# The Transfiguration of Our Lord March 3, 2019

 ***LOOK TO JESUS; LISTEN TO JESUS;***

***LEARN FROM JESUS!***

**(LUKE 9:28-36)**

 28 About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. 29 As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. 30 Two men, Moses and Elijah, 31 appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem. 32 Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. 33 As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter said to him, "Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters-- one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." (He did not know what he was saying.)

 34 While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. 35 A voice came from the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him." 36 When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone. The disciples kept this to themselves, and told no one at that time what they had seen.

**Introduction**: The transfiguration of our Lord is a rather sensational event, though it is briefly recorded and not mentioned much in Scripture. What is its significance? How do the disciples react to it? What does this event have to say to us in 21st century America? What lessons can we learn that will have practical value for us in the here and now?

 Let us examine Luke’s account of this miracle and proceed to answer these questions.

**I. Jesus and Three Disciples (9:28)**

9:28 – **“About eight days after Jesus said this”** refers to what Jesus had taught His disciples in 9:22-27 concerning His death and resurrection, His second coming in glory, following Him on a daily basis, and the promise of eternal life.

 **“Peter, James, and John”** are known as the “inner circle” of Jesus’ twelve disciples. This is a special time for them to be with their Master, get away from the hustle bustle of daily activities, and soak up whatever the Lord has in store for them. This is, in essence, a retreat that will help them to advance as followers of the King of kings!

 **“A mountain”** is probably Mount Hermon which is located near Caesarea Philippi and is over 9,000 feet high. (A much less likely possibility is Mount Tabor which is only 1,843 feet above sea level, since Mark 9:2 describes it as “a high mountain.”)

 The purpose for getting away to this remote area was **“to pray.”**

**** There is power in prayer and true peace in the presence of Jesus, as these verses make evident:

“Call to Me and I will answer you, and I will show you great and mighty things, which you do not yet know,” says the Lord Almighty. Jeremiah 33:3

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6-7

**II. Jesus Transfigured (9:29)**

9:29-34 – This event is known as the transfiguration, based upon the word “transfigured” used in Matthew 17:2 and Mark 9:2.

 **QUESTION**: Is there any special significance or reason for Jesus’ miraculous transfiguration before His disciples (9:29-31)?

 **ANSWER**: The transfiguration is a preview of Jesus’ future resurrection from the dead. This is indicated by His prediction that He would “be killed and on the third day be raised to life” (9:22). Then Moses and Elijah spoke to Jesus of His “departure” and “fulfillment at Jerusalem” which clearly refer to His death/resurrection. The glorious transformation of Jesus’ physical appearance was only *temporary* here, but His transformed “spiritual body” would be *permanent* after His resurrection.

**** This spectacular nature of the transfiguration shows that Jesus is clearly to be the focus of attention for His disciples in this life. However, it points to something much more glorious – His miraculous resurrection from the dead. We are not to take Him for granted or underestimate his magnificent power. Sometimes we can be so shortsighted in limiting God and not tapping into the power He has for us, as this humorous story illustrates:

 A logging foreman sold a farmer a chainsaw guaranteed to cut down fifty trees in a single day. A week later, a very unhappy farmer came to report that the power saw must be faulty – it averaged only three trees a day. The foreman grabbed the saw, pulled the cord, and the saw promptly went, “Bzzzzzzzzzzzzzz.”

 The startled farmer demanded, “Hey! What’s that noise?”

 [Taken from *1001 Humorous Illustrations*, pp. 270-271]

**III. Jesus and Two Old Testament Leaders (9:30-32)**

9:30 – **“Moses”** was considered by the Jews to be the most important person in the Old Testament, and, of course, was the author of Law (Genesis through Deuteronomy).

 **“Elijah”** was the most dramatic of the prophets (along with his protégé Elisha), in which God had done numerous miracles through him (see 1 Kings 17 to 2 Kings 1). His miraculous translation to heaven is recorded in 2 Kings 2.

 **“Moses and Elijah”** are mentioned here to point to the special, miraculous nature of the person and ministry of Jesus. They were both great miracle workers, and they both represented the Law and the Prophets. Even greater than this, however, Moses points to Christ’s death on the cross (see the Greek term *exodos* in the next verse), and Elijah points to His glorious resurrection (in light of going up to heaven in a whirlwind with a chariot and horses of fire; 2 Kings 2:11-12).

