

Ps 99; Ex 24:12-18; 2 Pe 1:16-21; Mt 17:1-9

Jesus Pleases His Heavenly Father - 02-23-02

When you and I put ourselves into the picture of Jesus' Transfiguration, we begin to understand the central place of our Lord on earth and in heaven – in the whole universe. This moment in Matthew's Gospel on the mountain top when Peter, James and John saw Jesus as He really is – this moment is a turning point in Christ's earthly ministry. From this time on, Jesus makes His way to Jerusalem: to fulfill His purpose for coming into our world. The hallmark of Jesus' brief life on earth is His radical obedience to His heavenly Father. And He did it for you and me.

Cue video

Peter, James and John – and all the other disciples – including you and me – are part of the ongoing purpose of God in Christ. We see it when the Good News soaks through our tough outer shell – our pride and self-centered habits. I speak personally – and I speak to all would-be Jesus followers. Our hallmark is rebellion and disobedience. It is the fallen human way of behaving.

I recently learned the story of Nabeel Qureshi, a medical student who was born into a devout

Muslim family. His parents moved to the US from Pakistan, hoping for a better life. He grew up in San Diego. He was an excellent student, and at college he had many Christian friends. He spent years being “almost persuaded,” – that Jesus is Lord. He learned more and more about Jesus, yet to make the faith change would be to wound his family, especially his mom. At last, while he was working on his PhD, Nabeel made the real, obedient, permanent decision to follow Christ. His family was heartbroken. When he married his Christian sweetheart, no member of his family attended the wedding. Still, his faith in Jesus grew. He became a traveling preacher and teacher.

After some weeks of physical discomfort he went to the Dr to find out what was wrong. He learned he had stage 4 stomach cancer. The five-year survival rate for this disease is about 2%. He wrote a book about his hard-won faith entitled *Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus*. Nabeel was still teaching and writing when he died at age 34, one year after his diagnosis. He wrote, “...God in His infinite and sovereign wisdom has chosen me for this refining, and I pray He will be glorified

through my body and my spirit...My family and I ...are relying on God and the fact that He is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine.”

Nabeel embraced what the Lord had for him. He believed God’s glorious promise of Life in Jesus Christ through God’s radical and faithful obedience.

Seeing the glory of God is something most of us can only imagine. A few have seen this shining glory up close. Matthew tells us the disciples saw the brilliant light and heard God’s voice saying, “This is My Son, the Beloved, with Him I am well pleased; listen to Him.” (Mt 17:5)

The disciples on the mountain with Jesus that day were shaken. They fell to the ground in awe. Peter was so amazed, he decided he had to do something about this great event. But, before he could build shelters for Jesus, Moses and Elijah, the wondrous glimpse into God’s glory faded from sight.

What are we to do when we sense who God in Christ truly is? Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer of

the universe. We can bow down and worship our Lord. We can tell others what Jesus has done for us. We can live out the Gospel message each day. These are the days we have been given. We can live out our obedience to God. We can be about the Gospel.

By Jesus' glorious appearance, we learn that He will rule in His coming kingdom in His glorified body, just as His disciples were allowed to see. Moses, in his glorified body, represents the saved that will enter God's kingdom through death. Jesus has fulfilled God's Law that Moses gave us. Elijah never died. He represents those believers who enter the kingdom of God at the sounding of the trumpet at the end of time. Jesus has fulfilled the prophecies brought from God by Elijah and others. (Don Stewart, blueletter bible.org)

Through the Holy Scripture, we receive what Peter, James and John were given. It's written down for us. Whatever the world brings our way, we know that our Divine Savior was and is obedient to the will of His heavenly Father. He did not cling to some human perception of the next thing. He didn't formulate the appropriate

reaction or the best strategy. Jesus listened for His Father's voice. He obeyed that voice first, last and always. This pleases your heavenly Father.

The Apostle Peter, who was there on the mountain top with Jesus, writes, "We couldn't be more sure of what we saw and heard—*God's* glory, *God's* voice. The prophetic Word was confirmed to us. You'll do well to keep focusing on it. It's the one light you have in a dark time as you wait for daybreak and the rising of the Morning Star in your hearts. The main thing to keep in mind here is that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of private opinion. And why? Because it's not something concocted in the human heart. Prophecy resulted when the Holy Spirit prompted men and women to speak God's Word." (2 Pe 1:19-21 MSG)

We are called to be about His coming kingdom – to spread the Good News – sharing the hope we have in His sacrifice for us. Whether we speak or act, let us give glory to God the Son for His faithful obedience. May this Season of Lent bring us refreshing and renewed obedience. I pray for your joy in the Lord. Amen.

