

A Sneak Peak

Matthew 17:1-9

Introduction

We love previews. Movie trailers, scenes from the next episode and infomercials all serve a purpose—to whet our appetite for the movie, show or whatever the ad is selling. It's a powerful marketing tool. Descriptions alone don't have near the effect. That's what was happening on the mount of Transfiguration. Three of the disciples were getting a "sneak peek" at glory. They saw the glorified Jesus, Moses and Elijah, the representatives of the Law and Prophets. **LAW** and **GOSPEL** met on that mountain.

The Event

To understand the **Transfiguration** better, let's first look at what happened.

- 1) *Jesus was transfigured or transformed into a more glorious and exalted appearance.* The state of exaltation broke through the humiliation for a brief moment.
- 2) *Moses and Elijah appeared and began talking with Jesus.* We don't know exactly what they said, but it more than likely had something to do with encouraging Him as He proceeded on His journey to the cross, letting Him know He was on the right track. We also don't know how Moses and Elijah were recognized. But it gives us an insight into heaven, that we will know everyone there.
- 3) *Peter thought it would be a good idea to stay there and enjoy this for a while, but was interrupted by God the Father (a voice from the cloud) who said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to Him."*
- 4) *Everything went back to normal* when the disciples fell on their faces in fear and awe. It was all over. I imagine the whole event took less than 5 minutes.

It's Importance in the Church

In Scripture

But this short event is powerfully important in the Church. The more often a story is related in Scripture, the more important it is. Jesus's **Crucifixion and Resurrection** are related in all four Gospels. Obviously, the most important thing about Christ's life. His **Baptism** and the **Transfiguration** are each related three times, while His **Birth** is only covered in **St. Matthew** and **St. Luke**. **St. Mark** begins with John the Baptist and Jesus' **Baptism**. **St. John** is more concerned with the **Incarnation** than the actual birth. The **Baptism** and **Transfiguration** are important, because they identify Jesus as the **Son of God**.

The Church Calendar

Epiphany and the season after are concerned with showing that Jesus is the **Son of God**. This was important early on, as many were trying to deny the deity of Christ. So, Epiphany has as its Gospel lesson, the story of the Magi, showing that those outside Judaism recognized Jesus as God's Son (**Matthew 2:1-12**). The season after Epiphany has stories of Jesus being revealed as God's Son through miracles and testimonies, this year, proclaimed by John the Baptist as the Lamb of God (**John 1:29-42a**);

Messianic prophecy is fulfilled in Jesus (**Matthew 4:12-25**); Jesus is Presented at the temple (**Luke 2:22-32**); He came to fulfil the Law (**Matthew 5:13-20**); He teaches the Law (**Matthew 5:21-37**). These are bookended by His **Baptism** and **Transfiguration**. The color for today is white, because it's a day of victory and celebration.

Listen to My Son

Because of its message, it's the doorway between **Epiphany** and **Lent**. This is the last time Jesus is shown to be the Son of God before He goes to the cross. We sing a lot of Alleluias today, since we will be giving them up for Lent. The message is the Father saying, *"This is my beloved Son, with Whom I am well pleased; listen to Him."* We listen to Him because He is God's Son. As God's Son, He speaks with the **authority** of God. After all He is the **Word** of God. So, His is the message of God. And what is His message? It's the message of the **Gospel, forgiveness** and **salvation**. That leads us right into Lent and the Cycle of Life.

The Center of the Story

The Transfiguration puts us at the center of the Gospel message. Jesus is the Son of God Who died on the cross for our sins. Listen to Him! Listen as He says, "I love you." "I died for you." "I forgive you." It's a sneak peek at heaven on the mountain. Let's listen to the Son as He calls us to the cross and calls us home.

Means of Grace

As we partake of the body and blood of Jesus, we also get a sneak peek. It too is a mountaintop experience. we come into the Holy of Holies. We are witnesses of the resurrected body of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Gospel message of love and forgiveness is proclaimed. And we hear the Father say, "Listen to Him" as He strengthens our faith for the journey.

*May the peace of God,
Which passes all understanding,
Keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*
