

The last Sunday in the season of Epiphany is traditionally the Sunday on which we celebrate the transfiguration of Jesus. Throughout the season of Epiphany, we were reminded time and again of the fact that Jesus appeared not only as true man, but also as the very Son of God. During this season we often point to the miracles which Jesus performed, for those miracles could not be done by any mere man—they could only be done by someone who was also true God. Yet, the account of the transfiguration is an even greater evidence of the fact that Jesus was the Lord God in human flesh. The disciples recognized that fact as they observed the transfiguration, for they exclaimed, LORD, IT IS GOOD FOR US TO BE HERE! It is also good for us to be here as we hear this account again, because 1) It is good for us to see Jesus in His glory, and because 2) It is good for us to listen to His Word.

The transfiguration of Jesus took place towards the end of His earthly ministry. In fact, it was so close to the end of His life on earth, that He was beginning to prepare His disciples for the fact that He was about to suffer and die. After He first told this to His disciples, we read: "**After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them.**" (v2-3) While alone on the top of this mountain, Jesus' appearance changed. From the other gospels we are told that His face began to shine like the sun. And His clothes became a brilliant white. What was happening was that Jesus was allowing a portion of the glory of God to shine forth. As true man, He did not make use of all of the divine power and glory which He always possessed. But at times He allowed a portion of His divinity to shine through. His power shone through whenever He did a miracle. Now this was a time when He let a different aspect of His glory shine through for these disciples to see.

While this happened, Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus and were speaking with Him about His coming death. Jesus had come to be the Savior of the world. That was His mission for being on earth. And He did not back away from it at all. For even now, as He allowed a portion of His divine majesty and glory to shine through His human form, He was speaking about the work which soon would be accomplished.

When all of this happened, Peter was excited and blurted out, "**Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.**" He did not know what to say, they were so frightened. (v5-6) The disciples did not understand what was happening, but they knew it was so great that they did not want it to end. So Peter offered to build a shelter for each of the three so that they could remain up there on the mountain.

While we might like to chuckle about Peter's reaction to this wondrous sight, what would probably be a better thing for us to do is to marvel at what he wanted to accomplish. Having seen only a small portion of the glory of Jesus shine through, he did not want it to end at all. He wanted it to continue. So, if seeing a small portion of Jesus' glory has that type of effect, can we even imagine what it is going to be like when Jesus returns in all of His glory to take us to be with Him eternally? It is no wonder that we can never comprehend what heaven is going to be like.

Peter cried out, "Lord, it is good for us to be here," because he was so excited at seeing Jesus' glory. That same thing should be said by each one of us this morning, Lord, It is good for us to be here, for today again, through faith, we witness You revealing a portion of Your glory even while You were here on this earth. The disciples then needed this small glimpse, even as we need it to strengthen our faith. It would not be long after this that Jesus would be handed over to sinful men and be put to death. This glimpse of Jesus' glory was to help them to understand who Jesus was and why He would be willing to endure all of this — He was doing it as the Savior of all mankind. We too need to be reminded of this as we are about to enter the season of Lent, for if Jesus were just true man, His death would not have benefitted us at all. But since He reveals Himself as true God, His holy, precious blood shed for us through His suffering and

death on the cross is sufficient to take away the sins of the whole world. So it is good for us to be here and, through the eyes of faith, witness Jesus' glory, for it strengthens our faith in Him as our Savior.

Then the Lord God Himself added His own testimony about Jesus. **"Then a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and a voice came from the cloud: This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!"** (v7) God the Father adds His own testimony about Jesus, and that testimony is that Jesus is His beloved Son in whom He is well pleased. He is pleased with Jesus because He was willingly carrying out the plan of salvation that the Father had set down from eternity. He was well pleased with Jesus because Jesus was fulfilling all of the demands of His law perfectly. As true man, He was subject to the same law of God that you and I are subject to. But Jesus was able to keep it perfectly, something you and I are never able to do. So God was truly well pleased with Jesus, for He was about to lay down His life as a payment for the guilt of the sins of the whole world.

Since Jesus is God's beloved Son, the Father commands us to listen to Him. Jesus' transfiguration means nothing to us if we do not follow the words which He has spoken to us. Jesus Himself said, *"If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples."* (Jn 8:31) Holding to Jesus' teaching, or listening to His Word is the same thing. We must take every Word which He has given to us and hold to it without wavering. At times He may ask us to do things or to believe things that do not make sense to our human reason. But we will gladly do it simply because Jesus has said it. We will never be able to comprehend fully how He can be both true God and true man at the same time, but we also know that it took Him to be both for us to have eternal salvation.

"As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead." (v9) The disciples probably did not understand that command either, but they did listen to Him in carrying this out. Jesus did not want anyone to be looking to Him for the wrong reasons, and that is why He did not want the news of His transfiguration spread before men until they would understand what it really meant. And that would not happen until after He had risen from the dead.

Lord, it is good for us to be here today as we meditate upon Your transfiguration. It is good for us to see a portion of Your glory so that we are reminded that You are both true God and true man in one person, so the Savior of all men. It is also good for us to hear the Father tell us that You are His beloved Son and that we are to listen to all that You tell us. And we will gladly keep to Your Word 100% because Your Word is truth. It is good for us to be here to have our faith so strengthened, and now we pray that You go with us and remain with us day by day.