

Sermon: The Transfiguration of Our Lord

Text: Mark 9:2-10

Theme: It is good to be here.

Goal: The blessing of the glorious Christ among us.

Dear Friends,

Introduction: A week before the Transfiguration, Jesus had promised to His disciples: “I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power.”

The Transfiguration is now part of the fulfilment of this promise which would really be fulfilled at Jesus' resurrection. The disciples were experiencing a foretaste of the glory and power of God's kingdom. God gave them this experience to strengthen their faith and to assure them that the Man of Nazareth was really His beloved Son, the promised Messiah.

Peter became so excited with this experience that he wanted to perpetuate that moment. He didn't want to go down the mountain anymore, back to the problems and challenges of the daily life. He wanted to stay there: “It is good for us to be here! Let us put up three shelters – one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.”

It is usually accepted that Mark wrote his Gospel based on the reports he heard from Peter. I can imagine Peter telling Mark about the Transfiguration! It was a unique experience for him and it touched him deeply. He wrote about the Transfiguration in his first letter as well, confirming the voice they had heard from the Father and the brightness of the light that shone around them.

We are children of God of the new covenant. We know how the story ended with the resurrection and ascension of Christ. We know that Jesus established His kingdom among us. We know that Jesus is now

in glory with the Father and with Moses, Elijah and all other saints. We believe that we will all be there by God's grace. But for the disciples it was not as easy as it is for us. They couldn't understand what was to happen: Jesus' suffering and death. They couldn't even understand when Jesus spoke about His resurrection! Therefore Peter wanted to stay there, in glory with Jesus, Moses and Elijah, and his fellows John and James. "It is good for us to be here."

I – It is good for us...

A) It is good for us to be with Jesus too. This one hour that we spend together in Service is a blessed hour in communion with Jesus! Away from the daily rush, we sit quiet and worship our God. We listen to His voice and partake in His Holy Meal. We believe and confess that Jesus is the Beloved Son of God, our Saviour. We sing with angels and archangels: "*Holy, Holy holy!*" - The same happens when we read the Bible and pray at home, alone or with our family. It is a moment of peace and of fellowship with God. It is good to be with Jesus!

B) It is good for us to be with Moses too. We need to hear the Commandments, who call us to repentance and show us how to walk according to God's will. We cannot just take some sweet drink; but we have to accept some bitter medicine as well. If people would listen to the 10 Commandments more, the world wouldn't be as bad as it is. For us it is good to be with Moses; it gives us security; because Moses is not alone, but he comes with Jesus, who reaches His hand to help us as we are unable to obey 100% the Commandments.

C) It is good for us to be with Elijah, the prophet. Elijah called the king and the people of his time back to the true faith. Elijah and the other prophets pointed to the Messiah; and we know that those prophecies were accomplished in Jesus. God is faithful in what He promises. We can be sure about what He promises to us as well. And the biggest promises were accomplished in Jesus: promises of forgiveness and eternal life.

D) It is good for us to be with Peter, James and John. They were eyewitnesses of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. When we read what they wrote in the Bible, it is like to be with them and to enjoy their telling the stories and sharing with us their faith and life experiences. Peter wrote (2 Peter 1:16-18): “For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.” We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.” This gives us confidence that the Bible is really the Word of God!

II – The end has not come yet

It is good for us to be with Jesus, Moses, Elijah and the apostles, to be strengthened in our faith and in our life. After the Transfiguration Moses and Elijah went back to the glory of God, where all our blessed beloved ones and forefathers are. But the glorious end has not yet come to us. After being with Jesus and His fellows for a while, we have to go down the mountain, like Jesus and the disciples after the Transfiguration. Jesus had to face suffering and death, as we will remember it during the Lent Season, which begins this week on Ash Wednesday. We have to face Lent Season in our lives as well. Not like Jesus, because He did the most for us and on our behalf on the cross. But we know that life is not easy. Every one of us has temptations and sufferings to carry. But after being with Jesus and His fellow prophets and apostles, we know and believe that we can lift up our eyes from the darkness and dirt of this world to the glory of the Resurrected Jesus! Like the apostles were comforted in hope remembering the experience on the Transfiguration Mountain, like they were facing persecutions and sufferings, we are also comforted in hope by the glory of the living Christ!

Conclusion: Don't miss the opportunities to be with Jesus and to kneel

at His table with your Christian family. God said in our Gospel: “This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to Him!” As we enjoy being here and always with Jesus, He will never forsake us, according to His promise. In good and in bad times of our lives, He will reach His hand to us and hold us firm, until we will be with Him, with Moses, Elijah, the apostles and all the saints for ever and ever. Then He will accept our wish when we say: Lord, it is good to be here. And He will answer: “Good and faithful servant. Come and share your Master's happiness!” (Matthew 25:23). Amen.

Pastor Carlos Walter Winterle  
Cape Town, 19 February 2012

1. Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer!  
that calls me from a world of care,  
and bids me at my Father's throne  
make all my wants and wishes known.  
In seasons of distress and grief,  
my soul has often found relief,  
and oft escaped the tempter's snare  
by thy return, sweet hour of prayer!
2. Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer!  
the joys I feel, the bliss I share  
of those whose anxious spirits burn  
with strong desires for thy return!  
With such I hasten to the place  
where God my Savior shows his face,  
and gladly take my station there,  
and wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer!
3. Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer!  
thy wings shall my petition bear  
to him whose truth and faithfulness  
engage the waiting soul to bless.  
And since he bids me seek his face,  
believe his word, and trust his grace,  
I'll cast on him my every care,  
and wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer!

*Text: William Walford, 1772-1850*  
*Music: William B. Bradbury, 1816-1868*  
*Tune: SWEET HOUR, Meter: LMD*