

“UNTITLED”

Sermon Text – Luke 9:28-36
Transfiguration of Our Lord, C (LSB Propers)
Sunday, February 14, 2010
Zion Lutheran Church, Beecher, IL
Old Testament Reading – Deuteronomy 34:1-12
Epistle Reading – Hebrews 3:1-6
Gospel Reading – Luke 9:28-36

In the Name of Jesus. [Amen.] Our sermon for today is based on the Gospel reading regarding the transfiguration of our Lord Jesus.

Dear friends in Christ Jesus,

I read an article once in *Reader's Digest* about people's fear of speaking in public. The so-called expert who wrote the article stated that most people's greatest fear when speaking in public is that they won't measure up to the audience's expectations of them.

Some years ago, when I just got out of college, the company for which I worked was exhibiting some computer equipment in a business exposition. A few days before the show was to be held, a local TV station invited some of the companies that would have products at the show to send representatives to appear on a program. The program was meant to give the public an idea of what could be seen at the exposition.

My boss appointed me to represent our firm. At first, I was flattered, and looked forward to being on TV. But then, the day for taping the program arrived, and once I got on stage... with the bright lights glaring... and the cameras rolling... well, let's just say that I was frightened and desperately wished that the boss had picked *someone else!*

I asked myself: **“Ron, just what are you doing here?”** And then I told myself, **“Whatever you do, don't say something stupid and embarrass yourself... or worse yet... don't let your boss down!”**

Well, the show went off without a hitch. The host of the TV program put us at ease. He asked us to comment on things that we knew and understood quite well. Thankfully, my fear of saying something stupid and embarrassing myself (and disappointing my boss) was never realized.

We just heard the story of the Transfiguration of Jesus. There we heard that the disciples were so amazed... *and frightened...* at what they were witnessing, that they apparently weren't able to think clearly. And as a result, impetuous Peter took it upon himself to speak for all three disciples.

Whether it was out of fear or amazement, Peter came up with an off the wall comment, and told Jesus that he, James, and John would **“make three tents”** for each of Jesus, Moses, and Elijah.

Considering this today, we might snicker at Peter's somewhat ridiculous comment. We might wonder if Peter has the same problem that most of us do regarding not knowing what to say... and how to say it... when speaking in public. In fact, perhaps Peter could use a subscription to *Reader's Digest*. Then he could read up on the best ways to keep from saying embarrassing things when speaking in public!

But... before we hammer Peter too much... let's back up a little and see what really was going on that day.

St. Luke tells us that “**about eight days**” prior to the Transfiguration, Jesus had asked the disciples: “**Who do you say that I am?**” (Lk. 9:20, ESV) Again, it was Peter who spoke up first and said: “[**You are**] **the Christ of God!**” (Lk. 9:20, ESV)

So, it was after these familiar words of Peter had been spoken, that Jesus took Peter, James, and John with Him onto the mountain. And there... right before the disciples' eyes... Jesus was transfigured. The Divinity... the glory that had always been resident in the Person of Jesus... but had been hidden... was now permitted to be seen.

And so, with all that having happened in just a moment of time, it's no wonder... *at all...* that dumbfounded Peter would say: **Master, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents...**” and so on.

Peter had the first part of his statement correct. It was *indeed* good that they were there – to see Jesus in His Divine state. For this transfiguration was being done so that the disciples might have revealed to them... *with crystal clarity...* just *exactly* who Jesus is.

Through this, the disciples were shown that Peter's confession of Christ, just 8 days prior to this was 100% accurate. For if Jesus was “**the Christ of God...**” that truly meant that Jesus *is* God... the long awaited Messiah... finally come to restore the severed relationship between sinners and their almighty Creator!

Also, Jesus' appearance with Moses and Elijah showed the disciples the beauty of God's plan of salvation for mankind. For Moses represents the old covenant and its promise of salvation given to the Israelites *through* Moses following their rescue from Egypt.

And Elijah... one of the greatest of Old Testament prophets... represents all the previous holy men of God who had spoken time and time again, indicating that God Himself would rescue sinful man from eternal death in hell.

So, what the disciples were allowed to see, is what track and field athletes call the passing of the baton in a relay race. For the last runner in a relay race is always the strongest and fastest runner.

Here, Moses and Elijah who ran “legs” of the “race” for man's salvation, now hand off the baton to God, Himself in the Person of Jesus. For it's God... *and only God...* who could take on the sins of the whole world and pay the penalty for those sins.

Did you notice it...? While Peter was still speaking... trying to convince Jesus to let him start his building project... they were enveloped by a cloud, sent by the Father. Peter was cut off almost in mid-sentence and the voice of God boomed for all to hear: “**This is my Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him.**” (v. 35)

Aren't we a lot like Peter? Peter was enthralled and enchanted with the beauty and the joy of the moment. He didn't want it to *ever* end. That's why he wanted to construct three tents... right there on the mountain... so that no one would *ever* have to leave.

For Peter knew what was waiting for them down below should they leave this glorious spot – hurt and heartache... sin and depravity. The world they'd left behind to ascend

the mountain was still there... on the other side of the cloud that had enveloped them... and that world had plenty... *plenty* of pain to go around.

And so, can you blame Peter... *at all?* We, too, would like to be free from the hurt of this world. We, too, would like to find some "mountain top" on which we can build a tent, and retire from the chaos, angst, and pain... leaving it all below us.

But in this account before us today, the Lord Jesus is teaching His disciples... *and us...* that the glory of heaven *can't* be brought down to earth and find shelter in this world of sin... uh uhh.

Rather, He teaches us that for us to be free of these things, that mankind will be taken *out* of this fallen world... *into* the glory of heaven!

Again, the disciples... *and us...* we're *all* given a clearer picture of who, *exactly...* Jesus is. We, along with the three disciples, get a glimpse of His glory and the power to save that's to be found in His glory.

Jesus rejected Peter's construction project, for He could not... *and would not* stay on the mountain. Instead, He urgently desire to bring about the salvation of not only Peter, James, and John, but in reality... the entire human race... and to do that... He *couldn't* stay there!

He would descend that mountain and eventually journey to the earthly Jerusalem... where He would offer up His perfect life as a sufficient Ransom for the sins of all people. And that, dearly beloved of God, *necessarily* includes you... each one of you.

In the coming days of Lent that begins this week on Ash Wednesday, we'll again tag along with Jesus watching Him journey to the earthly Jerusalem, where by His gracious sacrifice... dying in our place and rising three days later... we might... when our time on earth is completed... we might make a journey to Jerusalem ourselves... but *our* journey is to the heavenly Jerusalem where we'll dwell in perfect peace and joy *forever!*

You recall what I said earlier regarding my "stage fright" before I went before the TV cameras. I'd asked myself: "**Ron, just *what are you doing here?***"

But you also recall that my fears were not to be realized. I didn't make a fool out of myself, nor did I let my boss down, because I knew all the answers to the questions that were asked of me.

There's another "stage" coming up for each of us when approach the Judgment Seat of the Lord of the Universe. He'll ask each of us: "**Just what are *you* doing here?**"

And our calm, collected, and confident answer will be: "**On my own account I have no right to be here. But for the sake of Jesus who suffered, died, and rose for my sins... I now seek entrance into His glory.**"

And with that, our ears will hear God, Himself say these blessed words: "**Come, My son. Come, My daughter. Enter now, into My kingdom of glory!**"

In Jesus holy name! [Amen.]

The peace of God that passes all human understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus unto life everlasting. [Amen.]