

IK Synod Sermon and Prayers  
Transfiguration Sunday  
February 27, 2022

Gospel Reading – Luke 9:28-36 [37-43a] NRSV  
The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter.  
**Glory to you, O Lord.**

Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah” —not knowing what he said. While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. Then from the cloud came a voice that said, “This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!” When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.

The Gospel of the Lord  
**Praise to you, O Christ.**

Grace to you and peace from God, the Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

On this Sunday, February 27th, we celebrate the Transfiguration of Our Lord. This is the last Sunday in the season of Epiphany. Now we turn our eyes and our hearts toward the cross, as in a few days we observe Ash Wednesday and begin the Season of Lent and our Lenten journey.

Our reading begins with these words, “...about eight days later...” You may be wondering, what had happened about eight days ago. If we look back at the verses just prior to our Gospel reading Jesus asks his disciples, “Who do the crowds say that I am?” And then he asks, “Who do YOU say I am?” And we have Peter’s on the spot, accurate answer - The Messiah of God!

Then Jesus tells the disciples about what awaits him. “The Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.”

After this, Jesus continues by teaching about discipleship, about denying ourselves and taking up our cross daily and following him.

And then Jesus goes up on the mountain taking Peter and James and John with him. And on the mountain Jesus is transfiguration. What an amazing event! Jesus is praying and his face is changed and his clothes become dazzling white. Moses and Elijah suddenly appear and are talking to Jesus. And the disciples, even as they are sleepy, get to see Jesus' glory and these two men talking to Jesus about his departure, about his exodus.

Peter wants to capture this moment in time and so he proposes that they make three dwellings one each for Jesus and Moses and Elijah.

Peter knows that this is not a good suggestion, but he wants to somehow preserve this moment, this fabulous experience.

As one my colleagues said, "Today — in our time.....it would be a time for a selfie." Can you imagine it? Peter and James and John standing next to Jesus and Moses and Elijah, Peter holding up his cell phone, and taking a selfie, preserving the moment, hoping that the camera does justice to the dazzling white of the clothing, the change in Jesus' face.

But there is no preserving the moment, because while Peter was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud.

Then from the cloud comes the voice, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him."

And Jesus is alone, the two men are gone. The focus is on Jesus. Listen to him. Listen to Jesus.

What is it that we are to listen to? What is it that we have heard from Jesus? What is it we have learned from Jesus? (Take a moment to think about this.) What is it that you have heard from Jesus? What is it you have learned from Jesus?

Listen to him. Listen to Jesus, the voice says, God says. Does Jesus still speak to us today? Does he? I think Jesus does. Jesus still speaks to us today — through the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit, a gift each of you was given in your baptism. The Holy Spirit, dwelling in you. God right there. Jesus right there dwelling within you. Dwelling within your worshipping community. Dwelling in the world. God speaks. Jesus speaks even today — through the Holy Spirit.

What is God saying to you? What is Jesus saying to you? What is God, what is Jesus calling you to do? How is the Spirit bringing about Jesus' presence here on earth today? Here in your life? Here in the life of your congregation?

We often hear 'call' stories from pastors....they say....."this is when and how I knew God was calling me into the ministry."

But each of us, pastor or not, has a call story, in fact probably various and many call stories. God calls into roles and relationships as moms and dads, employees and employers, students and retirees, gainfully employed and those looking for work, folks who are teachers and farmers, military personnel, insurance agents, and little league coaches.

It is a long story, but I knew at about the age of 10 that I was called to adopt a child when I became an adult. And I did. I adopted my son from Russia.

When I began my first job in residential life at the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks, before I ever imagined going to seminary, I knew it was God calling me there.

What about you? When have you felt called by God? When have you listened to Jesus?

Siblings in Christ, what has God called you to do and to be. What new venture might God be calling you into? Congregations, what is God calling you to do in the next season of your ministry? Take time to pray, to listen, to discern.

Up on the mountain that day, Jesus was transfigured and God spoke, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him."

Listen, oh people of God. When waters drip off your brow — in the rain, in the shower — and you remember Jesus' words which were repeated at your baptism, listen "I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

Listen as the sign of the cross is traced on your forehead with these words. "You have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever." Listen to your new name....."Child of God".

Listen, as the ashen cross is traced once again on your forehead on Ash Wednesday with these words, "Remember, you are dust and to dust you shall return."

Listen, as we confess our sins together and as you are forgiven in the name of Jesus Christ.

Listen, as we join our voices singing our praise and thanksgiving. Giving thanks for all that God has given to us — his Son, his creation, your faith community, your family, your friends and countless other blessings.

Listen, as the one who suffered and died and rose for you.....invites you to the meal and feeds you with His body and blood. Listen for the welcome. Listen for the love. Listen for the grace. Listen for the mercy. Listen for the promise. Listen for the voices of believers from every time and place who join together at the table.

Listen to Jesus, for the calling, listen to Jesus for the equipping, listen to Jesus for the sending — as renewed and fed and nourished we go out into the world to listen and to respond, again and again.

Amen.

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

The Spirit of the Lord is poured out upon us in abundance; so we are bold to pray for the church, the world, and all that God has made.

A brief silence.

Transform us by your greatness, O God. Send us down the mountain to share joy with all people. Make us agents of change, confident that your hope will vanquish despair and your goodness will conquer evil. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

The mountains and valleys sing your praise. Dazzle us with your presence in every landscape: bluffs built by ancient glaciers, canyons carved by flowing rivers, flat horizons with uninterrupted views, and sands shaped by ocean tides. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

You love justice and establish equity. Strengthen leaders of local governments, community nonprofits, and grassroots campaigns. Bless them with gifts of integrity, creativity, and sound conscience. Build up safe and joyful communities where all people may thrive. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

Heal those who are in distress. Give patience to those waiting for answers. Grant hope to those who have reached the limits of treatment. Give compassionate hearts to those who accompany loved ones through illness and uncertainty. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

Today we shout alleluia from the mountaintop; this week we enter the wilderness of Lent. Bless all who prepare and lead us in worship during this change of season: pastors, deacons, musicians, and all who contribute to our worship life. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

Blessed are they who listened to Christ's voice in this life and now rest with him. Transform us from glory into glory, and give us your peace, that we do not lose heart. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

Since we have such great hope in your promises, O God, we lift these and all of our prayers to you in confidence and faith; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

**Amen.**

Hear us now as we pray the words that Christ has taught us,

**Our Father, who art in heaven,**

**hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come,**

**thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;**

**and forgive us our trespasses,**

**as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen.**

**Blessing**

God, who leads you in pathways of righteousness,  
who rejoices over you,  
and who calls you by name,  
✠ bless your going out and your coming in,  
today and forever.

**Amen.**

**Dismissal**

Go with Christ into a weary world.  
Share the good news.

**Thanks be to God.**