

Luke 9:28-36

Have you ever stopped to think about what it must have been like to be one of Jesus' chosen 12 **disciples**? It's hard to **imagine** waking up in the morning and actually having **breakfast** with the **Son of God**, or walking down the **road**, and hearing the Scriptures being **explained** by the One who was **there** as they were written - and who is, in fact, the One they are written **about**. It's hard to imagine stopping for **lunch**, and witnessing a **demon** being cast out of a man, or a woman being **healed** of an incurable disease. Things like these, which the disciples **experienced**, would have been truly **amazing**. But, in our Gospel for today we get to hear about what must have been one of the **most** amazing experiences for Jesus' disciples - and in reality, only **3** of them were allowed to **be** there. The event is the **transfiguration** of the Lord, and today, **we** get to go up the mountain **with** those 3 disciples, and really take to heart the **message** of Jesus' transfiguration as we **Listen To Jesus**.

The first two verses of our text tell us some **amazing** things in a very **simple** way. We read, "*About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. As he was praying, the appearance of his face **changed**, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning.*" The three disciples in our text are sometimes called the **inner circle** of Jesus' disciples. These men were blessed to be Jesus' **closest** companions, and as such they were allowed to witness a **miracle** that day. We're told that Jesus was **changed** before them. But, what does that **mean**? The Greek word, which is translated, "changed" is the root of our word **metamorphosis**. This word describes a **change** of something's **essence**. It's **more** than just a change of outward **appearance**. On that day, the disciples saw Jesus in a **different way** than they had ever seen Him before. Jesus was **completely changed** before them, and they were given the opportunity to see Him in a **glorified** state.

But that was just **one** of the miracles they witnessed that day. The **other** miracle was the appearance of **Moses** and **Elijah**, who stood there **talking** with Jesus. Luke tells us that the **topic** of their conversation was the approaching **death** which Jesus would soon experience. Everything that happened on that mountain was **overwhelming** for the disciples. They were **speechless** - that is, except for **Peter**.

As usual, Peter had something to **say**, but in this instance his words were rather **foolish**. He said, "*Master, it is good for us to **be** here. Let us put up three **shelters** - one for **you**, one for **Moses** and one for **Elijah**.*" When Peter said, "It is

good for us to **be** here,” he meant it’s good for us to **remain** here, and that is shown by the fact that he wanted to build **shelters** for them to **stay** in. Peter didn’t want this experience to **end**. He didn’t want Moses and Elijah to **leave**. He wanted to set up **camp** on the mountain and **stay** there. The **problem** was, this was exactly the **opposite** of what **needed** to happen, and Peter should have **known** it. Just a few days earlier, Jesus had **told** His disciples about His coming **death**. And as we just heard, that was **also** the topic of conversation between Jesus, Moses, and Elijah. If Peter had **Listened To Jesus** and had taken His words to **heart**, he should have known that they could **not** remain on that mountain. They needed to **go back down**, and face the difficult days which were yet to come - days which would include Jesus’ **death**.

It’s not too hard for us to **sympathize** with Peter in this situation. Very likely, we would have said something along the same line. After all, what would we rather **do** - spend time with Jesus in His **glory** as He spoke with famous prophets from the Old Testament, or watch Jesus be **humiliated** as He was handed over to the authorities to be **ridiculed**, **beaten**, and **crucified**? The fact of the matter is that it doesn’t **matter** what **we** or **Peter** would rather do, because **Jesus** was focused on what **needed** to be done. Jesus knew that He needed to go to the **cross** where He would **suffer** and **die** to pay for the sins of the world - so Peter and the other disciples simply needed to **follow** Him.

