

*Transfiguration Sunday*  
February 14, 2010  
Amazing Grace Lutheran - Pastor Chip Wilke

Luke 9:28-36

*About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem. Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. 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.) While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. A voice came from the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him." 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.*

Ahhhhhh...today is Valentine's day. It is a day to remember your sweetheart. Perhaps this day brings memories of how and when and what all took place when you first met and started going together with the love of your life. But my question is: how long did it take before you finally let the one you love see the real you? Whether we want to admit it or not, very often we start out on our best behavior and cover the real us a bit. After all, we want to put the best foot forward and make a good first impression. I'm sure I have some wives here who would testify that what they get for Valentine's today is not all the stuff their men used to get them when they first dated. When did you let them first get to see the real you - without the makeup or the cologne - the you that doesn't always smell or look your best - the you with flaws and weaknesses? When we find that someone who sees us the way we really are and they still love us, then we have found someone.

My friends, today on this Transfiguration Sunday that happens to fall on Valentine's Day, we are allowed to see a bit more of someone we love. This person is someone we love with all our hearts because He first loved us. This person is Jesus. All through Epiphany Jesus has been revealing bit by bit more of who He really is - but never like we see Him today! Today, as we listen to His Word we get to follow three disciples up the hill we call the mountain of transfiguration. Today, we are privileged and honored to: **See the Real Jesus. In His true glory. In His true humanity.**

About eight days before this account takes place, Jesus had asked the disciples: "**Who do you say I am?**" Peter, speaking for the disciples, answers correctly saying: "**You are the Christ of God.**" But then Jesus made some statements that His disciples did not want to listen to at all. Jesus said: "**The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.**"

Now we read: "**About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. As he was praying, the**

*appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning.*” Jesus goes up onto a mountain with Peter, James, and John. We can’t say for sure what mountain, but of main importance is what takes place on this mountain. Jesus begins to pray, as He often does, but then something extraordinary happens. Luke says: *“the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning.”* Mark says Jesus clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. Matthew says Jesus’ face shone like the sun.

Jesus had revealed glimpses of His glory as He changed water to wine, taught with the authority of no one else, and performed other mighty deeds. But now we really see Christ’s glory. These three disciples get to see the real Jesus. They get a glimpse of God, for that is who Jesus truly is and was and will always be. As John writes they caught a view of the glory of *“God the one and only”* who came from the Father’s side. Peter never forgot what he saw either as later he wrote: *“We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.”*

If this isn’t enough proof for our eyes of the glory that belongs to Jesus alone, there is still more. *“Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus.”* Two great prophets of the Old Testament are suddenly there in glorious splendor. We know Moses died and was buried by God Himself. We know Elijah was taken directly to heaven on a fiery chariot in a whirlwind. Now these two men, who went to enjoy the glories of heaven, are right here chatting with Jesus like old friends. The real Jesus is God’s Son and the Messiah promised in the Old Testament. But that still wasn’t all that happened. Before Jesus came down the mountain *“a cloud appeared and enveloped them...A voice came from the cloud, saying, ‘This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.’”* Do you think you would listen to Him after seeing all this? We see the real Jesus in His true glory on the mountain - the glory that is His as true God from all eternity - His glory that we will one day see fully in heaven. We get a small but powerful glimpse of the glory of God’s Son, the Lord’s anointed, on this mountain.

After seeing Jesus’ glory how would we respond? What would we have said after witnessing such an awesome sight? We can understand Peter’s reaction, can’t we? He wants more. He doesn’t want it to end. He wants to build some tents, some shelters for each of them so they can stay on that mountain. It was good to be there, and right there he wanted to stay. But as Luke records, Peter did not know what he was saying. Because of the ramifications of what Peter was saying, his suggestion did not even get a response from Jesus. The same is true of us any time we want to make our earthly homes and lives our heaven. We don’t know what we are saying. God has something much greater in store for us. It is just as foolish of us when all we want from Jesus is for Him to show us His glory in His power and might and brilliance and give us all the earthly things our hearts desire. The truth is that attitude and idea doesn’t even deserve a response from Jesus because He came to give us blessings far more precious than earthly treasures.

Yes, it is great to be on the mountain and see the real Jesus His true glory as God. But that is not only where we see the real Jesus because we also see the real Jesus in His true humanity. We see the real Jesus, true man, descend this mount of glory. And for what? So that He could climb another. Jesus just talked about it with Moses and Elijah. *“They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at*

**Jerusalem.”** The Greek word for departure is *exodus*. This word is loaded with meaning. Moses who God used to lead an exodus for the people from their slavery in Egypt is talking with Jesus about a far greater exodus. Jesus was here to deliver the world from their slavery to sin, and to the devil, and to death. Jesus came to lead people to a far greater promised land, one that Moses and Elijah were already enjoying. This departure is about to be fulfilled in Jerusalem where Jesus will go willingly to suffer, die, and rise again.

That dear friends, in his true humanity, is where we see the real Jesus. This is why Jesus, true God, also became fully human - so that He could die. On Wednesdays this Lent come and see once again the real Jesus. We see the real Jesus being betrayed and arrested. We see the real Jesus spit upon and punched in the head. We see the real Jesus crowned with thorns and falsely accused. We see Jesus' real dead body hanging there on the cross and then buried in a tomb. We see the real Jesus suffer real pain & punishment, and endure a real death so that by His sacrifice, the sacrifice of the holy Son of God, all sin could be removed forever. We see the real Jesus proving His glory as the true Resurrection and the Life on the third day, and then 40 days later ascending back to His throne in heaven where He now prepares a place for us.

You want a real Valentine love story? We have the greatest one, don't we? Jesus, who is God in all His glory and shows as much on the mountain, displays His real love for us in His humanity. In fact, Jesus sees the real you and me just the way we really are, with all our flaws and weaknesses and sins, and He still loves us. He loves us so much so that **“while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”** Now that is love. That is the real Jesus. I'm glad I get to see Him. I'm even more glad that I know Him as my Savior, my friend, my life, and my all. It is good for us to be here on the mountain and see the real Jesus in His glory. But this little foretaste of His glory is nothing compared to the glory He has won & prepared for us in a place we will surely never want to leave and the best part is we never will. Amen.