

**Luke 9:29-31 Jesus' Transfiguration Is for Our Glory! Transfiguration Sunday Feb. 7, 2016**  
By Pastor Kenneth Mellon, Trinity Lutheran Church and School, Pleasant Valley Rd., West Bend, WI

Grace and peace from God our Father and from the Lord of glory, Jesus Christ our Savior! Amen.  
In Luke 9:29-31 we read of Jesus' transfiguration which gives us a hint of the glory we can have with Him. These are Your Words heavenly Father to give us hope and certainty of our future glory. Your Word is truth

Dear Christian Friends,

This is an exciting day for two NFL teams playing in the Superbowl. Each player on each team is hoping to share in the glory of victory. There is something in all of us that wants more honor than others have. It may be in sports, spelling, work or anything in which we can compete. Even two of Jesus' disciples once came to Him and said, *"Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory."* (Mark 10:37) The problem with that is, when it comes to God and His glory, we can't come close to it. Paul reminds us, *"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."* (Romans 3:23) All have, except one man, the Lord Jesus Christ. He was the only human who never schemed or worked to get His own glory. The Bible states, *"[Christ], being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing...."* (Philippians 2:6-7) Jesus also said, *"If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father ... is the one who glorifies me."* (John 8:54) We would do well to do the same.

We read today how God did glorify Jesus on the mountain of transfiguration. Jesus had been on the mountain humbly praying. In answer to that prayer God the Father let the hidden glory of Jesus as the Son of God shine from His human body. Even His clothes were gloriously bright. This high point of glory during Jesus' ministry helped prepare Him for when He suffered the depths of God's judgment for sin while on the cross. It also prepared the three disciples who would never forget what they saw. John wrote, *"We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."* (John 1:14) John gives us a key verse to help us understand the value of Jesus' transfiguration. He didn't shine in glory for Himself. He connected that glory to His message of love and grace for us. This is why we can say:

**Jesus' Transfiguration Is for Our Glory!**

**First, although we want God's glory, we're not ready for it.** Jesus took His three witnesses to a mountain. (v.28) While He was praying into the night the disciples fell asleep. Who wouldn't be tired after a climb up a mountain and while waiting for Jesus to finish praying? Unfortunately, their sleep shows their human weakness. About a month later Jesus was in Gethsemane praying and He warned them, *"Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation, the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak."* (Matthew 26:41) But they still fell to temptation. Even if we spent the rest of our lives watching for Jesus and praying for His appearance, our actions alone would not make us ready to see Jesus in His glory.

The biggest problem for the disciples is that they were seeing but not hearing! Not long before this glorious scene, Jesus had told the disciples that He was going to Jerusalem to suffer and die for their sins. The disciples objected. They had joined Jesus to share in His glory, not in His dying. Jesus rebuked them. But, they didn't learn. Our verses tell us that Moses and Elijah appeared from heaven with glorious bodies. *"They spoke of His departure, which He was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem."* (v.31) Departure meant that He was going to die to fulfill God's saving promises. How did Peter respond? *"Lord.... let us put up three shelters - one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah."* (v.33) He heard Moses and Elijah say that it was God's time for Jesus to go, but he couldn't let go of the temporary glory he was seeing.

We have the same sinful nature that we must fight. We're tempted to think that not because of Christ, but because we are Christians, God should always give us preferential treatment. We expect that as soon as we pray, God will give us what we want because we deserve some of His glory now! But, we need to listen just as much as the disciples. Paul warned, *"We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God."* (Acts 14:22) Peter reminds us how temporary our honors are: *"All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the Word of the Lord stands forever."* (1 Peter 1:24)

The disciples learned how unprepared they were for God's glory, when a bright cloud surrounded them and God's voice spoke. We learn from another Gospel account that the disciples covered their heads. The glory God had gotten too close! They were too frightened to look, fearing that they might see God's full glory and die. We are no better than Jesus' disciples. We are sinners who on the Last Day will stand before a holy and glorious Lord! No action on our part will prepare us for that!

**Second, but God prepared for us through Jesus!** He had Jesus become one of us, yet without sin. He had Jesus live the most humble life a man could live. Jesus totally trusted His life to God for everything. He humbly followed God's direction even when it meant going to His death on a cross just as God had predicted through Isaiah and the Psalms. Moses and Elijah also *"spoke of Jesus' departure."* (v.31) The word "depart" in Greek is our word Exodus. If we have someone we love going away for a long time, we get sad. When we think of a loved one dying, we can get sadder because we will miss them. But, Jesus, who loves us more than anyone, has died and we're not sad. He has taken away our sins by His death so that nothing stands between us and heaven! The word exodus or departure pictures one who leads his people to freedom. That is what Jesus will do for all who believe in Him. Jesus promised, *"I go to prepare a place for you"* (John 14:2) Again His going to prepare a place for us was by way of the cross.

The Apostle John saw the path that Christ took to permanent glory. He saw Jesus' transfiguration on the mountain. He saw Jesus' crucifixion on Mt. Calvary, where Jesus died in shame for the sins of the world. He saw Jesus as the risen glorious Savior and later saw Him ascend to heaven. Because Jesus had led the way as the Savior, John had no doubt he would share Jesus' glory just as He promised.

We can have the same confidence. God's Word promises to all who believe in the Savior, *"When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory."* (Colossians 3:4) That glory is not just for the elite, like Moses and Elijah, but for all who believe. Why did God send Moses and Elijah? Both proclaimed God's truth. They encouraged Jesus to finish His saving work. I'm sure as the 3 disciples thought back to seeing them, they were encouraged, too. Moses and Elijah were people who went through discouragement and problems like all of us sinners. Yet, they stood next to Jesus made holy by His blood. We who know Christ by faith will have that same glory as *"an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade - kept in heaven for you."* (1 Peter 1:4)

The disciples did finally believe and they taught others, encouraging them to trust that Jesus would give them a glorious future! Through faith, we have already received Christ's righteousness. We know that when it's time for us to depart, we'll be leaving a sinful world and entering a new world of glory. We'll get to see Moses and Elijah in their glory and especially see Jesus in all His splendor! Winning the Superbowl or any other victory in life lets the winners feel great for a short while. But, it cannot compare to the victory in Christ and the glory of heaven that we will enjoy with Jesus forever! Amen.