

Ps 99; Ex 34:29-35; 2 Cor 3:12-4:2; Lu 9:28-36

Transfiguration and Communion Sunday

After the baptism of his baby brother in church, little Johnny sobbed all the way home in the back seat of the car. His father asked him three times what was wrong. Finally, the boy replied, “That priest said he wanted us brought up in a Christian home, but I want to stay with you guys!”
(alanbevereblog.com)

There is an old saying in missionary circles: “God doesn’t call the equipped – God equips the called.” First the calling, then the preparation. I say the glimpse of glory we get in the Gospel passage for today is a gift from God to prepare us to endure and to be bold and to stand our ground in these days.

The disciples who went up on the mountain with Jesus that day were amazed to see the Lord as He is eternally – without the veil of mortality. His heavenly aspect was revealed as He stood in the company of Moses and Elijah. Take a look.
(video clip) These great godly leaders came to Jesus to strengthen **Him** as well as to strengthen the disciples. He was headed to Jerusalem to

become the Sacrifice for the sins of the world. The Creator God spoke out of the cloud and gave the disciples the words they needed to hear: “This is My Son, My Chosen; listen to Him.” (v 35) They would never be the same after witnessing that divine presence, after hearing that divine voice.

We too are amazed and in awe to see what John, James and Peter saw that day by means of the Scriptures. Jesus Christ is the unique, supernatural Son of God. He entered flesh to make the atoning sacrifice once for all. He acted in the world of time and space – He also acted in eternity when He turned his face toward Jerusalem. He looked like an ordinary man, but He was and is the “Mighty King bringing justice and God’s unconditional love” (Ps 99:4) into the world. This holy moment strengthens all who have committed to follow Jesus wherever He leads us. It is also for any who have not yet met Jesus – the God-Man, the Worthy Lamb slain before the foundation of the world.

Now, Moses was a friend of God. He was called and prepared to lead the people of God out of

their Egyptian bondage. When God first called Moses, he said, “Who me? I can’t speak in front of people, Lord. I could never be the leader of the Israelites! There must be somebody else.” Moses was amazed, he was in awe of God– but he did not yet have the holy boldness that God was about to give him. In time his face would reflect the glory of God – as a witness to all who saw him. He became so shiny that he covered his face in the camp.

We are much the same, it seems to me. We need some time, we need some personal experience of God, to get used to being face-to-face with God. We all need prayer-time, time in God’s Word, and experience in ministry among people. Maybe we have trouble believing that God loves us and has a unique plan to put us to work for the Gospel enterprise. The Gospel enterprise is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Moses came around – particularly because he knew his brother Aaron would have his back – and would speak effectively when he could not find the words.

On the mountain-top standing with Jesus and appearing in heavenly glory there was Moses on the Day of Transfiguration. His work was accomplished. He had led God's people out of Egypt – out of slavery – to the border of the Promised Land. He was sent to strengthen Jesus and to give courage and hope to His disciples – and to us even today.

Moses spent forty days on Mt. Horeb and then came down bringing the Law to the people (two stone tablets). Jesus came down from this meeting with His heavenly Father and these Patriarchs to bring a profound inner experience of God's presence – God's healing – and God setting right what has been ruined in our fallen world. The boy was set free from the unclean spirit and the infirmity that the spirit caused. We are amazed – in awe – and we are transformed by the promise Jesus fulfilled: "I will never leave you nor forsake you, (Heb 13:5; Josh 1:5)" says the Lord. Jesus makes good on that promise again and again.

The Father also sent Elijah to encourage Jesus on the Mountain of Transfiguration. Why Elijah?

Listen as the Prophet Malachi as he brings God's Word:

“Count on it: The day is coming, raging like a forest fire. All the arrogant people who do evil things will be burned up like stove wood, burned to a crisp, nothing left but scorched earth and ash— a black day. But for you, sunrise! The sun of righteousness will dawn on those who honor my name, healing radiating from its wings. You will be bursting with energy, like colts frisky and frolicking. And you'll tromp on the wicked. They'll be nothing but ashes under your feet on that Day.” God-of-the-Angel-Armies says so.

“Remember and keep the revelation I gave through my servant Moses, the revelation I commanded at Horeb for all Israel, all the rules and procedures for right living.

“But also look ahead: I'm sending Elijah the prophet to clear the way for the Big Day of God—the decisive Judgment Day! He will convince parents to look after their children and children to look up to their parents...” (Mal 4 MSG)

Here on the mountain top God's promise is being fulfilled. Do not listen to a world or a church that tells you Jesus is one of many good-hearted

teachers of history. No. Do not let anybody tell you that miracles are for the past, not for today. No.

Every Bible story points to the coming Savior, Messiah, the Christ. And here on the top of the mountain, Jesus is revealed as the very One – our Lord, our Friend, the One who takes away the sins of the world. No congregation or ministry team can become the true Church by an up or down vote. No, we are the church by the presence and the power of Jesus Christ in our midst – and through us to our neighborhood, our region and to the whole world. Amen.