

Luke 9:29-31 God has a glorious future for us!  
Transfiguration Sunday February 14, 15, 2010

Grace and peace are yours from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ Amen

God's Word about Jesus transfiguration is written in Luke 9:29-31

These are Your Words heavenly Father to strengthen us until we join You in the glory of heaven. Your Word is truth.

Dear Friends, in Christ,

Today we will be speaking about glory. Every person in the world has a longing for glory. Think of all the people that compete in the Olympics. They train for years among just for the opportunity to compete and get a medal. But, so few do, and even those who win with a new record soon have the record broken by someone else. That is the nature of glory in our world. It fades or leaves no lasting satisfaction. God knows our dilemma. That's why

### **God has a glorious future for us!**

**First, too often we seek glory in a wrong way.** One way of seeking glory on earth is to think that since we are God's people, we deserve to have a better life. Peter wanted glory now as he saw Jesus transfigured. He said, *"Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters..."* (v.33) We would have said the same. Peter, James, and John were getting a glimpse of heaven. Jesus' face shone like the sun. (Matt. 17:2) His clothes were *"as bright as a flash of lightning,"* (v.29) And, with Jesus *"Moses and Elijah appeared in glorious splendor."* (v.30-31)

Can we blame Peter for wanting to stay? No, it was glorious to see. But, yes, we can blame him, because Jesus had already told them that He was going on to Jerusalem to suffer, die, and rise. The disciples were shown His glory to prepare them for His crucifixion. They needed to understand that seeing Jesus and the two men from heaven was not going to win glory for them. They would feel worse if, after having seen the spender, they couldn't have it. Their sins separated them from their God. The disciples had no doubt about that, as soon as the bright cloud from heaven appeared. This glory of God was too much for the disciples. They realized that they could not live in God's holy presence as sinners. They were in terror and covered their heads (v.34), as if that could stop the judgment of God against them!

We can't stop God's judgment against us either. By our sinful nature, we want glory now. We would like our lives to be easy. We want God to give us a break from our labor or our problems or our needs. We may wonder why we have to suffer? What good are the burdens that we carry in life? God has a purpose. The Bible states, *"We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God."* Acts 14:22 God's Word puts a longing in us for a glory far beyond this temporary life. Paul wrote, *"I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us."* Romans 8:18 With these promises in hand, we will fight against our sinful nature that wants everything to go our way in life. We will follow God's way as the best way.

Another danger that we face is our sinful pride. It wants to receive the main attention. We do something nice for others and we expect a thank you in return. We think that we so smart with our answers that we are surprised when no one wants to listen. We too often think that people around us don't appreciate our talents or skills. To top it off, we see other people receiving praise when they haven't done half as much as us. So, we become jealous. *Proverbs 13:10* It tests our Christian faith if we are slighted or despised or deprived of anything. Our pride will say, "God in heaven, look down and see what a gross injustice is being done to me." (M. Luther) We remember Jesus' story of Pharisee and the tax collector. The Pharisee stood in front at the temple praying to God about how good he was. God took no notice of him, except to condemn him to eternal shame instead of glory. That could be a danger for us if we seek too worldly honor and glory rather than eternal glory.

**Second, God has a better plan of glory.** We don't have to compete like in the Olympics, nor are we at the center of all attention. Yet, God's plan for glory is exactly what we need to satisfy our created nature. His plan is first, that we follow Jesus' life. Jesus' whole life was spent honoring His heavenly Father in prayer, in His miracles, and in His preaching. Whether He ate or drank or whatever He did, it was to the glory of God. On the mountain when Jesus was transfigured, Moses and Elijah had appeared with Jesus to speak about *"his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem."* (v.32) The word for departure in Greek is exodus. The word foreshadowed Jesus'

victory in death just like Israel's victory over Pharaoh in Egypt so long before.

Jesus put God first even if the crowds rejected Him for it. Later in His ministry most of the followers left Him. It was a comfort to Jesus to have Moses and Elijah talk about how Jesus would fulfill everything that God wanted. From the top of the mountain that He was on, Jesus couldn't literally see Mt. Calvary. But, He knew what lay ahead and it was not immediate glory. Isaiah wrote, "*He was rejected by men, a man of sorrows, we esteemed Him not.*" (Isaiah 53:3) But God was with Jesus. He called down from heaven to say that He *was well pleased with His Son.*" (Matt. 17:5)

If anyone deserved a favor from God or a break for carrying the burden of the world's sins, it was Jesus. If anyone deserved all the honor and glory of heaven and earth, it was Jesus. God could have called Jesus to heaven from the mountain. God the Father appeared in a bright cloud and said, "*This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.*" (v.35) Jesus knew that it was His Father's will that He return to the land that was still in darkness and the power of sin.

He would need to continue fighting evil enemies who were determined to stop Him. Jesus was willing to suffer it all, because He knew that beyond death would be the resurrection and of glory in heaven. With Moses, Elijah, and God's words of encouragement Jesus prepared for battle. He was ready to give His life as a ransom for all.

As we trust in Christ to forgive our sins and to freely give us glory in heaven, the Holy Spirit will help us set our priorities. If God deems it necessary that we carry a burden or suffer for our faith, then we will trust God's promise that "*our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.*" 2 Corinthians 4:17 We must see ourselves in the light of His Word to know that on our own we are nothing before God. Yet in Christ, we mean everything to Him as His loved children. In Christ's forgiveness God is well pleased with us.

Coming to church is like spending time on a mountain. We have heard God's Word and have spent time with Jesus. It's time to go back to the valley, where we will help people in need. We will help carry each other's burdens in prayer. We will daily say, God has given us everything good when we deserved nothing. What can we do to honor Him?

Peter and John always remembered seeing Jesus on the mountain. John wrote, "*We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*" John 1:14 Peter wrote, "*We were eyewitnesses of his majesty, for he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him.... We have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it....*" 2 Peter 1:16-19

If we are to follow Jesus to glory we need to keep hearing the Gospel. February 15, we are beginning the season of Lent. It is a time when we think about not only the physical suffering of Christ, but His whole willing obedience. He humbled Himself, yet God was always upheld Him. Let us walk with Jesus in his humility knowing He suffered to win glory for us.

By faith we will follow Him. Just as God raised Jesus and gave Him the honor He deserved, He will raise us and honor us with Jesus. Moses' and Elijah's bodies were shining with glory. God will bring us to glory as well. Immediately at our death our soul will be in heaven. We'll hear God's voice and we will shine. It states in Revelation, On the last day, our bodies that are corrupted will be "*raised in glory*" 1 Corin. 15:43 and we will see Jesus. Amen.

*The God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.*