9:31 – **“Departure”** (*exodos*), especially with the connection to Moses, draws attention to the most important event in the entire Old Testament – the exodus, God’s deliverance of His people from bondage in the land of Egypt. This is referred to over 125 times in the Old Testament, and is much more important theologically than even creation. The exodus event is the grandest act of God’s redemption of His people Israel, and serves as the best type (past event intended to have a future fulfillment) of Christ’s redeeming death on the cross.

 **“Jerusalem”** is where Jesus was later crucified, so **“fulfillment”** looks back to Jesus’ predictions made in 9:22 about His rejection, death, and resurrection.

9:32 – It is interesting to note that **“Peter and his companions were sleepy”** at this time. No wonder they **“became fully awake”** with such an astounding wake up call!

**IV. Jesus and Peter’s Question (9:33)**

9:33 – **“Shelters”** may possibly be an allusion to the shelters made of intertwined branches used in the Feast of Tabernacles (see Leviticus 23:42-43) or much more likely alludes to the tent of meeting where the Lord met with Moses (see Exodus 33:7-11).

 Peter’s suggestion to put up **“shelters”** is quite strange and out of place, as Luke later comments upon with these words: **“he did not know what to say.”**

**** Poor Peter was so out of sync with what was going on, yet at the same time he was excited and wanted to say something, anything, regardless of how goofy it really was. He was there to see, listen, and learn rather than speak his own mind thoughtlessly. Here are some illustrations that may help us, when we are tempted to use our mouths without thinking:

When your mind goes blank, remember to turn off the sound.

 [Taken from *1001 Humorous Illustrations*, p. 330]

A young lady once said to John Wesley, “I think I know what my talent is.”

Wesley said, “Tell me.”

She replied, “I think it is to speak my mind.”

Wesley said, “I do not think God would mind if you bury that talent.”

 [Taken from *Illustrations for Biblical Preaching*, p. 379]

**V. Jesus and the God the Father (9:34-36a)**

9:34 – **“Cloud”** in the Old Testament was often used as a symbol of God’s presence with His people (see Exodus 16:10; 19:9; 24:15-16; 33:1,9; 40:34-37; Leviticus 16:2; Numbers 11:25).

9:35 – **“This is my Son, whom I have chosen”** is also similarly stated by God the Father at Jesus’ baptism in 3:22. **“This is my Son”** alludes to Psalm 2:7, and **“chosen”** to Isaiah 42:1.

 God the Father’s command, **“Listen to Him,”** capsulizes the point of Jesus’ transfiguration in a practical way.

**VI. Jesus and His Three Disciples (9:36)**

9:36 – The disciples wisely **“told no one at that time what they had seen,”** since they still had to ponder the significance of what they had seen and heard from this sensational experience. However, after Jesus’ resurrection the meaning of His transfiguration became clear, and they would freely proclaim to others about His substitutionary death on the cross and glorious resurrection from the dead!

**Personal Application**

 There are a number of lessons that we can learn from this remarkable account of Jesus’ transfiguration. First, His glorious resurrection (and death on the cross for the forgiveness of sins) is to be our focus in life. This is the greatest act in all of human history, and the most wonderful event for you and me personally. Without the cross and empty tomb, we are utterly lost in the dungeon of despair, hopelessness, and meaninglessness. Positively, our passion is to cling to the cross and bank our hope fully upon God’s eternal promises in Christ, especially eternal life with Him. This is brought our so clearly by the Apostle Paul:

 When I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. 1 Corinthians 2:1-2

I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection. Philippians 3:10

 Secondly, our focus is to be on Jesus day by day. It is so easy to get distracted with this, that, and the other thing. Nice religious ideals are not going to keep us going – what we need is a Lord, a Master, a King, to lead and guide us. Christ is not only that; He is our Savior, our Provider, our very Sustenance in life. No wonder the author of Hebrews commands this:

 Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hebrews 12:1-3

Looking unto, listening to, learning from, leaning on,

Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our Faith,

Pastor Steve Waterman