

TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD

YEAR C

EXODUS 34:29-35

2 CORINTHIANS 3:12-4:2

LUKE 9:28-36

MARCH 2, 3, 2019

Many of us face times of despair and are sorry as we think of the things we have done in our lives. Paul says that all have sinned. We come into the sanctuary of the Lord seeking restoration in our relationship with God. Some of us might even struggle over our relationship with God. We come to church and we hear words of forgiveness and love. One of the goals of coming to church is to see God in a new way and experience a restored relationship with God and with each other.

Exodus 34 is the story of Moses returning from his 40-day meeting with God on Mt Sinai. Moses brought a second tablet of stone containing the word of God we call the Ten Commandments. This second time was after the golden calf episode where the Israelites started worshipping the gold calf. The first stone was broken in symbolism of the people breaking their covenant with God. The second tablet included instructions for the tabernacle which would become their worship space during their wilderness wandering.

Exodus 34:30-32 When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, the skin of his face was shining, and they were afraid to come near him. ³¹But Moses called to them; and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses spoke with them. ³²Afterward all the Israelites came near, and he gave them in commandment all that the Lord had spoken with him on Mount Sinai

Moses returned from the mountain to a people that were afraid. They had broken the covenant and fallen away. They saw Moses and his glowing appearance, and they were afraid to come near. They saw the presence of God on Moses and were immediately brought face to face with their sinfulness. God gave Moses the second tablet of the Law for instruction.

God also gave the second tablet to show that God was claiming them as God's people. Moses invited Aaron and the others to come near to him. Moses taught them concerning that Law and the instructions for the tabernacle. Moses came with words of restoration and God's love for them. They received assurance of the forgiveness of their sins and that God would sustain them.

Luke 9:30, 31 Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

The season of Epiphany is a season for us to be enlightened. It is a season of light. Epiphany started with the wise men coming from the east because they followed a star. The star led them to where Jesus was. As we traveled through Epiphany we have learned who Jesus is and what his ministry is about. This season of Epiphany helps us see that Jesus is the Christ. The season of Epiphany ends with Jesus on the mountain with Moses and Elijah. Jesus is glowing with the glory of God as he meets with the two from the Old Testament. He is the son of God and the one who would save his people from their sins. You and I see and we believe that Jesus is Lord. We go from the mountain top into the valley of Lent which begins Wednesday. We begin our own 40-day experience with God. Our faith has received an important shot in the arm as we begin the season of Lent.

Epiphany is about God's love for you and me. God's love teaches us that we are not lost in our sin, but we receive life and the restoration of our relationship with God through Jesus Christ. We see God's love for us in this glimpse of God's glory in Jesus on the mountain. Today we celebrate Transfiguration. We come to the Mount of Transfiguration where the countenance of Jesus was changed. He became radiantly white as Moses and Elijah appeared to Jesus and spoke with him. They talked about the

events to take place shortly in Jerusalem. They were talking about the death and resurrection of Jesus at the hands of sinners. Moses is the great law giver and Elijah is the great prophet that would return to precede the Messiah. All three appeared in glory. Peter, James and John were there to witness the glory of God on that mountain top. The climax of the Epiphany season is the Transfiguration because it reveals Jesus in a way that he is not revealed before this time. It is the climax because the voice comes from heaven declaring that Jesus is the beloved son and they should listen to him. We heard the voice at the baptism of our Lord. At baptism the voice was speaking to Jesus even though we could hear what the voice said. This time the voice speaks to the three disciples with Jesus. They should listen to Jesus. They should hear God's revelation and God's direction for them and the people of God.

Luke 9:35 Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!"

The three wanted to stay on the mountain with Jesus, Moses and Elijah but they could not stay there. The work of salvation and the life won for you and me are not found on the mountain top experience. You and I enjoy the times of relative peace. We like staying out of the line of fire. We like being in the safe place we call church, but the work of the Lord is not done in the safety of this sanctuary. We get to see and hear things in this as we gather at church, but the work is done in the valley where people are hurting and where they are searching for peace. Peter, James and John could not remain on the mountain and neither could Jesus. Moses and Elijah could not remain because Jesus is the one who is lifted up. The work of salvation is not done on the mountain but in the valley where people would despise him and they would eventually kill him.

Just as Aaron and the Israelites were to listen to Moses as he taught, Peter, James and John were to listen to Jesus as he taught them. They

were supposed to listen and understand when he cast out demons. Peter, James and John were to listen when Jesus told them about going to Jerusalem where he would be handed over to sinners and Gentiles. They were to listen when he taught about crucifixion but also when he told about resurrection.

You and I also listen to Jesus because he speaks important words to us. We listen when Jesus sends us out to proclaim the gospel. We listen when the Lord is guiding us. We listen to the Lord when he leads us and teaches us in the ways of truth. We get to bask in the glory of God on this Transfiguration Day, but we cannot stay here because the work of the gospel is not confined to this building but is in our communities, in our state and in our world.

Luke 9:36 When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.

Jesus was found alone because our salvation does not come through Moses or Elijah. While it is important for us to read and follow the Law of Moses and to know that Elijah is the great prophet it is more important to follow Jesus Christ because he is the Savior of the world.

You and I must go and tell about the glory of God, but we can only do so after we understand the message. We come to this sanctuary and hear the word of God. We come to the house of God which might be a mountain top and see a glimpse of the glory of God. We participate in the season of Lent and we discover that Jesus would suffer and die for our sins and to provide our salvation. We listen to Jesus because it is his voice and his message that give life. We must go and tell the good and we focus on the Lord Jesus. We seek his face and we give God the glory.

AMEN