

The Lord's Message: A Glimpse of God

Date: February 19, 2023

Where: Tilghman UMC

Scripture Reference: Matthew 17:1-9

Today, we are finishing up the Season of Epiphany and beginning the Season of Lent, this Wednesday is our Ash Wednesday Service. The celebration of the ending of the Season of Epiphany is Transfiguration Sunday. This marks the turning point in Jesus' ministry. Jesus will no longer be teaching the crowds and healing the sick. Jesus' full attention will be on the disciples and the cross. The disciples will be the ones that will carry on the ministry.

Let us pray.

If someone were to come up to you and ask "who is Jesus?", what would you reply? Son of God, Great I Am, The Bread of Life, Living Water, The Light of the World, The Lamb of God, etc. How do you know and believe this? The Bible and your faith.

Chapter 17 starts out with this phrase, "After six days." What happened six days ago? We look at **Matthew 16:15** with Jesus asking the disciples, "Who do you say I am?" Peter replies in verse 16, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus then proceeds to tell Peter that He will build this church on this principle of faith, verses 18. Jesus goes on to tell all the disciples about His suffering and death, verse 21. This upsets all the disciples. In verse 22, Peter takes Jesus aside and began to rebuke Him. In verse 23, Jesus responds to Peter. Jesus goes on to tell all the disciples they need to be willing to sacrifice their life for the Gospel, verses 24-27. All this occurred six days prior.

Now, we pick up with Jesus taking Peter, James and John up a Galilean Mountain. In **Matthew 17:2**, when they get to the top of the mountain, Jesus' appearance changes. He is transfigured. His face is shining like the sun and His clothes become white as light. There was another time that something similar happened to a person and that was when Moses was in the presence of God. This is recorded in **Exodus 34:29-35**. By being in the presence of God for forty days and forty nights, the skin on Moses face glowed with the glory of God. Moses had to be in the presence of God for this to happen. Since Jesus is God, the light comes out of Jesus, so not just His face is glowing, but His whole body and even His clothes are glowing with glory of God. This may have been the same image that John saw in the vision while he was on the island of Patmos, **Revelation 1:13-16**.

In **Matthew 17:3**, not only was Jesus changed, but Jesus was talking to two people long considered dead, Moses and Elijah. Moses represents the law that Jesus said that He did not come to change, but to fulfill, **Matthew 5:17-18**. Elijah represents the prophecies that Jesus was to fulfill. Conservatively, Jesus fulfilled over 300 prophecies.

In verse 4, Peter, thinking that they are going to be staying on this mountain for a while, suggests that they build some shelters. We are told that as Peter is speaking in verse 5, God speaks. In verse 6, God speaking humbles the disciples. This is a similar message that God gives at Jesus' baptism in **Matthew 3:17**. Jesus reassures them in verse 7. In verse 8, when the disciples looked up there was only Jesus. In verse 9, they head down the mountain.

Who was the Transfiguration for? Was it Jesus? No, Jesus knows that He is completely human and completely God. Was it for Moses and Elijah? No, now they understand God's plan. Was it for Peter, James and John? Yes, if there were any doubts that Jesus was the Son of God, they were all erased. They are the ones who will be leaders of the disciples to carry on the ministry of Jesus.

In **Hebrews 11:1**, it says that, "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." Now I have faith that God loves me. God sent His only Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for my sins. I am forgiven by Jesus' acts of great love. Jesus is sitting on the right side of God and one day I will see Jesus. I believe all of this, but sometimes I need to see God. I need to peak under the cup to know that all of this is true.

The Bible shows us a variety of ways God has used so that humans will have a glimpse of Him. God uses visions. In **Isaiah 6:1-4**, God gives Isaiah a glimpse through a vision. God uses dreams. In **Matthew 1:20-21**, God sends an angel in a dream to Joseph to tell him that Mary is going to give birth to Jesus. God uses angels. In **Luke 1:26-31**, God sends the angel, Gabriel to Mary. God comes to us in a physical way. God appeared to Moses in a burning bush, **Exodus 3:2-5**. God wrestled with Jacob, **Genesis 32:24-28**. Jesus blinded Paul, **Acts 9:3-6**.

These are just some of the ways that God has appeared to people in the Bible, so that they would not have any doubts. God uses these ways to appear to people today, so that there will not be any doubts that He loves us. We can see God.

Another way that we know that God loves us is through the acts of others. Peter and John healed a lame man in **Acts 3:1-10**. In **1 John 4:7**, we should remember this verse to show us how we are to live so that others will know God. I want to share with you a devotion from Josh McDowell. It is entitled "We Show by Our Actions that We are Living in Faith".

“Mallory noticed the woman’s dirty fingernails as she dropped a bread roll onto the plate and handed it to her. *Doesn’t she ever take a bath?* she thought, staring at the woman’s matted hair.

The woman took the plate from Mallory and shuffled away without looking up. Mallory glanced at the next person in line at the homeless shelter Mallory’s family visited once a month. The gray-haired woman smiled at her, revealing a mouth with only a few teeth.

“Her name’s Clara,” the woman said. “Her husband died a few months ago. She hasn’t been the same since.”

Mallory quickly shifted her gaze and reached for another bread roll. She placed it on the plate of chicken, mashed potatoes, and gravy that her brother gave her and handed it to the woman.

The woman smiled. “Thank you,” she said. “God bless you.”

Mallory blushed. This woman seemed different from many of the others at the shelter, who took their food and shuffled off without a word. She wasn’t dirty. *Except for her missing teeth and worn clothes, she seems—well, normal,* Mallory thought. Watching her walk away, Mallory felt embarrassed as she recalled her earlier complaints to her parents about going to the shelter. Her parents had gently insisted that she go, and Mallory had been grumpy ever since.

Mallory’s gaze once again found the woman with the missing teeth. She sat beside Clara and began to butter her roll. Then she cut Clara’s chicken, gently placing the fork in Clara’s hand when she was done.

Mallory left her place in the food line and took a seat next to the woman. “Are you related to Clara or something?” she asked.

“No,” the woman answered. She looked curious.

“I saw what you did for her. I mean, cutting her meat for her and everything.”

The woman shrugged. “I just want her to know that God loves her, and so do I. I tell her that often, but I think I say it a lot better in my actions. But why am I telling you? I bet that’s why you come here—to show God’s love to people like me.”

Mallory’s face showed her surprise. “Yeah,” she answered. “That’s why I come here.” She smiled at the woman, determined not to forget that again.

Transfiguration is for all of us, so that we can see a glimpse of God. In turn, we can be the transfiguration for others so that they can see a glimpse of God. They can experience God's grace, mercy and love through our actions. Amen.