**Pastor Tim’s Message Notes 10-31-2021
Praying Before the Transfiguration**

It is definitely an understatement to say that the last couple of years have been challenging. Globally, nationally, locally, it hasn’t been easy. It has been a difficult challenge for all of us to deal with.

But by the grace of God, I want to share with you that I firmly believe that we have navigated these difficult times well together. Through these challenging times, I believe that our top priority was to remain united toward the Lord our God and united in love and support for one another as a Christian community. And Christ has led us through this with the help of the Holy Spirit. And I have no doubt that He goes before us and will continue to lead us through the days ahead and through any challenges that they will bring.

But I believe as we journey together towards Thanksgiving and Christmas and look ahead in 2022, that we are poised to begin a new season where we become even more intentional in reaching out to others in the Name of Jesus our Lord. I see us stepping out to strengthen relationships and to build new relationships, with one-another and with neighbors and co-workers and others around us. I see new small groups beginning, some of which will be meeting in homes. I sense a boldness to invite others to participate in events and activities rising up within us. I believe that exciting and vibrant times in life and ministry together are coming.

**And the key in all of this is to listen to the leading of our Lord as He guides us forward**. Christ is the head of the church and the key has always been to listen to Him. And to listen is more than just to hear, it is to put Jesus’ teaching into practice in our daily living. To listen is to follow after Him. It means to heed the words of Christ.

Today we are highlighting another critical event found in the gospel of Luke where we find Jesus praying. And the key to grasping this event is found in the words “listen to Him.”

To help set the stage for our passage, our story immediately follows after last Sundays’ story, which was also found in Luke chapter 9.

Last week we looked at Jesus explaining the nature of His role as the Messiah. It was a hard word to hear. Not only would their Messiah suffer and die, but Jesus told them that they must be willing to suffer and die for Him as well.

How would they handle this difficult truth? Would they stay connected to one another and to Christ after hearing these challenging words from Jesus?

 **But just as Christ has led us through Covid, Christ helped His disciples after giving these hard words.**

He wanted to reassure them that they are on the right path. Although it is not an easy path, it was the right path. It was the path of the Lord that they were walking in. Hopefully, like those in this story that we will hear, you have felt the Lord’s presence to give you reassurance through these more challenging days as well.

So let’s pick up the story where we left off last week as we continue on today with chapter 9, verses 27-36 of Luke.

**27“Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God.”**

**28About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. 29As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. 30Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. 31They spoke about his departure,[**[**a**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+9%3A27-36&version=NIV#fen-NIV-25333a)**] which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem. 32Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. 33As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter said to him, “Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” (He did not know what he was saying.)**

**34While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and covered them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. 35A voice came from the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.” 36When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone. The disciples kept this to themselves and did not tell anyone at that time what they had seen.**

These is just an amazing event, isn’t is? And again, it begins with prayer.

Jesus tells his disciples that some of them standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God. In other words, the Kingdom of God would be seen by some of them in an undeniably profound way.

And then we read, beginning in the very next versus, of an amazing event where 3 of Jesus’ followers witness the kingdom of God come in an extremely powerful way, as they would witness Jesus being transfigured before them and seeing Him in His divine glory. Certainly, there would be other amazing moments as well, such as Christ’s post-resurrection appearances and the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, when this group would see the kingdom of God coming in very powerful ways.

We are told that about 8 days after Jesus’ difficult announcement that he would suffer and die, Jesus takes three of his closest disciples – Peter, John and James with Him to join Him in pray up on a mountain.

Again, Jesus made it a point to pray – even as the crowds were clamoring for His attention.

And as they are in prayer together, suddenly Jesus is transfigured before them. His clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning and His face changed.

It was like, for a moment, they beheld Jesus in all His glory.

**Now friends, let us think again of the humility of Jesus**. Although He was God, He didn’t hold on to His divine glory when he became human. It was very easy to mistake Jesus to be a poor ordinary peasant Jew – just going by the looks of him.

But Peter, John and James catch a glimpse of the kingdom of God when we see the King revealed in His glory.

