

The Transfiguration

Transfiguration Sunday

Passage: Exodus 34:29–35; Psalm 99; 2 Corinthians 3:12–4:2; Luke 9:28–36, (37–43a)

Key Passage:

Luke 9:28–36 - The Transfiguration

Why believe in Jesus? Can't prove it, but we have evidence. Evidence that is compelling for those who want to believe.

Why keep believing in Jesus and his promises when there is such suffering, sadness and evil in our world?

Today is **Transfiguration Sunday**, and we've read the details of this event which Luke recorded. The apostle Peter was one of 3 of Jesus' disciples who Jesus took with him up the mountain. The event is actually for them. And it's also for us who read about it now. Peter's letter shows that these events left an indelible impression on him as he wrote in 2 Peter 1:16-18

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. 17 For he received honour and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." 18 We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.

This event provides further confirmation that in knowing Jesus we know God, so those who follow Jesus can have full confidence in Him.

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In the beginning of chapter 9 Luke notes that when King Herod hears what Jesus has been doing he asks: "Who is this?" Jesus is someone who is clearly different to anyone else. Jesus did not make an announcement that he is the Christ. But, after they got to know him, his disciples came to that conclusion. In Luke chapter 9:20 when Jesus asks his disciples: "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "The Christ of God."

Jesus' disciples have come to realise that he is the One spoken of in the OT; the One God had promised to send to rule and rescue his people.

In this chapter Luke describes an event which added further weight to their assessment of who Jesus is. Today we'll consider 2 key themes which show us that **in knowing Jesus we know God himself**. First, picture:

The Event itself. Jesus -

- invites Peter, James and John to come with him as he goes out to pray. They follow him up the familiar trail - it's not too steep. At the top, Jesus stops and begins to pray - as was his custom. While he was praying, his face was changed -

- the Jesus is transfigured - and his clothes dazzled like lightning. Then they saw 2 other men - Moses and Elijah - in glorious splendour standing with him, talking. They were speaking about his departure, his exodus, which would take place in Jerusalem. A week earlier when Peter declared Jesus was the Christ, Jesus had told them that they were going to Jerusalem and he would be rejected by the religious authorities, arrested, crucified, and on the third day be raised to life again. His coming crucifixion and resurrection were his departure, his exodus.

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Meanwhile the disciples grew heavy with sleep, but when they were fully awake they saw his glory and the 2 men with him talking about his departure. They are identified as Moses and Elijah. Why these Old Testament men? In Deuteronomy 18:15 Moses said that God would send a prophet like him before that time and in Malachi 4:5-6, God said Elijah would come again before God came in judgement. The presence of these men tells us God's judgement is just round the corner. The cross looms closer.

Meanwhile Peter strangely offers to build 3 tents - one for each of the dazzling figures. In the Old Testament this time of feasting looked back to God's provision in the wilderness, anticipating the God's ultimate deliverance.

Almost in response a cloud envelopes them all. And what happens then is most significant.

In the second theme a voice from the cloud announces **the Heavenly Endorsement of Jesus**. Listen again to heaven's comment: "This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him." Who is speaking? Just one person. He's speaking about Jesus. It's the voice of God. "This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him." Each of the 3 phrases that are spoken is important.

"This is my Son, ..." - we've heard those words before. Remember when John baptised Jesus in Luke 3:21-22:

When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

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Here is **God's affirmation of Jesus**. Not just a man, but indeed God as well. Here is the One whom God has chosen as his King - the second phrase: "... whom I have chosen;" alludes to Psalm 2:7. It's a Psalm about the world's rejection of God and his authority, and God's response with a declaration that he will install his Son as King who would rule over the whole world, and bring all opposition to an end, and safety for his people. God's chosen King is about to experience the world's rejection, but will be raised on the third day.

The third phrase "... listen to him." calls on Peter, James and John to listen to Jesus. The disciples will need instruction from the One who leads the way to God. There are things the disciples do not yet understand about the one they have confessed as the Christ. They are to listen to him. His word is God's word.

Peter recalled that instruction in his Second Letter. It made a deep impression in him. It needs to make a deep impression in us too. Here is the first take-home message: This passage calls on each of us to "Listen to him" - to Jesus as we read his word. **In knowing Jesus we know God himself - you can have confidence in God's word.**

Secondly this passage highlights the transcendence of Jesus. He is human, but not simply human. He is God's Son - he himself is divine. Jesus has 2 natures: he has our human nature and he also has God's divine nature. Not half and half, but he is a unity sharing 2 natures. He understands you, and he mediates for you before God. He is your God and your Saviour. Listen to him; put your full confidence in him. **In knowing Jesus we know God himself - he is worthy of your trust.**