

**Holy Trinity Lutheran Church  
Des Moines, WA  
February 19, 2012  
Transfiguration Sunday**

**Mark 9:2-9**

**Remember What You've Seen!**

- 1. Three Years of Seeing**
- 2. There was Purpose**
- 3. Remember What You Have Seen**

**Hymns: 402 – O Lord, You Are My God  
And King – 95—389 – 314  
Closing: Shine Jesus Shine**

All Scripture quotations from the NIV

*After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus.*

*Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, 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 to say, they were so frightened.)*

*Then a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and a voice came from the cloud: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!"*

*Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus.*

*As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. Mark 9:2-9*

Three Years. For three whole years, Peter had seen it. He had seen every moment with his own two eyes. He saw every one of the miracles.

(Examples?) He witnessed every one of the healings. He had been privy to every one of the sermons. For three years, Peter had seen it. He had seen the Epiphany, the revealing of Jesus, in greater detail than anyone else. Among all of Jesus' disciples, he was one of the first to be called to follow. Among the 12, he was one of the inner circle. He got to see special things. Everything that he saw had even led him to boldly proclaim, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God!" Three years of seeing, three years of memories. There is no way that Peter could forget.

But just in case, there was something more. Just in case those three years weren't enough to hold onto and remember, there was one final glorious bonus to see, one more spectacle to witness firsthand. Peter also got to see the transfiguration. With the Sons of Thunder, James and John, Peter was chosen to see a revealing like nothing that they had seen to this point.

Up on a high mountain in the remote hills of northern Israel, we heard the account of the Transfiguration a few moments ago through the pen of Mark as it was told to him by Peter. A quiet moment of prayer turned into a sight filled with glory that most will have to wait til heaven to see. There on that mountain, the great prophets Moses and Elijah appeared, speaking to Jesus. Moses, through whom God had brought the covenant of the Law into writing, and Elijah, the greatest of the prophets to Israel, brought assurance that Jesus was the fulfillment of all of the promises of the Old Testament. There on that mountain, a brightness beyond description showed the glory and holiness that truly belonged to this Son of God. There on that mountain, a mighty voice from heaven brought approval for the Son of Man from God himself. That mountaintop experience showed Peter and his two friends, in unsurpassing glory, exactly who it was that they were following for those three years. As they stood, bewildered in both fear and amazement, there could be no doubts that Jesus was everything that he proclaimed and everything the disciples had confessed him to be.

Yet, what exactly was the purpose? The whole ordeal lasted just a short time. Moses and Elijah had disappeared as quickly as they came. Jesus' clothes were back to their normal worn look. Jesus himself appeared to be the same person that he was when they ascended the mountain to pray. Were there lasting results? They had to be wondering why they were allowed to see this. If they would've known what was ahead, they would've understood completely.

Of course, they did not. But Jesus, he knew precisely what was ahead. For Jesus and his time on

this earth, things were about to change. Everything was about to be very different for Jesus and for his disciples. The six days that were referenced at the start of our text had been spent in the classroom. We are told in the section prior to our text that Jesus had begun to teach the 12 disciples about what was ahead. In plain, clear words, he spoke about the rejection, the suffering, the humiliation, the death that was in his future. And more than that, he told them about the rejection, the suffering and the persecution that was in their futures. Jesus was not the only one who would bear the cross. These followers of Jesus would also face the burdens and the struggles that discipleship of Christ would bring.

And in the days of the coming Passion of Christ and in the years of ministry ahead, the devil would use the sufferings and the struggles against them. As Christ suffered and died in Jerusalem, the devil would raise up doubts in these men. Through hostile enemies of the Gospel of Christ, the devil would drum up fear in the Apostles' hearts. He would use everything that they were about to encounter to chase these dedicated followers away from the Christ they had so boldly and confidently confessed. Peter and his friends had no clue about the minefield of doubt and deception that the devil was about to lay out in front of them. But Jesus did.

