

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Have you ever imagined what it must have been like? To be an Israelite, camped at the base of Mt. Sinai while your leader, Moses, was on top of the mountain, talking to God. And then he came down, a changed man. You could see it in his face. It was radiant. You talk about the glow of a pregnant woman, but that doesn't even begin to explain what those Israelites saw in Moses, a man blessed to see the heavenly glory of God.

On a day like today, Transfiguration Sunday, I can't help but think of that Old Testament account. I still remember fondly those times when my dad would sit me on his knee and tell me all about Moses, the great leader of the Israelites, and this part always stuck out to me. Moses, seeing just a glimpse of the heavenly glory of the LORD. How his face beamed with excitement! How it reflected that glory of the LORD, the God of free and faithful grace, to the people, so bright, so radiant, they made him cover himself up with a veil.

Well, this morning, I'd like to tell you about the radiance of the LORD's glory, from another angle. This morning, Jesus himself reveals his glory. Jesus reveals himself through his glory.

Now, I actually didn't get to see the event, Jesus' transfiguration, firsthand. A little bummed that I didn't. But I did get the next best thing. I had three reliable eye-witnesses tell me in detail what happened on the Mount of Transfiguration. You know them. Jesus' closest disciples, and friends, Peter, James, and John.

You heard their account as well, a little earlier, when you read my gospel, the gospel of, well, me, Luke. But for a moment now, I'd like to transport you back to that awesome day so you can see what the disciples saw.

Maybe we should set the scene first. It was about eight days later. Eight days after what? Well, it was about a week after an exciting, yet sobering day for the 12 disciples. After a couple of years of following Jesus, listening to him preach, seeing him perform miracle after miracle, all of that to show who he truly was, the Son of God, they thought they had a pretty good grip on who Jesus was.

Jesus asked, "Who do you say that I am," the perfect opportunity for the disciples to confess their faith in them, and they did. I hope you remember Peter's beautiful confession, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

By those words, you would think the disciples got it. Not only knowing who Jesus was, but what he had come to do. But when Jesus explained what would happen to him along the road to the cross, his suffering, being rejected by the Jews, being killed, but then rising back to life, they didn't like it. They didn't understand why Jesus had to go and endure all the pain and suffering. They didn't want him to go. They were in need of a pick-me-up.

They got it...eight days later. Now, Jesus had this ritual where every so often he liked to go up the mountainside, by himself, to pray. That was such an important part of his ministry. It gave him the

chance to get refreshed by his heavenly Father and to regroup and be reenergized to continue his earthly work.

But this time was different. He took Peter, James, and John with him up the mountain. Now, I imagine Jesus did what he normally did. He started praying, and well, if you think your pastor's prayers sometimes get a little long, just a drop in the bucket compared to Jesus' prayers.

The Three admittedly became tired, their eyes started getting a little heavy, and they started to nod off. But all the while, something unusual but extraordinary was happening to Jesus. I described it the best that I could, but I know it will never be able to fully depict Jesus' appearance as he was transfiguring.

Through groggy eyes, the disciples saw a bright light, and opened their eyes to see Jesus, his face shining, his clothes as bright as a flash of lightning.

Do you understand what was happening? Jesus was revealing a glimpse of his glory, like what Moses saw. All the power and majesty and divine glory that are his, but that he put aside and didn't make full use of during his earthly ministry, Jesus was revealing it then. If there was any confusion or doubts about Jesus being God, even in the disciples, that appearance put those to rest.

And that wasn't it. As Peter, James, and John were wiping their eyes, trying to make sense of what was taking place in front of them, they realized Jesus wasn't alone. And this wasn't a dream.

Two other men were there. How the disciples knew who they were, they couldn't really explain. But somehow, they knew who these two Old Testament rock stars were. The famed Moses and Elijah. I won't even tell you how jealous I was of the Three. Moses, representing the giving of the law in the Old Testament, and Elijah, a wonderful representative of the prophets.

But equally as fascinating as their sudden appearance was what Moses and Elijah and Jesus were conversing about. They were talking about his departure, which Jesus was going to bring to fulfillment in Jerusalem. They were discussing his coming approaching death, not in a sad tone, like they were distraught that he had to go. But encouraging Jesus. He had a long road to go. But the end of that road, salvation for the world, that would keep him going.

Do you know what your reaction to seeing something like this would have been? I can tell you how the Three reacted. Two were dumbfounded, still not being able to believe what they were seeing. Peter, on the other hand, well, he got real giddy and maybe a little too overexcited. Moses and Elijah were leaving Jesus, and Peter just blurted out, "Master, it's good for us to be here. Let us put three tents up for you and your guests."

