

The Transfiguration
February 11, 2018

2 Corinthians 4:3-6
95-97-96-771*

*CW-S – “I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light”

The Transfiguration - Take Another Good Look!

I. Thank God for your faith to see!

II. Thank God for what your faith sees!

Dear Christian friends,

Today we join Peter, James and John on the Mount of Transfiguration. Seeing what they saw – hearing what they heard – we echo Peter, **“Rabbi, it is good for us to be here.”** We can readily understand Peter WANTING TO STAY up there basking in Jesus’ glory **instead of returning** to that messed-up world down below. Ordered by Jesus **“not to tell anyone what they had seen until (He) had risen from the dead.”** I wonder how hard it was for them to KEEP THIS to themselves.

The transfiguration was meant to prepare Peter, James and John for Holy Week and **especially** Good Friday. What they would see and **hear** at Calvary would be a STARK CONTRAST to what they **saw and heard** on the transfiguration. Could this really be THE SAME Jesus – so in glory at His transfiguration – so covered with blood – **His own blood!** – hanging dead on a cross? What they believed about Jesus would be SORELY TESTED by what they saw happen to Jesus on Good Friday.

Before we begin our **Lenten journey** we climb this Mount of Transfiguration to BE STRENGTHENED in our faith. **So TAKE ANOTHER GOOD LOOK** at the Transfiguration! As you do that 1)THANK GOD for your faith to see and 2)**thank God** for what your faith sees!

I. Thank God for your faith to see!

In Bible class we’ve **been looking at** what the **Mormon** church teaches. Let’s just say Mormons believe some REALLY STRANGE – **bizarre** things. But the point has also been made that TO THE UNBELIEVER what we believe as Christians is JUST AS **ridiculous** and **bizarre**. That point itself is a BIBLICAL TRUTH. Earlier Paul had written that **“the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing - offensive to Jews and foolishness to Greeks.”**

Just look at some of the BASIC **truths** of our Christian faith. A virgin having a Baby who is the **eternal, almighty Son** of God in the flesh. Dead people coming back to life. Or this right here – TAKE ANOTHER **good look** – **“Jesus was transfigured in front of them. His clothes became radiant, dazzling white. Elijah appeared together with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.”** To the unbeliever this is all NONSENSE.

These verses pick up in the MIDDLE of Paul’s **train of thought**. Paul’s discussing HOW GLORIOUS the gospel message and **ministry** are. He’s made the point that **God’s LAW must be preached** – it’s GOD’S law. **Sinners need to be** CONFRONTED with their sin and **guilt**. Sinful pride and stubbornness need to be CRUSHED and CONDEMNED. It’s not OK to **ignore** and **defy** God. Only when sinners DESPAIR of their **own goodness** and see themselves JUSTLY HEADING to hell’s **eternal banishment** and punishment – only then will they see and savor God’s GLORIOUS gospel of Jesus as our **perfect Savior**. Facing up to our **damning** sin we thrill to hear the gospel’s, **“Be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven you.”**

That good news of **forgiveness** FULL and free in Jesus is so glorious yet IN REALITY many hear it and then SHRUG it off. They learn what Jesus has all done to save them and they walk away from their Savior. They DON’T HAVE TIME – they don’t want to BE BOTHERED with **Jesus – church** – God’s **Word**. They see being a Christian as a BUMMER instead of a **blessing**. They see Jesus as INTERFERING in their lives instead of giving them **eternal life**.

WHY do so many reject the gospel while WE thrill to hear it and cling to Jesus as our highest good? ***“If our gospel is veiled, it is veiled among those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from clearly seeing the light of the gospel.”*** Aren't those CHILLING words – the devil ***“blinding”*** people so they don't ***“clearly see”*** the gospel? Indeed, to hear the devil called ***“the god of this age!”*** Those who don't believe in Jesus are IN FACT worshiping and serving the devil. They may not think so but **by rejecting Jesus** and refusing to repent of their sins they are DOING EXACTLY what the **devil wants** them to do.

As we take another GOOD LOOK at Jesus' transfiguration thank God for your FAITH to **see the truth**. That faith is God's gift to you – it's literally a miracle that **God worked** in our hearts. Paul compares it to the **miracle of CREATION**. ***“For the God who said, “Light will shine out of darkness,” has made light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the person of Jesus.”*** We were JUST AS ***“dead in sin”*** – ***“blind”*** to the truth – ***“hostile to God”*** – AS those who reject the gospel. But THROUGH the gospel God brought us to SEE AND TRUST in Jesus as our Savior. Don't ever take your Christian faith FOR GRANTED! Treasure it – **protect** it – faithfully feed and **nourish** it with God's Word at home and at church. Don't let the devil REGAIN CONTROL of your heart and blind you to Jesus.

