

May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

Today is the transfiguration of our Lord. In order to better understand the transfiguration I want to give you some background information. Chapter 8 really sets up the scenario and gives us good context into the importance of the transfiguration.

The transfiguration comes after Jesus questions His disciples: Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" 28 And they told him, "John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets." 29 And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Christ." From Matthew's perspective we get Christ's response 17 And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. 18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock[b] I will build my church, and the gates of hell[c] shall not prevail against it.

This is important because here Peter confesses that Jesus is the Christ, He is God. This confession is solidified in what Peter sees at the Transfiguration, and again at Christ's resurrection.

After the confession of Peter, that Christ is the Son of God, he also taught His disciples about His death and resurrection:

And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again. 32 And he said this plainly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. 33 But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."

Here is the juxtaposition of Christ at His lowest, in human standards, that he must be rejected and die and then right after you see the Glory of God in Christ's transfiguration. Most of the disciples had

preconceived notions about who the Messiah was, and this discussion with them was to break their limited understanding of God's will. They were stuck on the finite and did not understand the ways of God. Jesus was explaining that He came to die, but also rise again in victory.

So after 6 days Christ then took Peter, James, and John up to the mountain where Christ prayed to His Father. While Jesus was praying He was transfigured, He became as white as light. The glory of his divinity shown in this moment and the three disciples witnessed this. Alone, this must have been an amazing spectacle to view, but along with Christ appeared Moses and Elijah. Why Moses and Elijah? Moses is very much connected to the Law of God. Even in the OT reading you hear When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand as he came down from the mountain, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God.[d] 30 Aaron and all the people of Israel saw Moses, and behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him.

Moses met with the almighty and the glory of the LORD was so much that Moses walked away with his skin and face shining. Moses received the testimony of the Lord. He received the law of God on the tablets. The LORD's words written on tablets. The Law that Christ was able to keep completely and perfectly. The other, Elijah, one of the great prophets of God, taken up to heaven in a fiery chariot is the connection that all prophecy is fulfilled in Christ. It is, Jesus, that all prophets before were pointing to. It is Christ and Christ alone that is the fulfillment of the Word of God. Why is this important?

The disciples who went up with Christ on the mountain were witnesses, specifically Peter, was rebuked for telling Christ that He doesn't have to die. Jesus' glory is shown in the discussion of what was to come. You know from Luke that the discussion that Moses, Elijah and Jesus were having were regarding Christ's death and

resurrection. And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, 31 who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure,[a] which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. His discussion was to show these men, these disciples that Christ's death and resurrection is where the glory of God lies. This is what Peter reiterates in 2 Peter 1: we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. 19 And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. The lamp shining in a dark place is Christ in this sinful world. Moreover, the epistle connects the OT to the Gospel because the only way for the veil to be removed is by Christ. It is His death and resurrection that gives you oh sinner hope. It is the drink that satisfies the unquenchable thirst of this life. It is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The transfiguration must have been an amazing sight. Peter wanted to make three tents because He must have felt the presence of heavenly glory there. Many times, us sinful beings, also get caught up in the wonder and majesty and want to hold on to it when that is not where the wonder and majesty lie. This is the veil many of mankind still wear when they hear the Law. Thinking God is more present in one place than another, thinking one sermon that speaks God's Word rightly is better than another that does the same does not mean God was more present in it. However, God's Word is a living Word and accomplishes the will of God. My confidence is in His Word. I know it will not return void. Luther had a sacristy prayer that I and many other pastors pray before we begin a service. This is the prayer:

O Lord God, dear Father in heaven. I am indeed, unworthy of the office and ministry in which I am to make known Thy glory and to nurture and to serve this congregation.

But since Thou has appointed me to be a pastor and teacher, and the people are in need of the teachings and the instructions, O be Thou my helper and let Thy holy angels attend me.

Then if Thou art pleased to accomplish anything through me, to Thy glory and not to mine or to the praise of men, grant me, out of Thy pure grace and mercy a right understanding of Thy Word and that I may also, diligently perform it.

O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, Thou Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, send Thy Holy Spirit that He may work with me, yea, that He may work in me to will and to do through Thy divine strength according to Thy good pleasure. Many times people think that if you were not inspired by a sermon than it wasn't great. God's Word works how it does. Peter missed the picture relishing in the glory of God in the transfiguration. Please do not misunderstand the importance of the transfiguration, but Peter wanted to dwell in the presence when something much greater was coming. The issue is that Peter caught up in this magnificence missed the point that this is not the end goal. It is less majestic to our eyes. It is less glorifying to human standards. To this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts. The most majestic and glorified Christ has ever been was when He uttered those words "It is finished." on the cross with His last breath. This is where the majesty and glory of our Lord lie. This is why Peter writes that you have something more fully confirmed. 16 But when one[c] turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. 17 Now the Lord[d] is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord,[e] are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.[f] For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. The death and resurrection has happened. You have the guarantee that your sins are forgiven. You have the guarantee that Christ's death paid for all sin, and His resurrection brings you into new life. What is just as amazing is that you were brought into that very

death and resurrection through your baptism. You have been transfigured by Christ. You get to taste and drink the glorified Christ in this bread and wine. You have His glory placed upon you in your absolution by His very Word. You even have been given His Spirit, the Holy Spirit is with you now!

All this has been given to you through His sacrifice. In Christ's transfiguration, Peter, James, and John got a foretaste of what is to come. They most definitely remembered this moment, His transfiguration in His resurrection. You also have the guarantee that Christ will come again to complete all things. You know this from John's description of Christ in Revelation where he describes Jesus as one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. 14 The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, 15 his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. 16 In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength. His light shines now and will continue to shine. Even in paradise, the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.

You too carry that light. "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that [b] they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

The light of Christ shines in you through His mercy and grace. The peace and joy you are given in this world of tragedy, heartache and death is otherworldly. It is only explained in the fact that a sinner once dead in sin has been made alive in Christ through His death and resurrection. The transfiguration of our Lord shows you that the light you now have, is from Christ. His glory shines forth through you because He has transfigured you. He has made a sinner a saint.

Jesus touches you in His Word and Sacraments. He tells you to "Rise and have no fear." for He has bought you with His life, He wants you to see no one, but Jesus only is your Redeemer.

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Matthew 17

And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. 2 And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. 3 And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. 4 And Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." 5 He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son,[a] with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." 6 When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. 7 But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and have no fear." 8 And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

9 And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, "Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead."

Exodus 34

When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand as he came down from the mountain, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God.[d] 30 Aaron and all the people of Israel saw Moses, and behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. 31 But Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses talked with them. 32 Afterward all the people of Israel came near, and he commanded them all that the Lord had spoken with him in Mount Sinai. 33 And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil over his face.

34 Whenever Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him, he would remove the veil, until he came out. And when he came out and told the people of Israel what he was commanded, 35 the people of Israel would see the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face was shining. And Moses would put the veil over his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

2 Peter 1

16 For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17 For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son,[i] with whom I am well pleased," 18 we ourselves heard this

very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. 19 And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, 20 knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. 21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

