

Transfiguration 3/2/25
Luke 9:28-36 C

NOW PETER AND THOSE WHO WERE WITH HIM WERE HEAVY WITH SLEEP, BUT WHEN THEY BECAME FULLY AWAKE THEY SAW HIS GLORY AND THE TWO MEN WHO STOOD WITH HIM.

You know what today is. It's my granddaughters' birthday. Today, the lovely Eliza and Palmer turn two years old! I know what you are going to say: Pastor, at the seminary you were taught never, ever talk about your family in the sermon. Ok. But, does that really apply to granddaughters, especially when those girls happen to be the most beautiful girls in all the world? Teasing a little bit. Honestly, I pray that you feel the same way about your grandchildren. I'm of the age you had to wait 9-months just to find out if it was a boy or girl. You spent all that time wondering: What is this baby going to look like? The first time you held your child, or grandchild, or, for some of you, great-grandchild, I really do pray you thought that child was the most beautiful thing in all the world, because you should have.

Today in the Church Year is the Transfiguration of our Lord. There, on the mount of Transfiguration, Peter, James, and John saw the most beautiful of things. They saw the face of Jesus altered, His clothes dazzling white, and Him speaking with Moses and Elijah. They saw Jesus in His glory, and Moses and Elijah in glory, as well. It was amazing. It was wonderful. So wonderful, in fact, Peter came up with a plan to capture, to live, in that glory forever and ever, without end, *"Master, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah"* (v. 33). That's sounds like a really great idea. Who wouldn't want to see that beauty and glory forever and ever, without end?

Especially when you consider all the things Peter had seen traveling around as a disciple of Jesus. He saw some pretty awful, terrible things. He saw a man full of leprosy. He saw a man struggling with a withered hand. He saw the sorrow and grief of a widow as she was burying her only son. He saw a sinful woman in repentance and contrition wet and dry the feet of Jesus. In the midst of his fear that he would drown and perish, He saw that even the wind and the water obey Jesus. Peter saw the demons cast from a man named “Legion,” because he had so many demons.

Peter saw a lot of things – a lot of suffering; a lot of sorrow; a lot of despair; and a lot of death. Now, he saw the glory of Jesus and he cannot help but think this is so much better than any of the suffering, sorrow, despair, death, he had been seeing, so he wanted to capture that glory and live in it forever.

That sounds like an awfully good idea doesn't it? Yes, it does because you've seen the same things Peter has seen. You've seen sorrow, and you've seen suffering, and you've seen despair, and you've seen death. You've seen marriages break up. You've seen your own child rebel. You've seen the emotion and felt the pain when you and your spouse had a knuckle-dragging free-for-all, or maybe a free-for-all with a child, or with a co-worker. It's all around you – cancer, Alzheimer's, strokes, frustration, failure, fears, and regrets.

And you know it's not just other people dealing with these things. It's not somebody else's family; it's your very house. Your loved one. It's terrible. So you look at Peter's suggestion and you say, “You know I could use some of that glory. If I could just somehow leave all the suffering, sorrow, despair, and death behind, and just have the glory of Jesus.” I mean, really, who could argue with Peter?

Well, the Evangelist Luke did. Peter says, *“Master, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah”* (v. 33). And St. Luke adds, “not knowing what he said.” Think about that: He didn’t know what He was saying. In other words, Luke tells us his comments were just plain inappropriate. “Uffda!” His words are not right; they’re not proper; in fact, they have no place even being said. His words really show Peter had **no idea** what the conversation Jesus was having with Moses and Elijah was about, because what they were talking about was “His departure, which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem (v. 31).”

And His departure is very Good News for Peter, James, and John and even from you, Dear Child of God. Jesus’ departure is a very unique event. That little word in English, “Departure,” is really “Exodus”. “Exodus.” Remembering that the Old Testament looks forward to the New Testament, you remember the Exodus, right? God sent Moses to be the Deliverer to bring Israel out of the house of slavery, out of the house of bondage, out of the land of death, into a land He had promised to give them, a land flowing with milk and honey, a land of life. And as God brought them out, they got to see mighty acts of His glory as He led them through the Red Sea waters, and by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night into the place where He would have them be.

God so loved the world that He sent us a Deliverer and this Deliverer was to bring about an even great exodus, an even greater departure. What He is going to do is take away all your pain, suffering, sorrow, despair -- even your death -- and bring you out of it. And He brings it about in Jerusalem. There, His face is altered, as He goes from glory to gory, as He is spat upon, struck, and He is crowned with thorns and the blood and the

sweat and the gore flow down upon His sacred face. His once dazzling garments are taken from Him as the Roman soldiers cast lots to see who will get them. There He is, naked upon the cross. And yet, He is clothed fully in your sorrow, suffering, despair, your death, as He dies as the wages of your sin.

The reason we have sorrow, suffering, despair, and death is because of sin. It's all because of sin. But, the glory of Jesus is that He takes all that sin into Himself and carries it all to Calvary's cross, where He bleeds and dies the death you deserve for those sins. He departs this life. But, the 3rd day He rises in triumph to bring you the glory of His Easter Resurrection so that you may have His glory as your very own.

And He gives you that glory in the waters of your Baptism. In Baptism, you are joined with Jesus so that His departure becomes your departure. As you become one with Jesus, He takes you out of the pain and sorrow and suffering and despair, out of death, with the promise and the assurance that you will be with Him in paradise, in all of His glory. And for today, because you cannot stay on the mountain but come down to fulfill the vocations God has given you, so there is news of great joy for you, Dear Child of God: Jesus does not stay on that mountain but He comes down to the plain to be with you, to work in you through His Word and Supper so that He can do His work through you.

And at the time of His own choosing, He will come to take your soul to be with Him in heaven. And you will rest from all of your earthly labors and struggles.

But even with that, the best is yet to come. On the Last Day, Jesus will come again in all of His divine glory and your body will depart your grave. The same body that died will be raised a glorified body. And you

will see Jesus with your own eyes. He will wipe all the tears from your eyes, because sin, sorrow, suffering, and death will be no more. And you will be with Jesus in all His glory, the glory that fills the very heavens.

On that day, you will say with Peter, "Master, it is good that we are here!" And you, Dear Child of God, will know exactly how good it is.