness and sickness when the sick child is healed.

It stays even with Peter as he defends his faith against people that say Jesus' resurrection and glory is a myth, a story, make believe. Peter rebukes this by writing in the first chapter at the sixteenth verse of the 2nd letter of Peter: "We did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received honor and glory from God the Father when that voice was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory saying, "This is my Son, my beloved, with whom I am well pleased." We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven while we were with him on the holy mountain. So we have the prophetic message more fully confirmed. You will do well to be attentive to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place - until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts."

You will do well to be attentive to this message as to a lamp shining in the darkest place. You will do well to listen and follow the light that shines the path in the darkest places. Listen and Do. Listen and act. Don't just hear it and say, yes, yes.... That gets you no where. Listen and act. Peter, James, and John listened and witnessed the glory of Christ, knowing that their lives were changed forever from that moment on and they were changed. They were transfigured into evangelists and preachers, teachers and leaders of the faith.

So as we stand on the edge of Lent, facing towards the trials that lay ahead, as we hear once again of the temptations and sinfulness that surround us in life. As we contemplate the suffering of Christ on the cross and we examine the good and the evil that

battles all around us this Lenten season, it is good for us to be attentive to this vision of transfiguration. To be attentive as Peter tells us to this glory of Christ.

To be attentive and listen and know that Jesus is more than just a friendly, good guy, old buddy with whom we walk and talk. Jesus is more than a good example to live life by. Jesus is God incarnate, revealed to us as the Son, the Chosen one, the one who carries the very presence of God into our midst and takes the weight of all our sins and the punishment we deserve upon his own shoulders and suffers and dies for us, so that we might have life, so that we may have joy, and peace. Jesus is the one who grants us the way into the eternal kingdom.

Sometimes I think we forget this. I mean we hear it. Yes, Yes, but we don't live it. We don't listen. When we turn our attention to our daily routine we forget about the divine presence that surround us. We go about our business, we manage our accounts, take care of our homes, we transport kids from A to B to C, we shovel our snow, and we get lost in the hustle and bustle of life forgetting who we are and whose we are.

Now I know that many of you do talk with God in your week. You offer prayers on a regular basis, perhaps in the morning at night or at meals. You ask God for help for yourself or for others. Yes I think we do all that. But when do we listen? Truly stop and listen to God?

On the mount of Transfiguration the Lord tells the disciples to Listen to Christ. Listen to God. Stop reading. Stop thinking about concerns or worries, stop listening to tv or music, stop texting, talking, blogging, twittering, and just listen.

It is good today, Transfiguration day as we head into Lent to remember to listen to God. To come before the Lord, to pour out our worries, our hearts, our joys and our fears and then to listen to the point of knowing God's answer. To hear the words of assurance, guidance and comfort, to live in it and let it surround us in all that we do. Take time this week to come before the Lord and listen to the Glory of God that is in your presence, that is calling to you to follow. To be attentive, to let the veil be lifted from your mind and from your heart and know the presence of God in your life. Amen.

May the Peace and grace of God be with you this day and throughout the week to come.

Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, and for all people according to their needs.

Almighty God, on the mount of Transfiguration we are given a glimpse of the glory of your power. We see the true light of the world who shines glowing now and forever as the path to your kingdom. Guide us ever in that light out of the darkness of our lives, out of the despair and hopelessness and lighten our path in righteousness.

LORD IN YOUR MERCY, Hear our Prayer..

O Heavenly Father, we ask that you take us like you did the first disciples to stand beside you in your glory, to witness the grace and love of your Word, shining forth from the mountaintop. Transform us and make us right. Empower us to welcome others in your grace. In a world of violence and war, we need your blessing of peace. In a world filled with hatred and envy and guilt, we need your forgiveness. In a world filled with disasters both manmade and natural where so many are suffering we need you to tend to us and keep us. Lord Bless us this day with your Love, grace, forgiveness and peace.

LORD IN YOUR MERCY, Hear our Prayer.

God, stretch out your saving hand to those who are sick. With your strong love, comfort the lonely, the oppressed, and all who suffer. Give courage and boldness to those who are scared or worried. Give healing to those who are oppressed by sickness mentally or physically. Send your Holy Spirit to be with all those who are in need. Especially we remember today our hospitalized, our homebound and for Howell Crawford, Tyler Freeman and for all those we name now to you.....

LORD IN YOUR MERCY, hear our prayer.

Lord, we pray for this community of faithful; teach us to use the many gifts you have given us for the mission of your Church. Take and use us as your witnesses, to show your love, to be imitators of your grace, to share your good news, to show your glory in all that we do on the mountaintops and in the valleys and even in our daily life as your servants in this community and beyond.

LORD IN YOUR MERCY, hear our prayer.

Into your hands, o Lord we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.