

Church of Our Saviour  
Fond du Lac, Wisconsin

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Transfiguration Sunday  
February 14, 2021

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Text: Mark 9:2-9

Title: "He Was Transfigured Before Them"

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***In the Name of (+) Jesus our Lord. Amen***

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Let me say it right at the beginning!

I do not understand the Transfiguration! I will never understand the Transfiguration! But I will go the mountaintop with Jesus and Peter, James and John just the same! I have gone there many times before! This time I will go with you!

To begin...

I do not know what transfigured really means! I do not know how Jesus' clothing became dazzling white! I do not know how those gathered together on that mountain talked together! Old Testament heroes! Moses and Elijah! New Testament heroes! Peter, James and John! They talked we are told! But, how? And had I been there on that mountaintop that day I probably would have ended as Peter, James and John did, building shelters!

That's what we do! When something is beyond our ability to understand! We build shrines! We build shelters! We build churches! And, they remind us of many things! Our faith! Our history! And, we have to say, the mystery of God!

Isn't that why, when you get right down to it, churches like this one are built! It's about God! And the mystery of God! And

so, the ceiling is high! The chancel is beautiful! That's why the symbols, not the real thing, but symbols all around us are in this place! Something of God! But, not near God's whole being!

One of the serious issues of our age is we have tried to get the big issues of life and faith and love, and even the person of God, into a manageable size! We have made God smaller than the real God is!

We rarely kneel anymore, God is big, and we are just humble, kneeling servants! And we like to make it sound like we've got God exactly where we want God, a God we can manipulate! A God who will do what we want! Especially when enough people praying, God will bend, and we will get what we want!

A long time ago, the Greek philosopher, Aristotle, said that God is perfect and by that he meant, God is unchanging and unaffected by world and life and life events! Because God is God! Good, Aristotle! Good! But we are still mostly in the dark!

William Placher, in his book, JESUS THE SAVIOR, has written, "Somewhere near the middle of the story, comes a crucial moment! As Jesus teaches and acts in remarkable ways, followers and critics alike begin to ask more pressingly, who is this guy?"

There! That's where we are! That's what we ask!

Questions arise! The Transfiguration mountain events still leave us dumfounded! He called men and women to follow him, to welcome and work toward the reign of God, which he

said, was already in their midst, but what is it? And, why can't we see the signs of God more clearly?

Jesus put together a little band of followers, just twelve, and together they helped him put together a community of friends who, as he taught them, loved one another! He told them, as he has told us, you are my people, you are church, and the gates of hell, the power of death, will not get the best of you! And, we believe!

So, who is this guy?

The miracle of Jesus is that he comes to us not at our invitation, not because we have earned the right, not because we deserve his presence! He comes to us because of love!

He is the Savior of all people! And he saves us all, if we hear him, from despair, and loneliness, and isolation, and fear!

And, even for those of who think they have failed in this life,  
Jesus tells us, you are mine, I love you!

How do we get into the orbit of his love? How do we  
access saving love? Don't we have to prove ourselves! Don't we  
have to sign a statement of faith? Don't we have to join up?  
Don't we have to be instructed and confirmed? Don't we have  
to know the Catechism inside and out? Don't we have to give  
money? Don't we have to get in church every Sunday?

In the Gospel story he comes, he comes down any road  
anywhere to welcome a lost child home, to intercede for the  
woman about to be stoned to death for adultery! He invites the  
tax collector to come down out of a tree to go get lunch! He  
wants minority people to be in his church! He, welcomes those  
nobody wants, the prostitutes, the sinners, the unclean! He

invites them to sit down and eats with them! How good! But, such a mystery! We build human worth on achievement and bank account! Jesus sees something else!

There is mystery on that Transfiguration mountain! No one had ever seen before what Peter, James and John saw! No one had ever seen clothing that was dazzling white! Not like that clothing! No one could ever have imagined the appearance of Moses and Elijah! How could that happen? No one had ever heard a voice coming out of a cloud, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love! listen to him!" No one had ever seen clouds that covered over them before!

And, no one could have imagined an eternal, mysterious God, saying to all the world, that he loves us so much that he gave his only Son to save us all! No one could have imagined

that! But that was the experience ahead! There was no getting past it or around it! The preliminaries were over! There was more Jesus could have done! There were still people who needed help! There were still people who needed to think deeper thoughts about life and faith! There were still people in need of healing! There were still people lost in their twisted way of understanding life and faith! They needed someone to relate to who understood them! Someone who didn't lose patience with them and push them away!

From that mountain of transfiguration, Jesus needed to face Jerusalem and his inevitable death! The death we would build our salvation on, salvation now and salvation which will take us into the life to come! And, so we bless God's holy Name! AMEN