



# **THE FATHER'S COMMAND: THIS IS MY BELOVED SON... LISTEN TO HIM**

**GRACE COMMUNION INTERNATIONAL, NEW BRUNSWICK, CANADA**

**FEBRUARY 23, 2020**

THE FATHER'S COMMAND: THIS IS MY BELOVED SON... LISTEN TO HIM

## **SCRIPTURE READING**

### **MATT 17:1-9 (ESV)**

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**“1 ¶ And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves.**

**2 And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light.**

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**3 And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him.**

**4 And Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.”**

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**5 He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, “**This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.**”)**

**6 When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified.**

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**7 But Jesus came and touched them, saying,  
"Rise, and have no fear."**

**8 And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no  
one but Jesus only.**

**9 And as they were coming down the mountain,  
Jesus commanded them, "Tell no one the vision,  
until the Son of Man is raised from the dead.""**

**(Mt 17:1-9 ESV**

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**THESE ARE THE INSPIRED WORDS OF GOD**

**THANK YOU FATHER FOR SHOWING THE  
GLORY OF JESUS TO THREE OF HIS DISCIPLES.**

**AMEN**

During today's sermon, we are going to consider the transfiguration of Jesus and what it means.

The transfiguration is written about in the Gospel of Matthew, Mark and Luke.

As we read the three accounts, we learn some important factor is not necessarily included in Matthew 17.

From the Gospel of Mark, we learn the following:

## FROM THE GOSPEL OF MARK

- **“and his (Jesus) clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them.” (Mr 9:3 ESV)**
- **“. And Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.” . For he did not know what to say, for they were terrified.” (Mr 9:5-6 ESV)**

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## FROM THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

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**“Now about eight days after these sayings he took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray.” (Lu 9:28 ESV)**

**“And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white.” (Lu 9:29 ESV)**

**“30 And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, 31 who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure (exodus in original) , which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.” (Lu 9:30-31 ESV)**

**“32 Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep, but when they became fully awake they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. 33 And as the men were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah”—not knowing what he said.” (Lu 9:32-33 ESV)**

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**“As he was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud.” (Lu 9:34 ESV)**

Looking at the three Gospel accounts helps us to have a fuller picture of what happened at the transfiguration.

The Transfiguration is a very important piece of the gospel because it shows who Jesus really is.

As we look at the Transfiguration, again, we read in the Bible that God is one. We also read that in the oneness of God, there are three distinct persons. It is difficult for us to wrap our minds about this truth because God is spirit. Because we are physical, we see through our physical eyes. We must set that aside and accept in faith how God reveals himself. **Only God can reveal God.** Jesus did this when he came to the earth in our incarnate flesh, when he came from heaven to earth being fully man while not stopping to be God.

**“All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.” (Lu 10:22 ESV)**

The persons in the one God are in a very intimate relationship with one another, coexisting in and with one another in perfect love. All three persons in the Godhead

are of the same essence.

In the New Testament, the disciples learn something about God that was not known before in the Old Testament. The people of God, the Israelites, did not understand that God is one and one in three.

In the Old Testament, Moses was inspired to write about the Spirit of God in the book of Genesis. The Israelites understood that God is one.

We know they did not understand the threeness in the oneness of God because they were insulted that Jesus called himself the Son of God making himself equal with God. **“32 Jesus answered them, ‘I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone me?’ 33 The Jews answered him, ‘It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God.’ (Joh 10:32-33 ESV)**

We must not fall into the trap of modalism which teaches that God sometimes manifests himself as Father, sometimes as the Son and sometimes as the Holy Spirit.

**Definition of modalism from Merriam Webster Dictionary.**

**: the theological doctrine that the members of the Trinity are not three distinct persons but rather three modes or forms of activity (the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) under which God manifests himself.**

Modalism has been mainly associated with Sabellius, who taught a form of it in Rome in the 3rd century (from Google Search).

Let us does go back to the Transfiguration. Why is it important?

