

“Jesus is God’s Son, We Are to Listen to Him”

Today’s Gospel is about an event, a most incredible event in the life of Jesus of Nazareth. We call it the Transfiguration. This is the remarkable transformation that once took place in the appearance of Jesus.” Three of the four Gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, all give accounts of the Transfiguration. Simply put – what happened that day on the mountain – Jesus’ whole appearance – including His clothes, changed – to show His heavenly appearance.

In the Gospel of Luke, Chapters 8 and 9, a question is being raised three times throughout those chapters - who is Jesus?

- Jesus has just walked on the water and calmed the raging storm. And in Luke 8:25 the disciples ask the question: *“Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him.”*
- In Luke 9:7-9 Jesus and his disciples had been performing marvelous miracles – driving out demons and curing the sick and this comes to the attention of the local ruler Herod the Tetrarch. St. Luke records Herod saying: *“I beheaded John. Who, then, is this I hear such things about?”* Things are starting to stir in ‘little old Israel.’
- And then in Luke 9:18-20. Jesus is alone with his disciples at a place in northern Israel, not far from Lebanon, called Caesarea Philippi, a center of pagan worship. Right in the middle of this place is the Temple of Pan, and the name Caesarea Philippi was for Caesar and they had a shrine for him too. This is anything but a holy place. And Jesus asks them this question: *“Who do the crowds say I am?”* They replied, *“Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life.”* *“But what about you?”* he asked. Can you imagine the Lord of all looking you square in the eye and asking you: *“Who do you say I am?”* Peter answered, *“The Messiah of God.”*

And now in today’s Holy Gospel - God wanted to answer this question once and for all with the simple and clear words: *“This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him!”* (Luke 9:35) Jesus took His three most trusted Apostles - Peter, James and John to a mountain – which I believe was Mount Hermon, in the northern part of Israel, not far from Caesarea Philippi – where Peter proclaimed Jesus *“the Christ, the Messiah – the Son of the Living God.”*

During the Transfiguration, there were three important things that took place:

- Jesus’ human bodily appearance was transformed – and these three men could see that.
- Moses and Elijah appeared with him on the mountain, in glorious splendor, and
- God the Father spoke directly to the disciples – and they heard Him.

It has often been said “what about Moses?” Moses died on Mount Nebo – not getting to go into the Promised Land, because he disobeyed God when he told Moses to speak to the rock and it would bring forth water, but Moses remembered the last time he was at that rock – and he struck it with his staff. It brought water – but it also brought punishment. People asked if he

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didn't get to go to the Promised Land – did he get to go to heaven? In this Scripture is proof. Here is a heavenly Moses who comes and stands next to Jesus, and also with Elijah who went to heaven on that glorious fiery chariot.

The Scripture tells us *“As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning.”* (Luke 9:28-29) Can you just imagine that? To be watching your best friend and His face changing? To become the most beautiful face you have ever seen, and all of a sudden His clothes are whiter than white! Tide can't do what had just happened.

A great many words have been said about who Jesus is, but now God the Father, Himself, chimes in. He reveals to all mankind, showing quite visibly who Jesus is; revealing - He shows them the Glory of His Christ, the Messiah; the glory of the Son of God. He shows them Jesus transfigured; bathed in “dazzling white.” In today's Old Testament lesson, taken from the Book of Exodus – we read how Moses witnessed the Glory of God – and because of it – his face was absolutely shining. Just being near God's glory was enough reason to have Moses wear a veil before others.

Luke's Gospel also tells us of the heavenly visitors: *“Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, (this wasn't Jet Blue leaving from Jacksonville, this was bringing fulfillment in Jerusalem with the death of Christ) which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem.”* (Luke 9:30-31)

Moses represented the Law, while Elijah represented the Prophets. After God the Father spoke, Moses and Elijah disappear and Jesus stands alone. You could say that the Law and the Prophets have served their turn and pass away. Now, He, who is the fulfillment of both the Law and the Prophets, alone remains as our means of salvation.

Jesus, and only Jesus, is the one who fulfills the Old Covenant and brings us the New Covenant. On that mountain, that day, a new era was on the horizon. The Old Covenant, represented by Moses and Elijah was going to pass away and the new Covenant was about to come, through the death and resurrection of Jesus. This new covenant through the relationship with Jesus – and the partaking in that New Covenant through His Body and Blood is the most precious gift that we, believers of Jesus, have been given.

