

TLH 135, 5. *'Tis good, LORD, to be here. Yet we may not remain;
But since Thou bidst us leave the mount, Come with us to the plain.*

Possible Prayer of Church ✧ Last Sunday in Epiphany: Transfiguration JAN 25th

*Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people
according to their needs. [Possible Brief silence]*

Heavenly Father, in Your Son Your glory tabernacled in human
flesh and blood to win for us eternal life. Open the eyes of all people to see
Your glory in the face of Christ. *LORD, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

Gracious God, with the appearance of Moses and Elijah at our
Lord's glorious transfiguration, You reveal to us that the Law and the
prophets are fulfilled in Him. Send Your blessing upon pastors and servants
of Your Church, that their preaching and teaching would flow from this right
understanding of Christ and His work for our eternal salvation. *LORD, in
Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

O LORD, lead Your people in Your steadfast love, and guide them in
strength to Your holy abode. Sanctify our homes. Be the companion of
those who live alone. Make our households places where Your wisdom and
grace are found. *LORD, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

Almighty Father, You alone establish all authority on earth. Bless
those entrusted with this responsibility both here and abroad, that they
would serve with integrity and honor for the well-being of all. Grant that all
division, conflict and strife would give way to unity, peace and quietness.
LORD, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

LORD God, remember the sick and the suffering, *[especially Faith &
Our Savior Prayers.]* ... and all those we keep in our hearts in personal
prayers that they would be fully restored to health according to Your will.
Yet if it not be Your will, give them grace to accept their affliction. *LORD, in
Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

Merciful LORD, bless all who approach the holy altar to receive Your
Son's body and blood this day, that they would come in repentance and
faith and depart in the peace only Christ can give. *LORD, in Your mercy,
hear our prayer.*

Almighty God, we thank and praise You for Moses and Elijah; for
Peter, James and John; and for all Your saints who gather around the
glorified LORD Jesus. Keep us in the faith until such time as You call us to
receive our portion with Your saints in light. *LORD, in Your mercy, hear our
prayer.*

LORD God, Heavenly Father, Your power is beyond compare and
Your glory beyond understanding. Open our hearts to know You through
the glory of Your Son, whose saving Will and purpose has rescued us from
sin and death and made us Your own people by Baptism and faith; for to
You, blessed and eternal Father, belong all honor and glory, worship and
praise, with Your beloved Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and
forever. **Amen.**

EPIPHANY/LAST TRANSFIGURATION Matthew 17:1-9 TRANSFIGURE 1.25.26

MEANINGFUL vs. BABBLE Peter said to Jesus, "*Rabbi, it is good for us
to be here. Let's put up three shelters - one for You, one for Moses, and
one for Elijah.*" Scholars over the years have tried to explain what in the
world Peter meant by this suggestion. But I think trying to find meaning to
these words is **pointless**. It's simply the way Matthew explains: Peter was
frightened and he just blurted out the first thing that came to into his head.
He simply could **not comprehend what was happening**.

MTN.TOP MOMENTS In life, moments occur that are
incomprehensible. Marriage is one. The **birth** of one's own child is one.
The **loss** of a loved one. There are "**Mountaintop moments**" and "**valley
moments**" throughout life. We are never ready for them. They arrive
unannounced changing us in irreversible ways. But there is **one thing** they
all have in common. They demand that we **be silent and listen**. These
moments have something to say to us, to teach us.

NO_nSENSE; KNOW-ALL But too often our response is like that of
Peter, babbling absurdities **because we cannot understand** the
significant, the meaningful moment. When Peter does finally quit talking
nonsense **a cloud appears**, envelops them, and the **Voice of God** gives
this instruction to Peter, James, and John: "*This is my Son, Whom I love.
Listen to Him!*" **That's it. Very short. To the point.** What Peter said made
no sense. What God said had a **mountain of meaning**. I would like to
spend a few moments this morning unpacking the meaning of it:

WHAT KIND OF 'LOOKS' What *DID* Jesus look like [normally]? They
didn't have selfies. No sculptures, portrait/s, not even a [police] sketch
artist. When Herod sent his soldiers to kill Him, Herod had to order them to
kill all the babies under two years of age. Why? Because He looked like
every other Hebrew baby. And when Simeon met Mary and Joseph at the
Temple, forty days after Jesus' birth, Simeon had to be shown by the Holy
Spirit who the Holy Family was. Why? Because the Holy Family was
Indistinguishable from all the others coming to the Temple. When the
angels appeared to the shepherds outside Bethlehem, what did they tell the
shepherds so that they would be able to find Jesus? Did they say, "*Look for
the halo*"? No! They said, "*You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths
and lying in a manger*" [Luke 2:12]. And when Jesus was an adult, when
Judas betrayed Him, how did he betray Jesus? **With a kiss!** [And,] **WHY?!**
Because without such a sign, or indication of His Identity, the soldiers would
not have been able to know *who* He was. Jesus looked like any ordinary
Galilean. And even at His Crucifixion, **Pilate had to put a sign above His
head, so people passing by would know Who He was.**

NO BEAUTY Isaiah prophetically announces this: "*He had
... no beauty that we should desire Him*" [Isaiah 53:2c]. This means that if
He were to come to Oregon in 2026, **we** would **not** recognize Him either -
except by the enlightenment given us by the Holy Spirit.