## WHY IS THE TRANSFIGURATION IMPORTANT?

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- **It changes the way we see the world; it changes our worldview.**

The three apostles, Peter, James and John who went up with Jesus on top of that mountain heard Jesus, saw him, spoke with him but they did not fully appreciate who he was. Many times, the teaching of Jesus was over their heads. They heard the words but did not understand.

The transfiguration was a major event and turning point in their life.

In the Transfiguration, we are able to notice a few things that are obvious.

The three apostles never expected to see what they saw. They had seen Jesus praying before, but they had never seen him transfigured.

Luke tells us they woke up to see Moses and Elijah talking about Jesus' departure or Exodus from this world.

It does not say that Moses and Elijah were transfigured but that Jesus was.

They were so overwhelmed and awed by what they saw. They did not know what to say.

Moses and Elijah both left the scene and only Jesus remained.

Moses, the giver of the law and Elijah the prophet were pointing to Jesus.

A cloud covered them and they heard the voice of God the Father telling them, **“This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him”**.

Luke wrote, **“This is my Son, my Chosen One, listen to him.”** **Luke 9:35**

Everything comes together in Christ. He is truly the fulfilment of the law and the prophets. He is the new covenant. **“The Messiah-Servant was the covenant—he was the basis of the relationship between God and his people. It is only through Jesus Christ that we can have an eternal relationship with God. ‘The Redeemer will come to Zion,’ Isaiah 59:20 predicts, ‘to those in Jacob who repent of their sins.’ God will make a covenant with these repentant people. His Spirit will be upon them, and his words will remain in them (verse 21). This is the new covenant** (from <https://archive.gci.org/articles/jesus-and-the-new-covenant/>).

God the Father told those disciples how Jesus is loved and important. He is the chosen one, the perfect man representing all of us.

His relationship with God the Father is perfect, flawless and faultless in every way.

Furthermore, he is the Way to God. Without Jesus and what he did for us, we could not have access to eternal life and to the wonderful future God has reserved for all those who place their trust in him in faith.

Our responsibility as God’s people is to listen to Jesus. He is to be our loving Lord and Shepherd. He is to be our Wisdom. He is the Truth and his word is truth.

It is important to note that in being commanded to obey Jesus, we are invited in a relationship with him, a relationship of love. God sending Jesus to the earth was an act of love towards us who needed rescue. It was voluntary, loving, etc. Obedience to Jesus is an act of love, love towards God first and love towards neighbor. God does not coerce us to obey. **We have the freedom to so or not. God hasn’t changed. He still looks at the heart. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.”** I Sam. 16:7. Jesus came to serve out of love for the Father and for us. Jesus was not self oriented. He was God oriented. His relationship with God the Father is perfect love. We have been called in that relationship through the Holy Spirit. We participate now in that relationship of love and have been called to be in that relationship forever united to Jesus. We have been called to serve out of love. We are called to obey in love because we are given the mind of Christ. Our obedience is rooted in God, rooted in Jesus who surrendered his

will to God the Father. Therefore our obedience is not to be legalistic but rooted in grace. (See Mr. Deddo's article "**Avoiding the chains of legalism**" <http://thesurprisinggodblog.gci.org/2020/02/avoiding-chains-of-legalism.html>)

We also learned from this passage the importance of prayer. Jesus in his humanity maintained his relationship with God the Father through prayer.

As a he was praying, God the Father glorified him for The benefit of the apostles and for our benefit.

The three disciples did not fully understand what they witnessed at the time. It was only later, after the coming of the Holy Spirit, that they would deeply and genuinely understand why Jesus came to the earth.

They were not to tell anyone what they beheld until after his resurrection, after he would be risen from the dead. They understood at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended on them in a powerful way.

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## IN JESUS, WE VIEW REALITY MORE CLEARLY

- **“But Jesus came and touched them, saying, ‘Rise, and have no fear.’ (Mt 17:7 ESV)**

After the Transfiguration, Peter’s life was completely transformed by God. Jesus changed his outlook on his relationship with God, the way he saw the world, his role in the church, etc.

Isn't it inspiring that after hearing the Father's voice, Jesus reassured the three disciples not to fear. Jesus calms and soothes fear and anxiety.

