

“A Word That Gives Light to Our Vision”

Text: Luke 9:28-36

I had a blinding experience the other night. I was serving as MC for our Family Trivia Night. At intermission time I walked past the judges table and walked directly in the line of the projector that was posing team scores on the screen. Every time I walked past, I asked myself: “Why did I do that?” After several blinding experiences, I learned to walk around the table to avoid that bright light.

This reminds me of the incident of the blind man in the Gospel of St. John. He was blind from birth, but Jesus restored his sight. The people who had observed the miracle denied what they saw with their own eyes, but the man who was blind could now see. Jesus concluded, “For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.” (John 9:39)

In order to give a clear vision to the disciples of his work, our text records along with Matthew and Mark, the transfiguration of Jesus. The light that the disciples saw on that occasion was the true glory of their Savior and ours. The way that St. Luke described it was in this way: “And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white.” This bright light along with the appearance of Moses and Elijah was too overpowering to handle. It was not to be a time of fear, but a time of great joy for these disciples. Our Heavenly Father spoke and said to them: “This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!” Like the disciples we have-

A WORD THAT GIVES LIGHT TO OUR VISION

I. We have a glimpse into the future

II. We are strengthened in our faith

I.

A.1. While this incident shows Jesus for whom he really is, there was a point to it all for the disciples. A difficult time in Jesus' earthly ministry was about to begin. The disciples would need strengthening for the challenge ahead of them.

As they went on it would be important for them to know the truth of Jesus' claims and the power that would go with them.

Have you ever been awakened from a nap and be totally disoriented as to the day, the time, and where you were? Years ago I remember falling asleep in my car on I-55 near Bloomington to the squealing of brakes.....Don't worry, I wasn't driving! Carol was and I wondered what was happening. She informed me that we were about to collide with the other car. Given our experiences, what must the disciples have felt?

St. Peter had confessed Jesus as the Christ, and Jesus described very vividly what that would mean. Now this occurs plus the appearance of Moses and Elijah representing all of the Old Testament. Everything God had promised was now being fulfilled in Jesus. As we look at St. Luke's description we really see a glimpse of heaven and what our future will be like. In last Sunday's Gospel, St. Peter was astounded as he was in the presence of God (Luke 5:8) We now see him in an even greater way!

2. A cloud now surrounds them and they heard the voice of God: "This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him! The Old Testament points to Christ. Moses had said: "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen." (Deuteronomy 18:15) While there were many spokesmen for God, the most important one is his Son.

(Hebrews 11:1-2)

B.1. Joining with the disciples in this experience, we can identify with Peter's words: "Master, it is good that we are here." He had the wrong idea however. He wanted to keep it in the presence, but they would be moving on from this experience. We too feel the presence of God while we are in worship. The service captures that for us. We not only feel this presence, but we are also equipped to share this message with others.

They were in the cloud and they were startled. Being in the presence of God could have meant death. Instead they were being equipped to bring a message of life.

2. What it must have been to see those saints of Old! They were with those men they had heard about and read about. You and I look forward to a similar reunion one day. We have a picture of that every time we worship. If we enjoy this now, what will heaven be like? Next Saturday I will pass another year as one of your pastors. As I do that, I reflect upon the many over the years I have known who know what heaven is like. They worship with us as the communion of saints. The hymn says: "We feebly struggle, they in glory shine." I miss them and you do too for they are your relatives and friends. There is work to be done by us and through us for we are on a journey.

II.

A.1. Moses and Elijah were talking with Jesus about his departure. This bears a striking resemblance to Moses' leading the Israelites out of Egypt. In fact the Greek word used here is "exodus". This departure would bring about the fulfillment of God's promises. As Moses and Elijah are gone from this scene, it is clear that Jesus is the only one to listen to for the disciples and us today.

2. We live in a world that teaches otherwise. The world tells us that all religions are the same. This is not the Message of Scripture however. We listen to Jesus. This departure by Jesus will bring about the greatest deliverance of all. Through his life, death, and resurrection Jesus delivers us from our sin and death. St. Paul tells us: “He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?” (Romans 8:32)

B.1. There is a great comfort for us in our text for today. There is no mistake about the identity and purpose of Jesus. The message of Jesus is the central mission of Scripture. We know that because Moses and Elijah talked with Jesus about this mission.

This word brings great assurance for us as well. Through the pages of Scripture and history, we know what these disciples accomplished after the crucifixion and resurrection. They brought this message to the known world of that day. We have the same message to bring as well to our world of today. It is a certain message for an uncertain and unsure world.

2. Once the disciples had heard these words and had seen Jesus in all of his glory, they said nothing about this event. In fact Mark in his description Jesus told them to keep quiet until he had risen from the dead. They did as Jesus said and wondered what rising from the dead meant. (Mark 9:10)

Later St. Peter would write: “For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.” (II Peter 1:16) Though the pages of Scripture we are too. We know and confess Jesus to be who he says he is and with him we are the victors in life and in death. As we move into the season of Lent we are mindful of our sins and the great price that Jesus paid. We rejoice that the victory has been won and is ours. We have his word on it! Amen.