

Sermon for March 2, 2025 – Transfiguration Sunday

Luke 9:28-36 EHV

Theme: Listen to Jesus.

- 1) He is the revealed glory of God.
- 2) He is the central focus of all Scripture.
- 3) He is our future Hope.
- 4) He is the Saviour God chose.

²⁸About eight days after he said these words, Jesus took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. ²⁹While he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothing became dazzling white. ³⁰Just then, two men, Moses and Elijah, were talking with him! ³¹They appeared in glory and were talking about his departure, which he was going to bring to fulfillment in Jerusalem.

³²Peter and those with him were weighed down with sleep, but when they were completely awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him.

³³As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter said to him, "Master, it is good for us to be here. Let's make three tents: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." He did not realize what he was saying.

³⁴While he was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them. They were afraid as they went into the cloud. ³⁵Then a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!" ³⁶After the voice had spoken, they found Jesus alone. They kept this secret and told no one in those days any of the things they had seen.

Let me tell you a brief story about false expectations: One Friday, my 2nd grade teacher offered my class the following riddle to think about. She said, "Next week, we will conduct a science experiment: we will make edible explosions." Naturally, my seven-year-old mind focused more on the "explosion" part of her riddle than the "edible." Over the weekend, I envisioned various types of explosions, ranging from firecrackers to thermonuclear bombs! I was pretty certain that my teacher would not be allowed to detonate a "nuclear bomb" in school, but a boy can dream, can't he?

I set my expectations quite high. Just imagine how let down I felt when the experiment was nothing more than making popcorn. Get it? "Edible" explosions.

When it comes to God's Word, I believe we all tend to act like 7-year-old me. The LORD promises to bless us all who believe in Him richly. Regrettably, instead of paying careful attention to everything God says about how the LORD will bless us, we let our imaginations run wild. We convince ourselves that He will take all our earthly problems away, allowing us to live an easy, trouble-free life.

Are those the rich blessings God promised us? No, they aren't. Instead, He offers us greater spiritual blessings that we often fail to fully appreciate: the gifts of forgiveness, life, and everlasting salvation through faith in Jesus.

Guided by Luke's account of Jesus' transfiguration, let us be encouraged to **listen to Jesus**. Why? Because: 1) He is the revealed glory of God, 2) He is the central focus of all Scripture, 3) He is our future hope, 4) He is the Saviour God chose.

Part One: He is the revealed glory of God

Our sermon text took place approximately 8 days after Peter confessed Jesus as the Christ – the very Son of God.ⁱ Regrettably, the disciples misunderstood what that confession meant. They believed Jesus would restore David's earthly kingdom and rule the world politically. When Jesus attempted to correct His disciples' misconceptions by telling them about his impending suffering, death, and resurrection, they refused to listen. Peter even rebuked Jesus for uttering such things.ⁱⁱ

Jesus' disciples needed to possess a correct understanding of His identity and mission if they were to become His apostles. Perhaps that is why *Jesus took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray.* ²⁹*While he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothing became dazzling white.*

Do you know what a geode is? It's an ordinary-looking rock that, when opened, reveals dazzling, colourful crystals. Even though we know an unopened geode is a geode, it's still hard to imagine its beauty until it's revealed.

Similarly, Jesus is like a geode. Even though the disciples acknowledged Jesus as the Son of God, they didn't fully comprehend the significance of their confession. That's why Peter continued to treat Jesus as a mere human teacher, attempting to rebuke Him for talking about His impending suffering and death.

However, Jesus was no ordinary human teacher; He was God the Son, who, for our sake, concealed His full glory throughout His earthly life. Jesus knew that Peter needed to glimpse His hidden glory. Why? To prevent Peter from imagining things about Him that weren't true. He wanted to move Peter to listen to what He was trying to teach him about His identity and work.

How often aren't we like Peter who, just 8 days before this account, tried to tell Jesus what He should do? When trials come our way, we are tempted to question why God isn't keeping his promise to "bless" us. "Lord, this is not how it should be. I am your child. Following you should improve my life, not worsen it." Like Peter, we often focus on the earthly blessings we think we're entitled to instead of the spiritual blessings God promises us in His Word. Then, when things fail to go the way we expect, we grumble, which, when you think about it, is essentially a form of rebuking God.

Let this, then, be our first takeaway regarding Jesus' transfiguration: He is not merely a human teacher with whom we can choose to agree or not. No, Jesus is the all-glorious Son of God—

perfect in righteousness and almighty in power. Behold His divine glory and be silent. Stop dictating your life to Him. Instead, listen to His plans for your salvation.

Part Two: Jesus is the central focus of all Scripture

³⁰Just then, two men, Moses and Elijah, were talking with him! ³¹They appeared in glory and were talking about his departure, which he was going to bring to fulfillment in Jerusalem.

Why did Moses and Elijah appear alongside Jesus? God inspired Moses to write the “Law,” and Elijah was one of the great prophets. In Jesus’ day, the term “The Law and the Prophets” was commonly used to refer to the Old Testament Scriptures. The presence of these two men conversing with Jesus about his departure underscores that all Scripture centres on Jesus and His once for all sacrifice for our sins.

