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Peace, Sun Prairie
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Transfiguration

Mark 9:2-9
"Jesus' Glory Gets Us Ready!"

Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory! Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

Through His Word, Jesus lets us see a most amazing sight, an awesome wonder He first showed to just three of his disciples.

As you stand on the **high mountain**, earth's beauty fades in the dazzling light of heaven's greatest sight. For a moment, Jesus lets the glory that has always been His, shine through His human flesh and blood in what can only be described as other worldly—**His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them.** This Jesus born in Bethlehem and raised in Nazareth is truly *God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God.*

He who **is not the God of the dead, but of the living** speaks with long departed believers **Elijah and Moses**. And the Father's voice confirms what we see: **This is my Son, whom I love**.

But what is it all for? Why does Jesus give us this astounding sight? The opening words of our lesson help us find the answer: **After six days...** The Holy Spirit wants us to connect what happens on the Mount of Glory with what happened **six days** earlier.

So when we flip back to Mark chapter 8, we find **six days** earlier was when Peter made that beautiful confession of faith about Jesus: **You are the Christ, the Son of the living God**. And **then** right after that, Jesus **began to teach** his disciples clearly how He **must suffer... be rejected, killed and after three days rise again**.

You see there's a good reason we always celebrate the transfiguration right before the season of Lent where we recall Jesus' suffering and death. It's because the Bible links this brilliant display of Jesus' glory with his impending passion. Luke's Gospel even tells us that's what Moses and Elijah were talking to Jesus

about, how Jesus' death and resurrection would fulfill all God's promises.

Each step Jesus took down the mountain took him closer toward the cross. But first He lets us glimpse His glory. For in some important ways, **Jesus' glory gets us ready for Lent.**

First it shows us we desperately need all Jesus would do for us. Look at Peter, James and John. They get to see Jesus in that **dazzling** brightness that shows his power and purity as true eternal God, and what's their reaction? **They were so frightened.**

It's a scene played out again and again in Holy Scripture. God appears in fiery glory on Mount Sinai and the Israelites tremble with fear. **The glory of the Lord** shines around the shepherds in the fields of Bethlehem, and **they were terrified.** And if we were to stand before that radiant glory in our sinful state, we too would cower.

For this spotless, **dazzling** light, brighter than the sun, tells us plainly God is perfect, holy, sinless and He requires that we be just as perfect, spotless, holy, sinless. But we are not, and all that sin spells our eternal ruin.

And could there be a bigger reminder of our sin than what the Father says here: **"This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!"**

What could be more obvious, more logical than to listen to, cling to and gladly follow every word this glorious Jesus speaks?! Yet, in defiance of God's own voice, we've failed to **listen** over and over.

Jesus says: **Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation.** But how often we let our guard down and stumble into, if not even seek out **temptation**, falling into that same foolish for the five thousandth time.

He says: **You cannot serve both God and money...** but someday we'd sure like to prove him wrong, wouldn't we? He says **do not worry**, but it seems to go in one ear and out the other as we look at the latest struggle and fear starts to grip our hearts. His Word tells us **pray continually**, but there are times we've acted like he said *pray occasionally*. His tells us to **let (His) word... dwell in you richly...** but part of us just wants to be content with what we learned in Sunday School and Catechism class instead of eagerly searching the Scriptures.

Jesus stands with **clothes dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them ...** and we stand in the **filthy rags** of our sin. Oh how we deserve for him to cast us away from himself into the endless darkness of hell.

But look what He does instead! **Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus.** Just like that, hides his glory again, choosing not to enjoy his glory with us, but setting it aside to save us.

Jesus' glory and power tells us plainly that everything we will see him suffer in Lent, He suffers not because He is taken by surprise, but because He chooses to suffer the price that will set us free from sin.

Instead of using his glory to burn up his enemies, He lets them arrest him. He does not shine like the sun and blind the soldiers, but in self-chosen lowliness, lets them nail him to the cross. **Jesus' glory get us ready for Lent,** it shows He does it all in love for you and me.

As they were coming down the mountain. All because He is thinking of saving you and saving me, Jesus goes down the mountain. He knows full well

every step takes him closer to whip, thorn, nail, cross and above all, the darkness of Good Friday, of God from God being forsaken by God, suffering hell's darkness in our place. He does it all so that we will join Him in heavenly glory.

And because we see His glory on the mountain, we know the blood He sheds and the death He dies is the blood and death of the One who is true God, whose blood and death is so great it can and does remove all sin, every failure to listen to and follow Him.

Now Jesus' takes His **dazzling white clothes, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them** and puts them on us, covering our sinful stains with his spotless obedience. Clothed with Christ through baptism, through Holy Spirit worked faith in His promises, we will get to stand in heavenly glory, not for a little while, but for all eternity!

And that wonderful truth, **gets us ready for life.**

Peter wanted to **put up three shelters** because he did not want this little glimpse of heavenly glory to come to an end. But that wasn't God's plan for Jesus and that wasn't God's plan for Peter, just as it isn't His plan for you and me. You see, Christ did not come to

make life in this world a little better, a little more bearable, but He came to us everlasting life in that perfect world to come.

So in this world we will still experience trouble and heartache. Jesus said so plainly in John 16: **In this world you will have trouble.** In fact, as believers we will often face additional troubles, persecution as we follow Jesus' word, plus all the devil's constant attacks on our faith. So we shouldn't be surprised when pipes break and cause damage at our school, or when we take flack for being faithful to Jesus' Word or endure sickness and struggle.

But look again at Jesus' glory on the mountain. This amazing Lord laid his glory aside to save you from your sins and give you endless life in heaven. Having done all that, He will most certainly keep His promise to be your refuge, help and strength in every trouble and struggle and in the end to work all things, even trouble, heartache and death out for the eternal good of his people.

Listen to what Jesus says. He says: **In this world you will have trouble.** But He also says: **Take heart, I have overcome the world.** He says: **Now is your**

time of grief, but then He adds: but I will see you again and you will rejoice and no one will take away your joyh.

So what does that look like? Remember who we saw with Jesus as He showed His glory: **Moses and Elijah.** Moses had been dead for 1500 years, but there he is alive and well and not complaining about aching knees! Elijah had been gone from this world 800 years, but there he is standing unafraid in glory speaking with Jesus, and there's no sign of a head cold!

But what does that have to do with the problems you face right now? Let me quote from Mr. Raymond's e-mail from early last Sunday morning as he announced the water damage from the broken pipe. He reminded us of God's promise in 2 Corinthians that teaches ***our light and momentary troubles will be outweighed by our eternal glory that awaits.***

The troubles we face only last a little while. The never ending glory of heaven, Moses and Elijah now experience, the glory Jesus has prepared for us by His cross and empty tomb, that glory will never end and never disappoint. Even a lifetime of trouble can't compare to endless life with Jesus. And of course we

don't face life's troubles alone, but with our Savior by our side, leading the way.

Jesus' glory gets us ready for life. We lose nothing when we follow Jesus. Indeed, He has already given us more than can imagine in the forgiveness of sin and the glory of eternal life. See Jesus' glorious love for you, and follow Him boldly. Amen.

Dear friends, now we are the children of God and... when He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Amen.