

**Prayer of the Day:**

Lord God, before the suffering and death of your one and only Son, you revealed his glory on the holy mountain. Grant that we who bear his cross on earth may behold by faith the light of his heavenly glory and so be changed into his likeness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**Verse of the Day:**

Alleluia. A voice came from the cloud: "this is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him." Alleluia. (Mark 9:7b cf. NIV)

**Sermon Text:**

Well, aren't you a sight for sore eyes! That expression has been used for quite some time now. I remember the first time I heard it I was left wondering what such an expression really meant. Had the sight of that person made someone's eyes sore? Was that a not-so-subtle dig at a person's appearance? They didn't seem to get angry when the other person said it, in fact they seemed to react as if it was a kind thing that was said to them. Of course, the expression means a pleasant sight for sore eyes and even at that not eyes which are literally sore and painful under the strain placed upon them but a sight which is pleasing and dispels the worries, heartaches, and troubles of life. It has come to be a way in which people simply say that its good to see someone.

With all that in mind, we turn our attention to the Transfiguration of Jesus this evening/morning and what we find is certainly **A SIGHT FOR SORE EYES**. This evening/morning in a world that is often plagued and troubled by sin, **BEHOLD THE CHRIST AS WE HAVE ALWAYS WANTED TO SEE HIM**. Ah, but then **WATCH HIM HIDE HIS GLORY THAT HE MIGHT SEE ALL HE HAS WANTED IN US**.

As we behold the sight before us, perhaps best to first look through the eyes of Peter. His reaction is much like I would expect my own to be. I just want everything to work out. I want everyone to see and acknowledge Jesus as He is, as I know Him to be. But Jesus, well Jesus doesn't always cooperate. For Peter, He is constantly pulling the attention away from His power and might, always pointing to humility, even death, telling people to keep the really impressive stuff quiet. The guy almost seems to get in His own way. He could be so much more popular.

I've been there. Truth be old even recently. I mean after all what's with snowy Sundays and temperatures so cold people don't wanna come out. Why not snow-covered Mondays? The kids would like that much better. We'd have more people in church. I know we can all watch online too but it's not like we going viral there. The cat videos are killing it, church services well not so much and the pandemic stuff, well it all just seems like God gets sin his own way sometimes.

Ah, but then we come to the mountain of transfiguration and here for a brief moment in time, everything seems to head in the right direction. Peter cries out what I've always thought myself, "*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.*" This Lord, Yes this, the glory and the divinity, the power and the glory, this is what we need what we crave. Let's dwell in this!

**TEXT: Mark 9:2-10**

<sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. <sup>4</sup> And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus. <sup>5</sup> Peter said to Jesus, "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." <sup>6</sup> (He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.) <sup>7</sup> Then a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and a voice came from the cloud: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!" <sup>8</sup> Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus. <sup>9</sup> As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. <sup>10</sup> They kept the matter to themselves, discussing what "rising from the dead" meant.

Of course there is much to learn from this sight on the mountain top. Jesus is the Son of God. He is everything the angels announced at Christmas. This is God in the flesh. God among us. But notice something here. Immediately after Peter blurts out his desire the Holy Scripture inserts some commentary. *He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.* You see this is always what happens when we stand in the presence of the holy God. Remember the angels and the curious greeting they are regularly forced to present. Don't be afraid is the refrain again and again in God's Word and for good reason. As we stand in the presence of perfection we immediately understand what we are lacking. While I have always craved the divinity and the glory of God, even His angels remind me that I don't deserve to stand in the presence of perfection.

Remember Isaiah as He stands before the Lord with seraphim all around. Only one thought captivates him in the presence of that glory, *"Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty"* (Isaiah 6:5). Turns out, while I often want to dwell in the glory of God, basking in His power with His law ruling and reigning over all things. Well the Law kills as it shows our sin. God's power frightens when I truly behold it and think of what it could do to me. God glory is simply too much for sinners to take in. While it is the vision I have always wanted, well it leaves my eyes sore, aware of the sin that lingers behind them and in front of them far too often.

So God does something else, equally amazing for you. <sup>8</sup> *Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus.* <sup>9</sup> *As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.* Poof, just like that all is gone and it's just Jesus, no longer gleaming white and bright before them. The glory is veiled. It has to be. Who in their right mind would crucify such a one as had just been revealed to them? Of course, that is exactly what must be done to save sinful human beings.

And so the Transfiguration becomes for us one last reminder of who Jesus is before the descent into suffering. Now He sets His face for Jerusalem. Now He makes His way with singular focus to the events which will end in His death and resurrection. The season of Lent will highlight all of it. The heart wrenching betrayal of Judas, the brutality of the guards (Israelite and Roman), the injustice of one court of law after another, and after He is pulverized by Roman scourges, the cross.

This, dear friends, is not a pretty scene. In fact, it is gruesome and grotesque. It is hard to watch and recall. But it is absolutely needed. Here my sin is paid for in full. Here the sin of the entire world is paid for. Every complaint when God's will didn't match my own. Every arrogant announcement that my ways were better than His. For the times like Peter when I foolishly wanted to live in the very thing that was terrifying me instead of dwelling in a fallen world with God's Word as my light. For all of it, the cross that God might forgive every sin and see me as He has always wanted me. Clothed in Christ's righteousness, we are saints. Made so not by the work of our hands but by the blood which dripped from His. No wonder the Father's voice booms from heaven in the cloud just before they see Jesus, glory veiled once more, *"This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!"*

This is God's great advice then for us as we live in a fallen world. As sin swirls behind and in front of eyes made sore in their own fallen condition. Listen to Jesus. Listen to the Word. Dwell within it. Any why? Because there we see Him again and again. There we are reminded of the precious truths which announce sinners to be saints, that would remind us of our God, who took on flesh that we might live with Him forever.

One day we will see the glory, either when we close our eyes in death or when Jesus returns should the end come before it. One day pandemic and its pandemonium will be gone forever, never to return. One day, sickness will be shattered and it'll only snow on Mondays as we bask in the warmth of the Son of God and **BEHOLD THE CHRIST AS WE HAVE ALWAYS WANTED TO SEE HIM.** But then, as we continue to struggle with sin may we turn our eyes to the Jesus and **WATCH HIM HIDE HIS GLORY THAT HE MIGHT SEE ALL HE HAS WANTED IN US.** As He makes us His own, well that is truly **A SIGHT FOR SORE EYES.** Amen.