His heart was in the right place, wanting this moment to last, to go on. He didn't know what he was really doing, though. Wanting to see more of Jesus' glory, but at the same time trying to prevent Jesus from carrying on his saving work, from beginning his walk to the cross.

o I don't know if I would have been quite as excited as Peter to want to keep seeing Jesus' glory, all of his heavenly splendor.

Now, don't get me wrong, I would love to see Jesus as he truly is, as the almighty Son of God, and I'm guessing you would, too. But you know, the same glory of Jesus reminds me of the glory I don't have. Jesus' perfect glory makes me think of all my deficiencies, all my sins.

To stand in front of a perfect God, who shines in all glory and might and power and majesty, a God who demands nothing less than perfection from me, and I can't give it. A God, who lovingly created me, who gives me everything I need in this life, and so much more, and how do I repay him?

A God who, in his glory, expects me to always be loving towards everyone who comes into my life, and I'm not. A God who, in his glory, expects me to always follow his commands, to not curse, to not lie, to not speak ill of others...to not covet, to not be greedy, to not hate, to not steal, cheat, lust after others, and I can't do it 100 percent of the time.

A God, who, in his glory, expects, who demands that he be the only God in my life, that I make him number one, the top priority in my life, and long to serve him, to worship him as much as I can, to learn more about him by being in his Word as much as I can, and strive to be like him every day, in everything I do...and I don't. I can't live up to his glory.

And in the presence of Jesus, my God of glory, I don't stack up. I'm a lousy sinner, and I definitely don't deserve to see his glory, but instead to be shut out from seeing him forever, in the prison of hell.

But as I think of that, I'm reminded of the way Jesus' transfiguration ends. Peter was speaking, a cloud appeared, covered them, and a voice spoke, "This is my Son, whom I have chosen."

"This is my Son, whom I have chosen." Do those words sound familiar to you? Can you think of another time when similar words were spoken? I'm thinking of Jesus' baptism, when, after Jesus was baptized, and as he was coming up out of the water, a voice spoke from heaven, "This is my Son, whom I love, with him I am well-pleased."

That was God the Father, setting apart his Son for a monumental task, to begin the work he had come to earth to carry out, to save the world from sin.

And now, with these words, "This is my Son, whom I have chosen," God was doing the same thing. Those words, not only bookending Jesus' earthly ministry, but revealing God's eternal purpose for his Son.

Yes, up to this point, Jesus had lived a perfect life, a major feat on its own, but in front of him was the culmination of his work...Calvary's cross. Jesus, the Lord of glory, clothed in heavenly splendor at his transfiguration, would very soon shed that glory to clothe himself in total humility.

That's what Jesus had been chosen to do. The King of glory, degraded to suffer at the hands of his enemies, be punished for crimes he didn't commit, and then ultimately, the ultimate act of humiliation, crucified as a common criminal, put on display for the public to mock and jeer.

The Lord of glory? Sure didn't look like it. The Lord of glory? Most certainly. Even in his death, Jesus showed his true glory as he destroyed the power of sin, death, and the devil. The blood he shed washed away all of my imperfections, all my sins, and it did the same for you too, forgiving us all.

And then came the great display of Jesus' glory. The transfiguration, that was only a glimpse. Jesus' resurrection, that was the whole thing. When Jesus rose from the dead, he did so with all the power and glory and splendor that are God's and God's alone.

Now, you didn't have the privilege to be there, at Jesus' transfiguration, at his resurrection. We may have not seen his glory revealed there.

But you have seen it. Every time you read the Scripture, the precious message of the gospel, of what Jesus did for you, you see his glory. Every time you confess your sins at church and hear your pastor, with the authority of God, assure your sins are forgiven, you see his glory. Every time you share Jesus with anyone else, you see his glory. You reveal his glory.

Now, the disciples, Peter, James, and John, they didn't do that at first. When the voice of God, finished speaking, it was just Jesus and the disciples. Surprisingly the disciples didn't share this wonderful event, at first. They kept what they had seen until after Easter.

We aren't held to those restrictions. Jesus has revealed his glory to us. We share that glory of a Savior who's lived, died, and rose so we could be forgiven. It's a privilege to have seen the light of Christ, and now, we get to reveal it. We get to show off Jesus' glory to others.

So here's my encouragement to you faithful lights of Christ. Shine. Shine as you live a life of thanksgiving to God as you obey his commands. Shine to those who are still in darkness. And we will shine until we reach eternal glory with our Lord of glory. Amen.