So, Jesus' message in showing these things was simple: "Remember what you have seen!" Remember everything that you have seen through these three years of Epiphany that you have spent with me. Remember this glorious day of transfiguration, where you have seen how great my glory is, where you have seen the fulfillment that I am, where you have heard directly from my Father. Don't let the darkness of what is ahead snuff out the light of what you know. Remember what you have seen! Hold on to it in the days ahead.

Yet, what do we know happened? We are fully aware of the road that Peter went down. We know about his denial in the courtyard. We know about his guilt and despair. We know that Satan worked in Peter's heart and got him to forget. Peter didn't remember all that he had seen. He failed.

In the coming weeks of Lent, we will also be pressed to doubt and forget. From Christmas until this day, we have seen a glorious revealing. All that Peter was privileged to witness, we also have been blessed to see. We have been brought to the manger to look upon the miracle of God in flesh. We have traveled through Israel and seen Jesus' power and preaching in action. Today, we have seen his glory, the confirmation of his mission through Moses and Elijah, the approval of his work from God, the Father.

But soon, Christ's glory will be put on the shelf. As we begin our Lenten journey this Ash Wednesday, we will see and hear terrible things. We will see this same glorified Jesus struck, pierced and crushed. We will see him led around in shame. We will see him hanging on an ugly, scorn-filled cross. For the next six weeks, that is where we will be taken.

And the devil will most certainly use that. Though we know the forgiveness that results from the work of Lent, Satan will take every sin we commit and try to fill us with overwhelming guilt. Though we know that these weeks culminate in the greatest victory of all time, Satan will use every pain to convince us that the outcome is still TBD. No matter how many times you have taken this journey. He will keep coming after you. He works in powerful, deceptive ways.

And we know that the devil's desire to have us doubt and forget goes well past Lent and into our everyday lives. These weeks of Epiphany have not just been about Jesus revealing himself as the Son of God with power. During these weeks of Epiphany, God has also revealed to us answers about life. But the devil does all he can to have us forget what we have seen. He uses the difficulties and tough times to convince us that God can't help us. He uses the things that don't go our way to persuade us that God doesn't listen to prayer. He gets us to focus on ourselves in all we do and forget about our true purposes in life. As quickly as the devil went after Peter to doubt after what he had seen, so he pounces on us to doubt and to wonder and to wander.

And just as Peter so quickly lost track of what he had seen, how often don't we forget what we have seen as soon as we walk out the doors. We leave this place and forget all that we have taken in. We complain that we have too much to burden. We despair that we have no place to find answers. We wonder if there is any purpose for us in life. We stray quickly from the lives that we have been called to lead. We duck the responsibilities that we have been given. Things are a little different when we come off the mountain and Satan is hitting us in the face with a different kind of reality.

However, Jesus' message on this Transfiguration Sunday remains: In the face of all that the devil does to tear you down and cause you doubts, remember what you have seen by the grace of God! You have seen Christ and his glory and his power. In the coming weeks of Lent, when we say goodbye to the Alleluias and our worship takes on a more solemn mood, remember the glory that has been revealed to you today. In the troublesome and wayward moments of life, remember the answers that have been revealed. In these weeks of Epiphany, we

have looked closely at his Word and we have seen the power of prayer and the purpose in pain. We have seen the grace of the call to faith and the scope of our call to action. Day after day, week after week, year after year, we see in God's Word that he truly has all of the answers for us, and they are founded in his glorious Son. Remember what you have seen!

This day of Transfiguration is just a reminder; a glimpse of glory to get us through what is ahead. What a privilege that we have been blessed to see it. What a joy to see all that God has revealed to us in his Word. You know that beyond the darkness of Lent lies the light of Easter joy. You know that beyond the struggles of life lies the light of Heavenly joy.

As you journey to the cross of Calvary in the coming weeks, may the assurance of Christ's power, glory and ultimate victory on Easter Sunday go with you every step of the way.