With the eyes of a GOD-GIVEN FAITH take another good look at Jesus' transfiguration and...

II. Thank God for what your faith sees!

In ***“the light of the gospel”*** we ***“clearly see Christ, who is God's image.”*** Looking at Jesus we SEE GOD Himself! AT THE HEART of the gospel and our Christian faith is the FACT that the man ***“Jesus of Nazareth”*** is in fact the eternal, almighty Son of God born one of us. Jesus is not just a GREAT GUY – He is ***“Immanuel”*** – ***“God (Himself) with us.”*** We must see that AS WE FOLLOW Jesus down this Mount of Transfiguration and on to Calvary.

Take another good look at Jesus' transfiguration and BOTH SEE and **hear** that truth. See Jesus giving Peter, James and John a GLORIOUS GLIMPSE of His divine glory. Hear God the Father say, ***“This is My Son, whom I love.”*** Oh, and also be sure to hear the Father say, ***“Listen to Him!”*** – literally, KEEP ON listening to Him! God orders all people to ***“listen”*** to Jesus – NOT IGNORE Him. To ***“listen”*** – to take to heart WHATEVER Jesus is saying – not argue with Him. WHO ARE WE to tell God He **doesn't know what** He's talking about?!

Matthew – Mark – Luke all record Jesus' transfiguration and they all struggle to find the WORDS TO DESCRIBE it. Matthew – ***“His face was shining like the sun. His clothes became as white as the light.”*** Mark – ***“His clothes became radiant, dazzling white, whiter than anyone on earth could bleach them.”*** Luke - ***“the appearance of His face changed, and His clothes became dazzling white.”*** Taking another good look at Jesus' transfiguration NOTICE how Paul uses the words ***“glory and light.”*** ***“Clearly seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ - made light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the person of Jesus.”***

That ***“glory of God”*** that we see ***“in the person of Jesus”*** is especially the glory of God's GRACE – His undeserved love for a **world of guilty** sinners. Peter wanted to stay up on that mountain. ***“Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us make three tents: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”*** Basking in the glory of Jesus' transfiguration sure BEAT ANYTHING the world down below could **ever offer** them. This was a TASTE OF HEAVEN – down below was God's ONCE PERFECT creation ruined by sin and **all the messes sin brings** with it – **sickness** and suffering – **pain** and problems – **diseases**, death and damnation.

Oh, take another good look at Jesus' transfiguration and with the eyes of faith see God's GLORIOUS GRACE – see Jesus determined to do EVERYTHING to save us sinners. See Jesus give us a GLIMPSE of the glory He had willingly left behind in heaven TO COME here as our Savior. **See Jesus**

leave this glory and GO DOWN this mountain heading to Jerusalem and the cross. EVEN BEFORE climbing this Mount of Transfiguration Jesus had ***“begun to show His disciples that He had to go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders, chief priests, and experts in the law, and be killed, and on the third day be raised again.”*** Yes, Jesus, ***“was speaking plainly to them.”***

Thank God that your **faith sees** the REAL MEANING and purpose of our **Lenten journey**. Jesus went to His cross **not as** a HELPLESS VICTIM but as the willing substitute for a world of sinners. Jesus – the ***“beloved Son”*** of God – the sinless Son of God ***“with whom (the Father) was well pleased”*** – is also the INNOCENT ***“Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world”*** with His own sacrificial death on the cross. Thank God for your FAITH THAT CLINGS to Jesus confident that ***“the blood of Jesus, God’s Son, cleanses us from all sin”*** – rejoicing that Jesus ***“did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”***

Take another good look at Jesus’ transfiguration and GET A GLIMPSE of the victory Jesus won for us! Jesus went to His **sacrificial death** on the cross confident of His **triumphant resurrection** from the dead on Easter morning. Jesus went that way so that INSTEAD of just a temporary glimpse of His glory we could confidently look forward to **spending all eternity** with Jesus in ALL His **heavenly glory**. On Maundy Thursday evening Jesus prayed, ***“Father, I want those you have given Me to be with Me where I am so that they may see My glory — the glory You gave Me because You loved Me before the world’s foundation.”*** That night Jesus also promised us, ***“If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to be with Me, so that you may also be where I am.”***

ONE DAY we will join Moses and Elijah – Peter, James and John – and all God’s redeemed people ***“standing before the throne (of God) and in front of the Lamb.”*** And it’s all because JESUS LEFT His glory and went that way of His cross. WHAT A GLORIOUS message and **glorious faith** – what GLORIOUS comfort and **hope**!

So take another good look at Jesus’ transfiguration – thank God for what **your faith sees** – and then climb down this mount and follow Jesus to His cross and Easter triumph. Amen.

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