

Listen to Him

The gospel for this coming Sunday (The Transfiguration of Our Lord) is Matthew 17:1-9. This takes place six days after Peter's confession.

Jesus takes three of the first disciples he called in 4:18-22. He selected them several times to be with him at key moments (26:37; Mk. 5:37).

He leads them to a high mountain, possibly Mount Tabor or Hermon. Mountains were common sites for significant events: temptation (Mt 4:8), sermon (5:1), prayer (14:23), feeding of 4,000 (15:29); God revealed Himself to both Moses and Elijah on Mount Sinai (Horeb; Ex 19:3; 1Ki 19:8).

There he is transfigured. That means his appearance changed. The three disciples saw Jesus in his glorified state.

When he is joined by Moses and Elijah the disciples witness the confirmation of Jesus' claim that he fulfills the Law (Moses) and the Prophets (Elijah). They were representative of the OT Scriptures. Moses and Elijah now talk about Christ's death to finish his perfect ministry here on earth.

Peter exclaims that it is great to be in this setting. He may have felt as though he and his fellow disciples were almost in heaven. When he speaks of tents, he may have desired to erect new tents of meeting where God could again communicate with his people. Or he may have been thinking of the booth used at the Feast of the Tabernacles. He seems to want the glory without the cross.

The Father interrupts Peter's babbling by speaking his blessing when it says "*This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.*" At all this the disciples were totally overwhelmed. To all of this Jesus comes with a comforting touch and a reassuring word.

Jesus touches us in our baptism and with his body and blood. He touches us through the consoling words of fellow Christians. He touches us through his perfect word. The phrase "listen to him" has the meaning of "keeping on hearing him. We too are directed to the voice of Christ, to Christ's Word, which is God's Word, and not to wonderful visions. We have enough in his Word. That is a bright light, which gives light to us in this dark world, and shows us the way of salvation.

Prayer: "'Tis good, Lord, to be here! Yet we may not remain; But since Thou bidst us leave the mount, Come with us to the plain" LSB 414. Amen.