In those words, he also told also them not to fear God the Father with an unhealthy fear.

God the Father is often seen as a harsh disciplinarian, one who has to be appeased. Jesus shed proper light on the misconception of who God The Father is. He is for us just as Jesus is for us, just as the Holy Spirit is for us!

Even if there were reassured of the Father's love for them, even if Jesus had told the disciples that he would die and would be resurrected, when they saw Jesus crucified, all, except the apostle John, ran away in fear. Peter even denied Jesus when confronted that he was also a disciple. The apostles, after the crucifixion, when back to their old occupation temporarily.

After meeting Jesus alive after the resurrection, he was willing to leave his profession of fisherman. He followed the instructions of Jesus to await for the descent or the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

He changed from fearing the loss of his own life to being willing to die for Jesus, which he did. Peter and the other disciples preach powerfully about who the glorified Jesus is and his importance to all who come to believe in him.

***Jesus is not just the only way to the Father, as vitally important as that is for life eternal, but he is the sole truth that brings all reality into focus, and he is the sole access in this world to the kind of life that allows us to live the way God intends us to live. If Jesus truly is the Son of God, which the events of his transfiguration declare him to be, then it demands that we view everything through his ordering of this world.*** **From:** Wilkins, Michael J.. The NIV Application Commentary: Matthew (p. 603). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

We are to listen to Jesus as we are instructed by God The Father, we are to examine everything through Jesus. He is the truth. He is the standard through whom we see the world.

Through him, we can examine the philosophies of this world and know what can be accepted and trusted and what stands against his teaching.

We see the world not through the eyes of evolution which states that the world began without a Creator. We see the world as being created by God and sustained every millisecond by Jesus Christ.

**We see the world and this decaying universe not as hopeless but with hope.** Jesus on the cross has redeemed everything. The apostle Paul wrote that even creation awaited the manifestation of the sons of God, referring to all believing people (Romans 8).

We see other people whether they be rich or poor as loved by God. Jesus was willingly sent to this world by God the Father not to condemn the world but to save everyone who would believe Jesus and accept his grace in faith.

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## **LISTENING TO JESUS GIVES US HOPE**

**“17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.**

**18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.**

**19 If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.” (1Co 15:17-19 ESV)**

1- Our hope transcends this life  
Everything perishes in this world.

- Physical life come and go.
- Countries come and go.
- Governments come and go.
- Jobs come and go.
- Companies come and go.
- Banks come and go.
- Investments come and go.
- The energy of youth comes and goes.
- There is not one thing in this world that does not deteriorate or die.

Jesus has come to our world from eternity. He has come to this world as a human being. He has died and risen from the dead as a human being. He died not because he needed to die. He was sinless. He died out of love for us! He has ascended to heaven, to the right hand of the Father where one day all believers will be in the man Jesus Christ.

The earth is going to be renewed. **“But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.” (2Pe 3:13 ESV)**

## 2- The grace of God trains us (Next slide)

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## **JESUS TEACHES US HOW TO LIVE . WE ARE TRAINED BY HIS GRACE**

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• (Tit 2:11-14 ESV)

**“11 ¶ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people,**

**12 training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,**

**13 waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,**

**14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.” (Tit 2:11-14 ESV)**

Taking heed of what God the Father told us about Jesus when he was transfigured on that mountain completely transforms the way we live, as we have just read in those verses in Titus.

As Jesus was glorified in the Transfiguration, we will also share in that wonderful glory.

**“and if children, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ.” (Ro 8:17 ESV)**

**“Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.” (1 Jo 3:2 ESV) (Next slide)**

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## **NEW MEANING IN LIGHT OF THE TRANSFIGURATION**

- **“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (Joh 1:14 ESV)**

These words had powerful meaning for John because he saw Jesus in his glorified state! He knew very well what awaits us at the resurrection.

You see, the Transfiguration of Jesus not only declared who He is and his relationship with God the Father, but also shows us the glory that awaits us in Jesus Christ.

How glorious and wonderful is the love of God for us!

**Let us pray**