



**February 27, 2022**

Sermon Series

**Shining Forth: Seeing Jesus in a New Light**

This Week's Big Idea

**We are Going to Need a Bigger Boat**

**Introduction:** *The transfiguration of Jesus is told in Matthew, Mark, and Luke and always caps the lectionary Gospel readings for Epiphany. It stands as a kind of doorway between Epiphany and Lent in the church seasons. And for good reason. In the disciples' journey with Jesus, a crisis point has been reached - - this mountaintop revelation confirms Peter, James, and John's worst fears from 8 days before and places the coming hardships in an eternal perspective. "Transfiguration" derives from the Greek word "metamorphosis" and that is how Jesus appears for a brief time: unearthly, in eternity with Moses and Elijah, enfolded in the Shekinah, God's Holy Presence. Their conversation refers to the earth however as a coming exodus in Jerusalem. This mountaintop theophany connects Jesus' heavenly identity with his saving mission. No Messianic paradigm could have prepared Peter, James, and John for this!*

**Luke 9:28-36 NRSV**

<sup>28</sup>Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. <sup>29</sup>And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. <sup>30</sup>Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. <sup>31</sup>They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. <sup>32</sup>Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. <sup>33</sup>Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah" — not knowing what he said. <sup>34</sup>While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. <sup>35</sup>Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my Son, my Chosen listen to him!" <sup>36</sup>When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.

**Bible Conversation**

How is this related to: a) Peter's confession vv. 18-20? B) Jesus' prophecy (v. 22)? C) The preceding saying (v. 27)? D) The radiant face of Moses (Ex. 34:29-30)?

What do you think is behind the command, "Listen to him"? (v. 35)

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## Reflection by Pastor Peter Strommen

Context for the transfiguration is hugely important. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all tell of a breakthrough moment preceding this event by 8 days. "Who do people say I am?" asks Jesus. "Who do you say I am?" Peter confesses, "You are the Christ--the Son of the Living God." Many see him as a major prophet. With Peter's confession that Jesus is the Christ, an ominous prophecy is introduced that has the disciples reeling, confused, and upset.

The word transfigure communicates an unearthly appearance of Jesus, such that the light of his face and appearance are beyond human. The appearance of Moses and Elijah seen talking with Jesus symbolically link the Old Testament to Jesus as its fulfillment. That Jesus' destiny in Jerusalem is called an "exodus" makes it his defining mission. The cloud (the Shekinah) is the very presence of God enveloping the disciples. The voice of God confirms Jesus' identity and the truth of his words, "My Son, listen to him."

Peter, James and John are left speechless and shaken. Coming down the mountain, Jesus again tells them of what is to happen in Jerusalem, but they simply don't understand. After the resurrection, insight will emerge. In Mark and Matthew, Jesus explicitly tells them not to say anything about this until the, "Son of Man has risen from the dead." (A phrase they also didn't understand at the time.)

Paradigms are like mental structures which carry a way of seeing. They help us make sense of things. "Paradigm shifts" are challenging when what presents itself no longer seems to fit, nor will it without "a bigger boat." *In the movie "Jaws" when the town sheriff sees the true size of the shark they are hunting he says, "You're going to need a bigger boat." He is right about that. But the shark hunter's refusal to make that adjustment costs the boat and his life.*

You are the "Christ" exclaimed Peter. He was both right and wrong. Jesus was indeed the Christ. But what the Christ was to be in God's plan was completely out of Peter's ken. He needed a bigger boat—a much bigger boat.

## Closing Prayer

Dear God, as we come to know You through Jesus, we encounter the limits of our understanding, of our love, of our faith. Yet you promise that in seeking we shall find, and in knocking the door will be opened. How remarkable your kind acceptance of our limitations, your forgiveness of our sin, and your promise to seek us before we would know to seek you. In Christ Jesus we pray. Amen.

## Next Week's Bible Theme and Text:

Sermon Series: Full to the Brim

Sermon: Even in the Desert

Text: Luke 4:1-13

## Reflection Conversation

How did you come to realize that Jesus was the one above all others you should listen to? What keeps you from being a better listener?

### The 1 Question:

What spot for you is like the Mount of Transfiguration - - where you grasped Jesus' glory in a special way?

**1 week.**  
**1 story.**  
**1 message.**

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