Peter and the other disciples found it difficult to listen to Jesus talk about His departure. They wanted to put it out of their minds. However, Jesus needed them to understand the importance of His crucifixion so they would not fall away on account of it. He needed them to comprehend that the whole reason He was born into this world was to offer himself up in payment for all our sins.

Therefore, He allowed them to witness Moses and Elijah engaged in a deep conversation with Him about His departure. Unlike Peter, these prophets did not attempt to dissuade Jesus from his journey to the cross. Instead, they listened attentively to what Jesus had to say and rejoiced in His upcoming work.

Many people today treat the Bible as if it’s a self-help manual designed to address earthly problems, and we aren’t immune to such temptations. However, God never intended the Bible to serve as a guidebook for achieving success in life. No, God wrote the Bible so that we might know Jesus as our LORD and Saviour from sin, as Jesus himself once proclaimed: *You search the Scriptures because you think you have eternal life in them. They testify about me!*ⁱⁱⁱ The Bible’s primary purpose is to lead us to repent of our sin so that, through faith in Jesus’ forgiving love for us, we might have the hope of spending everlasting life with Him in paradise.

Part Three: Jesus is our future hope.

³²Peter and those with him were weighed down with sleep, but when they were completely awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. ³³As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter said to him, “Master, it is good for us to be here. Let’s make three tents: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” He did not realize what he was saying.

Jesus’ transfiguration had a profound impact on Peter, James, and John: they were so awestruck by Jesus’ glory that they yearned to bask in it forever. Quite literally, they were experiencing heaven on earth!

However, as wonderful as that experience was, it served as a mere appetizer for the grand, everlasting feast of glory that is yet to come. Jesus still needed to prepare this feast, and the only way he could accomplish this was through his sacrifice on the cross for our sins. If the disciples kept their eyes and ears on Jesus, they would learn how and when His sacrifice would both save and forever grant them the glory they just tasted.

What can we learn from the disciples' reaction to Jesus' transfiguration? That our true joy is not found in the things of this earth, but only at our Saviour's side in heaven. That is why we need to diligently pay careful attention to every word Jesus speaks in Scripture. He is our only way to heaven^{iv}. While life on this earth may seem so great at times that we want to hold on to it above all else, this world is not our true home. Jesus says: *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him... The world and its desires pass away, but the one who does the will of God remains forever.*^v And what is God's will? According to Jesus, *"This is the work of God: that you believe in the one he sent."*^{vi}

Yes, listen to Jesus tell you about your future hope. Why? Because He is the Saviour God chose.

Part Four: He is the Saviour God chose.

To impress upon everyone who would read this account about the importance of listening to every word Jesus utters, God the Father made a grand appearance.

³⁴*While [Peter] was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them. They were afraid as they went into the cloud. ³⁵Then a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!"*

The cloud that descended upon the disciples was none other than the majestic cloud that had protected the Israelites during their 40-year journey from Egypt to Canaan. It was also the same cloud that had terrified the Israelites at Mount Sinai when God spoke His commandments from it. This cloud was known as "the Glory of the LORD," and whenever it appeared in Scripture, the all-holy and Almighty LORD Himself was present.

God the Father wanted Peter, James and John to know for certain that Jesus is the Christ, His chosen Saviour to whom the whole Bible points. Even though Jesus' appearance was like that of any man, he is God the Son. The Father loves Jesus because He willingly took on human flesh and blood to accomplish His will of saving us. Therefore, God the Father commanded, "Listen to Him," that is to say: Don't talk back to him, argue, complain, or try to change what Jesus says." Take every opportunity to listen carefully to everything He says. Cherish His Word as if nothing in all the world mattered compared to it; because, truth be told, nothing else truly matters!

Then, ³⁶*after the voice had spoken, they found Jesus alone, standing before the three disciples, approachable and altogether human. Just eight days prior, they had confessed him as the Christ. Only now do they begin to comprehend what their confession meant, as do we! Their hearts and minds became more inclined to listen to Him, not as an equal, but as the divine Son that God the Father had declared Him to be. While they still didn't fully comprehend everything Jesus said*

about His work, they listened attentively – so much so that, after Jesus finished His work of saving us, they recalled what Jesus said and believed.

Brothers and sisters in Christ: like the disciples, we might not comprehend everything Jesus teaches us in His Word. However, if we listen carefully to what He says, we will nevertheless grow in faith, love, and hope. Therefore, when it comes to the Bible, don't become like seven-year-old me who only paid attention to half of the riddle his teacher told him. Instead, listen to everything Jesus tells you. Why? Because He is the revealed glory of God, the central focus of all Scripture, our future Hope, and the only Saviour God chose. Amen.

ⁱ Cf. Matthew 16:16

ⁱⁱ Cf. Matthew 16:21-28

ⁱⁱⁱ John 5:39 EHV

^{iv} Cf. John 14:6

^v 1 John 2:15&17 EHV

^{vi} John 6:29 EHV