

February 14 & 15, 2026 – Transfiguration

Matthew 17:1-9

Dear friend in Christ Jesus:

Today we observe the Transfiguration of Our Lord. The Transfiguration is that event when our Lord Jesus Christ was transformed in his appearance. His glory was made manifest before he set out on his way to the cross. This Transfiguration serves as a fitting bridge between Epiphany and Lent. Today let us consider this whole event under the theme: **“The Vision and the Voice of the Transfiguration.”**

First, the vision. What do we see? As we go up the mountain with our fellow disciples, Peter, James and John, we see our teacher, Jesus. Only he doesn't look like what we're used to. The appearance of his face has changed. His face is glorious and radiant. His clothes have become as bright as a flash of lightning. The sight is spectacular, awesome! We're catching a glimpse here of Christ's glory as the Son of God, the glory he always had from eternity, but which he kept largely hidden during the days of his earthly ministry.

Our Lord transfigured. What else do we see? Two men with him, Moses and Elijah. These are two of the greatest figures from Israel's past. Moses, the deliverer out of Egypt, the lawgiver at Mount Sinai, the leader to the Promised Land. Moses, the great prophet of God, who saw God's face on Mount Sinai. Moses, who said, **“The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brother Israelites. You must listen to him.”** (Deut. 18:15) And then there is Elijah, the greatest prophet to have come after Moses up to that point. But now they are standing there with one who is greater than Moses, one greater than Elijah. Jesus alone is the one we end up seeing. Moses and Elijah have served their purpose. They pointed ahead to the Christ to come. Now he is here, and they gladly fade from sight, yielding the spotlight to him for whom it was designed.

But before they go, we hear their voices. Moses and Elijah are having a conversation with Jesus. They're speaking. Luke's account says that they were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. The word choice is significant. The Greek word that's translated as **“departure”** is a term you're already familiar with. It's the word **“exodus.”** In other words, Jesus was about to accomplish his **“departure,”** his **“exodus,”** by going to Jerusalem.

What does that mean for you? Well, think back to the first exodus, the one led by Moses. What was the situation? God's people were in slavery, in bondage in Egypt, under the oppression of the Pharaoh. They were trapped, with no way out. The burden was heavy; the labor was hard. They were crying out in distress and were unable to save themselves. That was a picture of our life in the slavery of sin under the dominion of Satan. That was our condition, a state of distress and death, a heavy burden and a hard labor.

But then for Israel, God sent a deliverer, Moses. Moses led Israel out of Egypt, out of slavery. That was the first exodus, the departure, the way out. The Lord told Moses to have the Israelites offer up the Passover lamb, by whose blood their homes were spared. Moses then led the people on the way out to freedom and forward to the Promised Land. Moses didn't quite get there himself. He wasn't able to cross over and lead the people in. That would be left to his successor.

But the real successor to Moses, the true leader out of bondage and into the Promised Land, that would be Jesus, the one transfigured here on the mountain next to Moses. Jesus leads the ultimate exodus. Jesus brings us out of the hard labor of sin, and he says, **“Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”** Jesus leads us through the wilderness of this world on our journey to the promised land of heaven. And he will lead us all the way in. He's gone there ahead of us through death, and back to life again, life everlasting.

So here at the Transfiguration, we see Moses and Elijah and Jesus, and they're speaking of Jesus' departure, his exodus, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. By going to Jerusalem to die on the cross as our Passover Lamb and then rise from the dead and return to his Father, Jesus would bring about the ultimate exodus for God's people. For through his crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, Christ Jesus has brought us out of our bondage to sin and death and now leads us to the promised land of eternal life in heaven.

Now we see something new come into our vision. A bright cloud appears. It is the glorious presence of God the Father. And from the cloud we hear the Father's voice. That voice has spoken before in Jesus' ministry. At Jesus' baptism there were these words, **“This is my Son, whom I love. I am well pleased with him.”** Now we

hear similar words, **“This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him.”** The Father is emphasizing and underscoring the mission of the Son. The Father’s voice calls us to listen to his Son’s voice. He bids us listen to this Jesus.

“Listen to him.” How we need this encouragement to listen to our Lord. For about a week earlier, Jesus said something his disciples did not want to hear. He said, **“The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and experts in the law. He must be killed and be raised on the third day.”** Talk of a suffering Messiah, a dead, executed Messiah. This does not sound good to our glory-loving ears. We do not want to listen to Jesus when he’s talking like this. But God says: “Listen to him. What he’s saying is true—and necessary.”

It is necessary for Jesus to go to Jerusalem to suffer and die. There’s no other way. It would take nothing less than the death of God’s own Son to pay for your sins. You couldn’t do it yourself. All your good works are not enough to blot out the dark record of your sins. Only Jesus can do that. All your good intentions cannot save you from death in hell. Only Jesus can. No one else. This is why you need to listen to him. Jesus Christ is your only hope. He is the only Savior God has provided for all people. Your life, your salvation, it all depends entirely on this man Jesus, the God-man Savior. That is why the Father says, **“This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him.”** And then we look, and we see Jesus alone.

And so, the Father, by the vision and by the voice, is calling our attention once again to his Son. See him as he is about to walk the Lenten road of opposition, suffering, and shame, for you. See him go all the way to the cross, there to purchase your redemption. See him risen from the dead, your living Lord. Now listen to him when he says, “Your sins are forgiven you. You have life, eternal life, in my name. Follow me.”

But this vision and voice of the Transfiguration isn’t just a cool story that leads us up to Lent. This wasn’t an isolated event that impacted the lives of a few people. Jesus’ transfiguration transforms us, and it changes the way we look at life. When you are struggling, when you are discouraged, when everything you see around you seems to indicate that our country is becoming more godless with each passing day, remember that there is more to this world than meets the eye. Remember that your ascended and glorified Lord will be with you always, and remember that he is still using his almighty power to protect and preserve his people.

If you recently lost a loved one, or if someone you love was taken from you years ago and you can still feel the void in your life, God doesn’t want you to forget about them. He wants you to remember them. Remember that the glory we can only read about, that we can only imagine, that glory is theirs right now and it will be theirs forever.

If your body doesn’t work as well as it used to, if you need to take a handful of pills every morning, if you are going in for another treatment or coming back from serious surgery, when you look in the mirror and stare at your own mortality, don’t be afraid. Remember the transfiguration. Remember God’s promise that he will transform your lowly body so that it will be like his glorious body (Philippians 3:21). And remember that the day we celebrate today anticipates a much more glorious day, the day when we will bask in eternal glory with Peter and James and John and Moses and Elijah and our Savior Jesus in heaven. Amen.