

Transfiguration 2/11/24
Mark 9:2-9 B

AND HE WAS TRANSFIGURED BEFORE THEM...AND THERE APPEARED TO THEM ELIJAH WITH MOSES, AND THEY WERE TALKING WITH JESUS.

Transfiguration is a feast for the eyes. Look at all there is to see. Jesus is transfigured. The glory and majesty of His God head shines through His human body. Elijah and Moses are there with Jesus, talking with Him. A cloud overshadows them on the mount of Transfiguration. The children of Israel knew that the cloud meant the presence of God, as He had guided them in the wanderings in the wilderness in a pillar of cloud during the day. There's a lot to see in our Lord's Transfiguration.

There's Moses. Moses, the great deliverer. He led God's children out of the slavery of Egypt. That's what Jesus is doing.

We find ourselves like the children of Israel. No, we are not enslaved to an earthly master like the Israelites were enslaved to their earthly masters, the Egyptians. We are enslaved to sin. "We are by nature sinful and unclean," we ourselves confess before God and all the world. That enslavement to sin means we sin every day in our thoughts, words, and deeds against God. Jesus Himself says, "*I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin*" (Jn 8:34, NKJV).

You know what your life, and the words from your mouth, and your thoughts are a living witness that you are a slave to sin. You believe good luck is more powerful and stronger than folding your hands in prayer, to cry in faith to the Creator of heaven and earth. "*Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you,*" He who set the height of the mountains and the depth of the sea promises you (Ps 50:15, NKJV). But you don't. You stew,

and fret, and worry because you are not in charge. God says, *Do not let the sun go down on your anger*, but you are angry at your neighbor; in fact, you stay awfully angry at your neighbor (Ep 4:26). You ogle and desire that woman, rather than finding contentment and joy in the wife God has given you. You stab your neighbor in the back. No, you may not do with a knife, but you do it with your words of gossip. And that green-eyed monster of jealousy is no stranger to you. Quite the contrary, it's your daily companion as you gaze, longingly, at what your neighbor has.

Yes, you are a slave to sin and your life shows it.

Jesus led Peter and James and John up a high mountain where they saw with their own eyes the Transfiguration of Jesus.

There is a lot for us to see, My Friends in Christ, because Jesus did not stay on that mountain. He was led to Jerusalem for us and for our salvation. There, indeed, He suffered many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes. His face changed from the glory of the mountain to a bloody mess. That's what happens when you're smacked around, beaten to a bloody pulp, and crowned with a crown of thorns. And He is killed, as He's crucified upon the cross. The 3rd day, He is raised to life again, breaking the bonds of our slavery to sin. That means, Dear Child of God, that you are free.

As Moses led God's children through the Red Sea waters to freedom, Jesus, your Deliverer, leads you through the waters of Baptism to freedom. You are forgiven all your sins and free from all its wages of death.

That means that you are a stranger here. Jesus has prepared a place in heaven for you. And one day, He will take you by the hand and lead you from the great tribulation of today to the House of the Lord, where you will be with Jesus forever and ever, without end. You will not hunger

nor thirst anymore. The sun's heat and the blizzard's cold will be no more. You will be before the throne of God and He will wipe all the tears from your eyes, which means that you will see Jesus in all His glory, not just for a momentary, brief second like Peter and James and John saw on the mountain of Transfiguration, you will see His glory forever and ever, without end (cf. Re 7:9-17).

But, you know all-too-well that you are not there today.

When Peter saw Jesus in all of His glory and Moses and Elijah with Him on the Transfiguration mount, He said, "*Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah*" (v. 5). And, you really can't really blame him, can you? Peter wanted to stay on that mount with Jesus in glory, because he didn't want to go down to the plain – the Roman soldiers and taxes, and heat and hunger and dusty roads and despair and disappointment.

You live in that plain today – with doctor appointments and needles, unruly children and family strife, mass shootings and all manner of crime, blizzards and droughts, and despair and disappointment.

Take a look at Jesus on that mount. You see Moses, the Deliverer. And, you see Elijah. Elijah knew all about life on the plain.

Remember his great showdown with the false prophets of Baal at Mount Carmel? There he saw the glory of God! Elijah and 450 false prophets gathered on Mount Carmel and each party prepared the sacrifice of a bull on an altar. And the prophets called upon Baal and nothing happened. So, they cried out all the more and cut themselves until the blood gushed out and ... **nothing**. So, Elijah poured water upon his sacrifice. And he did it a 2nd time. And a 3rd time. And He cried out to

God, and the fire fell and consumed not just the bull offering, but the wood and stone of the altar itself (cf. 1 Ki 18:20-40).

But, then, then it was that wicked Queen Jezebel vowed to kill Elijah. And, he was terrified, afraid, so he ran and hide in a cave, shaking in his boots like a little rabbit. God told him to come out of the cave and stand on the mountain before Him. A great and strong wind came, that literally tore the rocks to pieces. But God was not in the wind. An earthquake came. But God was not in the earthquake. A fire came, but God was not in the fire. Finally came the sound of a low, quiet whisper. And there was God, speaking to Elijah (1 Ki 19:1-18).

Have you ever been afraid? Have you ever been terrified? Then you know how Elijah felt. And, when you are shaking like a little rabbit in your boots, you want God to act. You want thunder and lightening and earthquake. Get this cancer out of my body! Let my loved one rise out of that hospital bed and live! Stop those flood waters before it fills my basement!

In the midst of your fears and tears, comes the quiet voice of God, "As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Take, eat; the Body of Christ. Take, drink, the blood of Christ shed for you for the forgiveness of all your sins." There, you see God. And where He gives you forgiveness, He gives you life and salvation; strength, joy, peace, patience, right in the midst of things that you cannot understand with your human reason and senses.

On that mount of Transfiguration, we see Moses and Elijah, and Peter and James and John. And we see Jesus. And, that comforts us that

the day is coming when we will see Jesus and all who have departed this earthly life loving the Lord Jesus.

For today, we don't walk by sight. We walk by faith, faith that sees the guiding hand of God. And faith sees that Jesus comes with us to the plain and His mercies are new to us each day.