

February 15, 2026

Pastor Prieue

The Transfiguration of Our Lord

Matthew 17:1-9

¹After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. ²There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. ³Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.

⁴Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.”

⁵While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!”

⁶When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. ⁷But Jesus came and touched them. “Get up,” he said. “Don’t be afraid.” ⁸When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.

⁹As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, “Don’t tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.”

A Glimpse of Glory on the Way to the Cross.

- 1) Revealed to confirm the identity of Jesus**
- 2) Concealed again for us and our salvation**
- 3) Sealed this sight in the minds of believers to give the strength.**

Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of our Lord Jesus. That’s the way Peter starts off his 2nd letter, shortly before he begins the section about that Transfiguration that we heard in our second lesson.

Speaking of Peter, it had been quite the week for him the week before the Transfiguration. Jesus had asked the disciples who the Son of Man was? That’s the question we too have been considering throughout this season of Epiphany. What is the identity of Jesus? Well, on that occasion, Peter stepped up to the place and knocked one out of the park. **“You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God.”** Matthew 16:16. And Jesus gladly commended him for it. **“Blessed are you, Simon! This was revealed to you by my Father in heaven…”** and this profession you have made is going to be the foundation of my Church’s proclamation!

The next episode of the story unfortunately didn’t go so well for Peter. Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. Peter couldn’t stand for that kind of talk. **“Never Lord,”** he piped up. Those were not the things of the Messiah, or so he thought, and Jesus rebuked him vehemently, **“Get behind me, Satan! You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human**

concerns.” (Matthew 16: 22,23). Then Jesus again began to explain the way of the cross both for himself and the way of the cross for them as they followed him.

I'm guessing it was kind of a rough rest of the week for Peter, after his Messiah rightly called him Satan. That week had been a proverbial roller coaster ride, and he had gone from the top of the hill—boldly confessing Christ in faith—down the steep drop off into the dark underground tunnel where Jesus rebuked him for rejecting the most critical part of the Messiah's work—the path to the cross.

Jesus let Peter think about that for 6 days before he took him and just a few of the other boys, James and John with him a special wilderness retreat. This special trip would give them a *Glimpse of Glory on the Way to the Cross* to strengthen them for the rest of their lives. That's our theme today.

First, that *glimpse of glory 1) was revealed by Jesus to confirm his identity* beyond a shadow of a doubt. Peter, by faith, had confessed Jesus to be the Messiah, but now Jesus was going to give these three the chance to see it with their eyes. On that mountain top, **“There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as light. Just then, there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.”** Matthew 17:2,3. Two of the most prominent figures of the Old Testament—Moses, the great Lawgiver and Elijah, one of the great prophets, to stand and point at Jesus, the one about whom all the Law and the Prophets had spoken

In the Old Testament, God had made a rule that a matter or a case had to be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. Well, there on the mountain top God had provided two key witnesses, Moses and Elijah, but the third would be even greater—God himself. **“A bright cloud covered them and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him.”** This mountain top experience, this *glimpse of glory 1) was revealed to give total confirmation that Jesus was the true Son of God!*

It's the kind of moment that Peter never wanted to end, especially just six days after Jesus called him Satan. **“Lord, it is good for us to be here! If you wish I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” (17:4).** This is more like it! This is what things should be like with the Messiah. Maybe we can just stay up here forever in glory. That suggestion wasn't even entertained for a second, because while he was still speaking, that's when the cloud covered them and the Father spoke those same words he spoke at Jesus baptism, “My Son, whom I love, but this time with one addition. **“Listen to him.”** Listen to the One who had told them that he must go to Jerusalem and be crucified. Listen to the One who had declared that they too must pick up their cross of follow him on the way to the cross.

Just as quickly then as Jesus had revealed this *glimpse of glory 1) confirm his identity, then it was 2) concealed again for us and for our salvation.* He needed to walk back down that mountain and finish his journey to the cross. There simply could be no skipping out on the cross, no shortchanging the price of redemption demanded by our sins. All his fullness as God had been concealed in a truly human body for the express purpose of becoming obedient even to death on a cross and by his death breaking the power of him who holds the power of death, that is the Devil!

