

## Transfiguration of Our Lord

February 11, 2024 (Year B)



*The whole holy Trinity appears here to strengthen the believers; namely, Christ in his transfigured form, the Father in the voice, and the Holy Ghost in the bright cloud.*

– Martin Luther –  
*Notes on the Gospel*

### PROCLAMATION POINTS

*The following are some thoughts and questions to be used for a text study on the weekly lessons, or for jump-starting the imagination of the preacher and hearer in preparing for the proclamation event.*

#### Exodus 34:29–35

When Moses descended from Mount Sinai with the second set of stone tablets, his face shone like the sun because of his encounter with God. He was so changed that all were afraid to approach him. In the original Hebrew, the term *keren* means to *radiate light*, or *send forth rays*. The image represented by that word is similar to how a child might draw rays of light coming out of the sun — not unlike the points on the crown of the Statue of Liberty.

When St. Jerome translated the Bible into Latin, in this verse he used the Latin word *cornuta* — saying that Moses appeared “horned.” This translation caused some confusion, and is the reason why many medieval depictions of Moses in paintings and sculpture mistakenly show the prophet with goat-like horns.

- *In what way does an encounter with the Living God actually make a person different? How is this true in our lives? In what sense do we radiate the glory of God?*
- *Can the difference in us as people of faith be the cause of some confusion in the people around us? Why might some people fear being around a genuine person of faith?*

#### Psalms 50:1–6

The theme of God’s revealed glory continues in the psalm for the day, proclaiming that he has called the earth from “the rising of the sun to its setting.” In Hebrew, this was the common way to express the expanse of the world from east to the west. But it also carries with it the connotation of passing time, and the changeless nature of God’s glory.

- *Verse 2 says that “God reveals himself” and verse 3 says God “will not keep silence.” How and why does God choose to reveal himself to us primarily through his Word?*

We live with certainty in the midst of a changeable world, that no matter what happens in our lives, the sun will still rise the next day — the earth will keep turning. But even this is only due to the stability and certainty of God himself.

- *Why is it important to know that no matter what happens in our lives, God is still in control? What makes that so hard to see in times of chaos and tragedy?*

#### 2 Corinthians 3:12–13, 4:1–6

In this text, Paul picked up on the imagery of the veil from our Old Testament reading and used it as a metaphor to describe what it is like to try to understand God outside of Christ. Paul was thinking especially of his fellow Jews, who

acknowledged the one true God, but didn’t understand the fullness of God’s grace and mercy.

- *How do you think your faith in Christ gives you a different view of the Old Testament than Jewish people might have?*

Paul said that, in Christ, the veil had been lifted for those who are ministers of the new covenant. In faith, we see what others cannot and are able to bear the unbearable.

- *The Bible is filled with commandments and requirements that we could never fulfill. How does the promise of Christ allow us to see the Law of God differently from those who treat the Law as a checklist of works to accomplish?*
- *Compare this lesson with what Paul says in Romans 3:20. How is the Word and truth of Christ veiled to unbelievers? Who lifts that veil?*

#### Mark 9:2–9

The name for this Sunday of the Church year, Transfiguration, is the Latin version of the Greek word “metamorphosis” — meaning to change form or change in appearance. What the disciples witnessed on the mountain was a sudden transformation — a vision of Jesus in his glorified form. To describe his clothing as “dazzling white” is to say that Jesus radiated the power and holiness of God.

- *The sun and the moon both radiate light, but in different ways. How is the difference between the light from Jesus and the light from Moses similar to this same distinction?*

St. Mark reported that a cloud covered the mountain where Jesus was met by Elijah and Moses at the transfiguration. This cloud immediately draws to mind the cloud that appeared on the top of the mountain, when the Israelites were camped at the foot of Mount Sinai.

At this new manifestation of God on the mountaintop, not surprisingly, Peter immediately suggested building tents. The Jewish people had a holiday called the “Festival of Booths” where they camped in tents to recreate the wilderness wandering of the Exodus. The Hebrew word *mishkan* (tent, booth) comes from the same root word for *shekinah* (tabernacle) which was the way the Israelites referred to the dwelling place of God.

Jesus never dignified Peter’s suggestion with a response. Instead, by the voice from heaven, the disciples were called to focus their attention on Jesus alone.

- *In what sense is Jesus himself the true “dwelling place” of God?*
- *How does Jesus supersede and fulfill the promise of the Exodus? What slavery are we being set free from in Christ?*