METAMORPHASIS

Today we recognize that unique event in Jesus' life among us, when **He “changes Himself” and shows Himself to be unique**. Today we celebrate the **Feast of the Transfiguration**. It is the day when we also hear again about that event, as told by **Matthew, Mark, and Luke**. We hear again about that event when Jesus traveled up onto the mountain with **Peter, James, and John**, and was transfigured there before them as He revealed to them His glory, which He hid from the world when He *became* Man in Bethlehem and dwelt among us. What we see; today, along with those three disciples, as well as with the angels and archangels and all the company of Heaven, including **Moses** and **Elijah**, is **who Jesus really is**. For just a moment, on that mountain, they **saw Him in a different way** - in a way different from the way in which He ordinarily appeared.

AS HE IS

At that first **Transfiguration, the human covering of the Man, Jesus, was “pulled back,”** and they saw Him as “God Jesus.” Yes, they saw things in the way they really were, and not the way in which they ordinarily appeared. What happened was that **His Face** took on a different appearance. The text in **Matthew's** narrative tells us that it was as if they were **staring at the sun on a clear sunny day**. His cloak, which was undoubtedly stained and smeared with dirt and mud and even sewage from walking the streets, now shone with the brightness of a halogen lamp. What happened on that Mountain was new and strange to the disciples - but not to Jesus. He was only showing what He had always been. Hidden under the anonymity of a traveling Teacher **was God, in all His splendor**. Even if the disciples had never heard the Voice of the Father say, *“This is My beloved Son,”* they would have known from what they saw that in this Man resided everything that was of God. The disciples, who were often confused by what He said and did, were not confused by what they saw on that mountain. Peter's comment, *“LORD, it's good that we are here,”* and his offer to build three “tents” - one for **Jesus**, one for **Moses**, and one for **Elijah** - is evidence that **Peter and the other disciples saw Him to be God**. They were still confused about His “desire” to go to Jerusalem and die, but [at least] **they knew Who He was**.

THE REAL TRANSFIG.

These three disciples were seeing with their own eyes what only Moses and Elijah and the saints had seen before. They were seeing Him in His glory, *“glory as of the **only Son from the Father**”* [John 1:14b]. The Voice saying, *“This is My **beloved Son**,”* is a reminder to them, that when they see Him arrested and tried, and convicted, and paraded out to Golgotha and laid across a wooden plank, and with nails pounded through His hands and feet, lifted up and hung until dead - this is **what He had come into this world to do**. This Man is the beloved One of the Father, sent by His Father to bear the burden of sin and death. **His greatest act of glory**, believe it or not, **would not be The Transfiguration, but rather, His hanging dead on a Cross**.

NOT IF, BUT WHEN

Peter, James, and John were there to see that glory of God. But Moses and Elijah were there as a reminder that there

was **another reason “the three” were witnessing this event**. Centuries earlier, **Moses and Elijah had been rejected by the people** they had been sent to serve. Their presence at the transfiguration is a reminder to the three (and to **us**) that **we, too, may be rejected by those with whom we live**. Yes! There **may** be hardship. No (wait)! Not, *“may be hardship,”* but, *“when we experience hardship!”* Because in this vale of tears, in this world of sin and corruption, hardship is unavoidable! So it is not a matter of **IF** - it is a matter of **WHEN! When** there is hardship! **When** there is turmoil. **When** there is heartache. **When** there is disappointment. **When** we are weak and beaten down. When this happens, then we are reminded by this text that the Lord **has shown us His Glory**.

SAME TODAY

When **we** hear the Voice of the Father say, *“Listen to Him!”* we are reminded that **He still speaks to us today**, through the **preaching and pastoral care of our pastor**. When we hear and receive this, then we look up, and we see only Jesus, the Crucified One, transfigured before us, today, on this other holy mountain - transfigured, where He **hides His glory under the flesh and vestments of a man** placed into a holy office to preach and absolve and feed - and hidden under the **earthly elements of bread and wine**. It is then, when we see Him in His ultimate glory to feed, strengthen, and sustain us. The reason **Matthew** includes this event in his Gospel narrative is that the Transfiguration of our Lord is, for us, a portal, a window or, as Peter writes in his Epistle, a “lamp” [2 Peter 1:19b] for us to see how Christ, by His death, would **lead us through the gates of death into eternal life**. It was Peter who said, *“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”* (John 6:68). The Voice of the Father still demands our attention to the Words of Jesus -until when? *“Until the day dawns and the Morning Star rises in [our] hearts”* [2 Peter 1:19c]. **#179 WIE SCHÖN**

IT HAPPENS NOW! in L.S. That day has already dawned! It is **now!** It “dawns” every time your pastor picks up the **holy paten and chalice**, and places under the “roof of your mouth” and gives and pours to you the Body and Blood of the Incarnate LORD. It happens every time he **steps into this pulpit** or speaks God's Holy Word from his mouth into your ears. This happens because the **Holy Word and Sacrament** is, for you, the prophetic Word made more sure [2 Peter 1:19a]. That is why the Apostle [Peter] writes that we *“do well to pay attention [to this] as to a **lamp shining in a dark place...**”* [2 Peter 1:19b]. The Sacrament of **Holy Baptism may be OUR transfiguration – as our LORD transfigures us from dead, condemned creatures into living, forgiven children of the heavenly Father**. But the **Sacrament of the Altar is our Lord transfiguring Himself** for us yet again and again every time we celebrate LORD's Supper.

ONE LAST TIME

And, that leaves only **one more glorious Transfiguration** – that being on the Last Day when our bodies will be transformed like His Glorious Body to be with our LORD and Savior forever and ever in glory! Glory be to God as we look forward to that Day! **Amen.** SDG