***And not only does the face of Jesus change and His clothes become extraordinarily bright, but these 3 men witness Jesus suddenly speaking to two of the heroes of the faith – Moses and Elijah.***

Now we do not know if they somehow could tell that these men were Moses and Elijah or if it was by hearing how Jesus addressed them that they could tell, but it was clear that Moses and Elijah were present.

And we do not know if this was for a minute or an hour – maybe longer.

But their conversation was at least long enough for Simon Peter to speak up and say “Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters – one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” Luke records that Simon didn’t know what he was saying. He probably didn’t know what to say, and with him being quicker to speak, these words came out from him.

**One of the things that is a blessing from Luke’s Gospel is that it describes the nature of this conversation between Jesus, Moses, and Elijah**. We are told that they were talking about Jesus’ coming departure in Jerusalem. In the original language, the word is exodon or exodus.

As significant as the exodus was with Israel leaving Egypt, the exodus of Jesus was far more important. Jesus’ suffering, death, resurrection and ascension would be the most important event in history.

And friends, let us think of the reassurance that Jesus was giving to these 3 men - to Peter, James & John. Despite them not understanding everything that Jesus was doing, this transfiguration event helped them to be reassured that they were following God’s plan for their lives.

And that plan could be summed up in three critical words. LISTEN To HIM.

And the scene builds to a conclusion, we see that suddenly Jesus was alone. Moses and Elijah had returned to heaven.

And then we hear the voice, the voice of God the Father. It was the same voice that had spoken at Jesus’ baptism.

And here again, the Father affirms His Son and strengthens the 3 men with the words. “**This is my Son, whom I have chosen**.”

But He doesn’t stop there. The Father is then clearly speaking to Peter, James, and John, giving them these words to live by.

**LISTEN TO HIM.**

Jesus is far greater than Moses or Elijah. Jesus was their Lord and Savior, just as He was Peter, James and John’s Lord. Jesus was preparing to give His life for Moses and Elijah’s sin, just as He was for Peter, James or John’s sin --- and for our sins for that matter.

Jesus is Lord. The Father was instructing Peter, James, and John to listen to Him. To Follow Jesus and heed His teaching --- even when it isn’t easy.

**Brothers and Sisters, Jesus knew that these 3 would be major leaders in the early church**. And He knew that this event would strength not only the 12, but also all the new churches that would be birthed in the coming months and years.

All of them must listen to Jesus as well.

*Friends, as we now consider this amazing event, which again began with Jesus praying, what are we to make of this for us today?*

And I believe it is the same 3 words that our Heavenly Father told Peter, James, and John. – **We are to listen to Jesus.**

**We are to trust in Jesus and put Jesus’ words into practice in our daily living**. Jesus doesn’t promise us an easy and comfortable life, but He does promise us true life and abundance life and eternal life when we choose to live for Him and to place our continued trust in Him.

While we were not on that mountain with Peter, John, and James, when Jesus’ divine glory was revealed in power, we do have their reliable and trustworthy testimony.

We have the Scriptures friends. **We can behold the glory of Jesus as we humble ourselves before God’s written Word and Jesus being at the center it.**

We have God’s Spirit living in us, helping us to behold Jesus and helping us to listen to Him.

The simple truth is that the most important thing we can do is **listen to Jesus.**

I love the last words of Mary, Jesus’ Mother, in Scripture. She tells those at the wedding in Cana – “do whatever He tells you.” In other words, listen to Him.

We can listen to Jesus by taking part in a regular Bible reading, such as our Bible Book of the Month. The new sheets for Novembers are available in our lobby.

We can listen to Jesus by seeking to put into practice what Jesus is teaching us in His Word.

We can listen to Jesus by spending time with Him in prayer each day.

We can listen to Jesus by trusting in Him and continuing to follow Him, even when life becomes difficult.

Truly all the Bible points to Christ. The Old Testament looks ahead to the coming Savior of the world. The New Testament letters look back to what Christ has accomplished for us.

And at the very center of everything is the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

We listen to Him, Brothers and Sisters, as we keep Jesus’ exodus on our minds and on our hearts each day.

May we daily remember His suffering for us and daily remember this victory for us. Jesus is on His throne today. May we listen to Him each day and follow after Him with everything we have, both when things are great and equally so, when things are difficult.

Let’s pray…

Sources:

Biblegateway.com