Jesus knew the glory and equality he had with the Father from eternity, of which he has just displayed a short glimpse of. But even more important than grasping and holding on to that

glory, was for him to bring glory to himself and his father by saving sinners. So he concealed his glory and walked back down the mountain, intent on carrying out the Father's plan of salvation. As that day drew closer, he began to explain more about it, **"The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified."** John 12:23. And another time he prayed to the Father, **"I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began."** John 17:4,5. Jesus wasn't talking there about his transfiguration, he was talking about the glory of his crucifixion and resurrection from the dead

Back there on the mount of Transfiguration, that day was still in the future, and he needed to go through it just as God had planned. So the last thing he said to the disciples as they walked down the mountain, 2) with his glory once again concealed was, **"Don't tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."** (Matthew 17:9)

Maybe that's a puzzling command to us. Why show them his glory if they're not supposed to say anything about it for the time being? What was the purpose of the Transfiguration for them, and for us hearing about it today? Let's think about what this glimpse of glory did for Peter, James, and John. They had seen the identity of Jesus confirmed and the Father told them to listen to Jesus. Did it wise them up for good, so that every time Jesus spoke about his need to go and suffer and die, Peter, James, and John were right there with him? No it did not! Every time he said something about it, they were filled with grief and did not listen very well. And as Jesus walked his path to the cross, did they pick up theirs and follow? Well, sort of. Yes, they kept following, but with a lot of doubting, denying, and deserting—all of them wound up deserting Jesus on the Mount of Olives and Peter denied three more times that same night.

They had seen the Transfiguration, but they were still going to be living on the roller coaster of human weakness, sometimes bearing fruit, and other times, faltering in weakness. And in those moments when they shook with fear and guilt because of their doubt and denial, they would have this moment to look back on and remember. This glimpse of glory would be sealed into their minds by the light of the glory of God. They could remember the moment they were knocked on their faces as they beheld the glory of Jesus the Son of God, and as they quaked with fear, Jesus came near to them and touched them, and they weren't vaporized. They looked up and all the glory had gone away, along with Moses and Elijah, and there was nothing but Jesus, the Son of God clothed in flesh, and he came near to them and said, **"Get up. Don't be afraid!"**

I'll bet you Peter, James, and John thought about that moment a lot throughout the course of their life, especially after the resurrection when everything finally clicked in their minds. That glorious sight, sealed in their mind, became an important part of their fearless testimony for the sake of Christ. John wrote it in his gospel, **"We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."** John 1:14. I'll bet you the light of that glorious sight of Jesus flashed through the mind of James sometime before King Herod ordered him to be put to death by the sword, the first of the Twelve to be martyred.

And Peter, roller coaster Peter? The Transfiguration did not stop Peter's denials, but at some point, he remembered that Jesus did say he could talk about that sight after he rose from the dead. Peter became the lead preacher of the disciples as he fearlessly testified to the identity of Jesus Christ his crucified and risen Messiah.

Peter also wrote about that day in his letter to Christians scattered through the world, facing persecution and suffering. Knowing that his death was coming soon, Peter wanted to

make sure that believers would always remember the glory of Jesus that he got to see. **“We did not follow cleverly devised stories, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.” 2 Peter 1:26.** I saw his glory. I heard the voice of the Father. It’s all true, and don’t you ever doubt it or forget it!

The purpose of the transfiguration, ***this glimpse of glory on the way to the cross, 3)*** sealed this sight in the minds of believers to give them certainty and strength in their faith. It was a glimpse of glory on the path of the cross. And this glimpse was written and recorded for you too, so that on the day you walk up to the casket of the one you love and the devil whispers in your ear, “What if this is it? You live and you die. No life after, no glory, no God,” this glorious glimpse of Jesus will remind you of the truth. And the testimony Peter, James, and John held to their dying breath proclaims, “It wasn’t a made-up story. It was all true and you will do well to pay attention to it. Listen to him!”

And on the day you turn up back on the hospital, like Josie my little girl did on Monday, and the devil whispers in your ear, “There’s no plan. There’s no sense to this. Why would God, who says he loves you, love you like this?” you can remember that even the journey of God’s beloved son went through pain and suffering and death before it ended in glory. So it’s no surprise that you will bear a cross too, and then a crown. And while you do, the same Son of God who drew near to Peter, James, and John on that majestic mountain, draws near to you according to his promise, **“Don’t be afraid... I am with you always.”**

This glimpse of glory calms our doubts and strengthens our hearts to bear the cross until the day we appear with Christ in his undiminished glory forevermore. Amen. *Oh Lord, you guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory.* (Psalm 73:24).