Finally, Luke's Gospel says: *“While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. A voice came from the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.” When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone”* (Luke 9:34-36) God the Father simply says these words, *“This is my Son, whom I has chosen; listen to him.”* Could it be any easier? Jesus is the only Son of God!

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While we can see the Word and believe it – it is crystal clear about Jesus’ glorious identity, but unfortunately there are some who can’t see the forest for the trees. In spite of the empirical proof – they ask:

- Is Jesus the Son of God - that God the Father proclaimed on the mountain that day, or is He someone else?
- Is Jesus the one who required repentance for sin – and then provided forgiveness – or is He someone else?
- Is Jesus the one who sacrificed Himself – on the hard wood of the cross – so that “*whoever believes in Him – shall not perish – but have eternal life?*” (John 3:16) Or is He someone else?
- Is Jesus someone who touched hearts and cured bodies and the spirits of people who have faith in Him – or is He someone else?
- Is Jesus someone who came as the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets – or is He someone else who turns a blind eye to the Law that His Father gave to Moses?
- Is Jesus someone who believes every Word that is in the Scriptures – as the written Word of God, the unchangeable, unmovable Word of God, or is He someone else?
- Is Jesus someone who invites people to come to Him and be transformed – never to be the same again – healed of affliction, disease, addictions, perversions and sinful behavior? Or is He someone else – who says come to me and stay just as you are – have fun and forget what my Father said – that was for another time that has expired a long time ago?

Sadly, there are people identify themselves as *Christians* today who cannot – or will not confess that Jesus is who God says He is. They will either say – Oh, he was a great prophet, or teacher, or even that he had great power that was used to lead us to our own ‘divinity.’ How can they be so wrong?

My brothers and sisters: you either accept the Divinity of Jesus as the Christ as the only Son of God – who died on the cross for the atonement of our sins – OR NOT! Believe in Him – and what the Bible says about Him - OR NOT!

Today, we are so very blessed to baptizing a young girl, Julie Carolyn Vickers, because her parents, Ashely and Jay along with David, and her godparents Amy and Brian – are believers that Jesus is the Son of God. Not only that, they believe that He is the “Way, the Truth and the Life” and that He is the only way to the Father. (John 14:6) They will be standing before you, in just moments, and they will be standing before Almighty God – making promises on Julie’s behalf – that she will be raised in that very same faith. As Amy said to me only Friday, that is a big responsibility. It is. We are blessed today to witness these promises as the church, as the Body of Christ, and support them in their life in Christ. We are so blessed today that we have people here that have been baptized within the last 12 months, and they know the proof of what takes place in your heart when Jesus’ Holy Spirit fills you. Congratulations to them and their family.

What it really all boils down to is the fact that if you do believe in Jesus, then you can call yourself a follower of Christ, a disciple of Christ, a Christian; if not – then you are making up another religion or cult all together. You know what – There are a whole bunch of cults out there that try to proclaim that they are Christian. I invite you to look at the chart outside my office that shows you all of the other denominations that are truly not Christian, and what they believe. You are going to shake your head and say, “they believe that!” Like the Mormons and several others. I am not going to point fingers because they say when you point a finger there are three more pointing back at you. Check out the chart – I think you will be amazed. I want to suggest to you that those people who are proclaiming something else, need to end their charade – and either submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ or not. You either believe what the Bible says – or you don’t. If you don’t believe what the Bible says -- then call yourself something other than Christian – and start living whatever truth you do believe in. There are too many who continue to question the divinity of our Lord – and you could call them ‘wolves in sheep clothing!’ The Apostle John warns us of this kind of deception with these words from 2 John 1:7-9, *“Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist. Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully. Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.”* And as we know –they have the Holy Spirit as well.

If you believe that Jesus is just who He says He is, and who God the Father says He is, and that God’s Holy Word is true and unchanging – then we leave it to Jesus and let Him and God’s Word transform us - to His ways – we are not to transform Jesus and Scripture to our ways – or the culture’s ways. There is only ONE TRUTH – and as we heard in today’s Holy Gospel - God has spoken – JESUS IS HIS SON – and we are to listen to Him!