That’s one of the lessons we can learn from this experience on the Mount of Transfiguration. Seeing Jesus in His **glory** is a **wonderful** thing, but it won’t be a **continuous** thing until we get to **heaven**. Until then, our life here on the **earth** will often involve a **cross** - a cross of **suffering**. Just like Jesus’ disciples we don’t like to **hear** about **crosses** and **suffering**. And as a result, we often try to **tune out** messages like that. We **prefer** to think that our lives should be full of **wonderful**, **fun**, **beautiful**, and **amazing** mountain-top experiences. And then when that doesn’t **happen**, our sinful nature makes us think that maybe **God** isn’t doing His **job** - that He isn’t **taking care** of us the way He **should**. But that shows a very **selfish** attitude - an attitude which comes from a strictly **human** perspective. Jesus has a **better** perspective - a **perfect** perspective. Jesus has something **different** to say, and we need to **Listen To Him**.

That’s exactly what **God the Father** said to Peter, James and John on the Mount of Transfiguration. Our text continues, “A *cloud appeared and enveloped them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. A voice came from the cloud saying, ‘This is my Son, whom I have chosen; Listen To Him.’*” If there was **one** message those disciples needed to take **with** them as they went back down the

mountain, it was those three words, “*Listen To Him.*” For the past 3 years Jesus had been **preaching**, and **teaching** His disciples with great **authority**. They had been privileged to see Him perform many **miraculous** acts. But if that wasn’t **enough** to gain their full **attention** and their full **devotion**, here in our text God the Father **Himself** spoke to them **directly**, as Jesus stood before them in a **glorified** state. And the Father’s message was clear - **Listen To Jesus**.

At the **end** of today’s text the disciples headed back **down** the mountain, and we’re told, “*The disciples kept this to themselves, and told no one at that time what they had seen.*” In Mark’s Gospel he tells us that Jesus had **commanded** them not to tell anyone what they had seen, **until** the Son of Man had **risen** from the dead. There are actually two very **difficult** thoughts for the disciples to **digest** in those words. The first was Jesus’ command **not to tell** anyone about what they had seen and heard. How could they **do** that? How could they keep this amazing experience to **themselves**? And the **second** thought was probably even **more** difficult. If they couldn’t tell anyone about these events until Jesus **rose** from the dead, it meant that **first** Jesus - their **teacher**, their **mentor**, and their **friend** - would have to **die**.

These truths were difficult for the disciples to **understand**. Yet, they needed to **Listen To Him**, because these were the most **important** truths they could ever hear. When Jesus was speaking about **His death** and **resurrection**, He was speaking about **their salvation**. In the coming months, the disciples would hear many **other** wonderful things from Jesus as well, things like, “*I am going to prepare a place for you.*” “*The Holy Spirit will come upon you.*” “*This is my body, given for you. This is my blood shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.*” These are **wonderful** truths, and there were many more as well. That’s why God the Father said, “*Listen To Him,*” because the words of Jesus are **important**. His words assure us of our **eternal life**.

The encouragement to **Listen To Jesus** is **always an important** encouragement for us to hear, but perhaps **especially** at this time of the year as we are about to enter into the season of **Lent**. Throughout the Lenten season, we get to go with Jesus as He walks that **difficult** road to the **cross**, and then walks that **glorious** road **out** of the tomb. This year, let’s make an **extra** effort to **Listen To Jesus** during our Midweek Lenten Worship services, as we focus on the words **He spoke** from the cross.

Why do we need to **Listen To Jesus**? There are many reasons that our sinful nature would tell us **not** to do it, because His words expose our **failures**. His words

show us how **difficult** and **painful** life can be for His followers. But that doesn't mean we should **avoid** His words. In fact, we need to realize that the words of Jesus are the **only** words that bring us true **comfort** and **peace**. Jesus speaks about **forgiveness** in a way that no one else **can**, because He is the one who **won** that forgiveness for us on the **cross**. Jesus speaks about **happiness** that is beyond **anything** this world can offer, because the happiness He speaks about is **eternal**. These are words we need to hear **again** and **again**. So, let's take to **heart** the words which the heavenly **Father** spoke on the Mount of Transfiguration, "*This is my Son, whom I have chosen. Listen To Him.*" Amen.