

Sermon – February 27, 2022 – Transfiguration Sunday

It's All About The Content!

Luke 9:28–36

Dear friends in Christ

“Don’t judge a book by its cover” we are told. And I think there is validity to the statement. We need to go through the content to reveal message the book wants to convey, be it sweet poetry, or deep knowledge and wisdom to the reader. We must read the content, and equally important, we must know who the author is, for that we need to do some research on who that is, so that we will not be deceived or dupped into something that could be damaging to our minds, and ultimately to our souls.

And like a book, what we have inside will convey a message. And more, what we have in our hearts and minds will be reflected in our attitudes, our decisions, our faith, our whole world. So, before judging someone, get to know that person, there is always more than meets the eye.

This is exactly what we see in our Gospel reading this morning, on this Transfiguration Sunday

Jesus takes Peter, John, and James. Now, why those three? We don’t know from the text at hand, but we are told how they reacted when they saw Jesus transfiguration.

First, they were asleep. It is said that the mountain the transfiguration took place is Mount Tabor. It is not that high, only a 1,886 feet high, although for me maybe a difficult one but for people like the disciples who used to walk lots might not be so, yet following Jesus places I’m sure was a bit demanding, so by the time they get to the top, they are tired, and so, they fall asleep.

But they wake up, perhaps struggling a bit to open their eyes, but when Peter is fully awake, on impulse he does something that reveals what is inside his minds and his heart. He realizes that Moses and Elijah are there with Jesus. A simple look at the text tells me that he wanted them to remain, the two men were leaving by this time, but Peter wants them to stay. I'm sure he had lots of questions to ask those two, or simply to be in the presence of two men who were and have been crucial in the history of their nation.

All through his life, I'm sure he heard the stories of the exodus, learned the commandments, and the word of the prophets. That's what was in his heart. That was what made him. And knew that both pointed to the coming Messiah, and yes he did recognized Jesus as the Messiah, he even confessed it about a week before this moment, just that Peter needed to know more about Jesus, needed to understand fully what he confessed previously, what it means to the Son of God, and what he came to accomplish for Peter.

But Peter having an appreciation and sufficient knowledge about the three men he and the other disciples were beholding, and not wanting just have them stay there with the disciples, he wanted to serve them by building a shelter for them to rest in, tabernacles, or hats, or tents as the ESV Bible puts it. There was an instinct of gratitude for the presence of these three men, and his desire to indulge himself in having them stay and fellowship with them.

But why Moses, and Elijah? The letter to the Hebrews tells us that it was because Moses was a faithful servant in the house of the Lord. And this is what Peter had in his mind and in his heart. Moses, the one who led God's people to freedom and though them God's commandments. The

one who had a close relationship with God. That even God himself spoke of him saying “he is faithful in all my house. ⁸ With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the LORD.” (Num. 12:7-8 NIV)

But we know the stories about Moses leading God’s people to freedom. Right from the get-go, we see a rebellious people. Moses even witnessed the demise of those who heard God’s word but didn’t want to live accordingly, instead for their sake of their own personal freedom disobeyed God’s commands and rejected God’s care. And because of that they wandered 40 years in the desert, and if it wasn’t for Moses constant pleading with God on their behalf, they would have been destroyed. Because of their doubt, because they took matters in their own hands, because they thought they could work out their own freedom and progress. Even Moses despite his being considered a great servant, he disobeyed God and took for himself a credit that was do to God, so God didn’t allow him to enter the promised Land, although God did not abandon him, instead through death took him to be with him forever, and now is here talking with Jesus.

That is what Peter had in his mind and heart about Moses, and the same goes for Elijah. The Prophet that was an outstanding figure in the Old Testament. He was a great prophet. Representing all the prophet of the Old Testament till that moment. Representing God’s voice that kept coming to his people over, and over again. The prophet that was taking to heaven without experiencing physical death, and he too was standing right there with Jesus.

A wonderful sight indeed! Peter wants it to last, and he wants to do something about it. That’s a natural reaction to what happens around us.

A natural reaction to the content we possess. However, his content only gets complete and sorted out when the focus changes, from what he intends to do, to what God does instead.

Something Peter didn't focus on, was the brilliance and glowing Jesus was having that moment. But that comes to the center of the scene when he hears the voice that is heard in the clouds that by now was involving them: "This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!"

Talking about content, the transfiguration of Jesus, really showed what Jesus was and is. God himself! God in the flesh, and although "... he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." (Phil. 2:5-8)

That's what the disciples and all those around him saw, yet here, Peter, John and James, see a glimpse of God in all his glory, Jesus nature, and his purpose on earth. The fact that Moses and Elijah were there means that the law and prophecies of Old get fused in one person, Jesus Christ.

Its all about content, we have seen what the content of the disciples and Jesus have and how those were displayed that day.

How about us, you and me. What would you say, if we could look inside, what would you see, what's the content of your mind and heart?

It is said that we can get to know each other only when we are naked. And not so much physically, rather when we are vulnerable, when all our defenses are down, when the masks we put on are removed, only then we get to know the real person.

What do we see, then, when all is down and removed? Sometimes is hard isn't it, to know what is there, and perhaps very difficult to remove our coverings that even ourselves can't see what's in there.

I'm not sure if it happens to you, but sometimes in the garage I use plastic jars to store small stuff, screws, bolts, nuts, small parts that I might have removed from things, but because I'm always in a hurry, or so it seems, I put things in there, for safekeeping, my car keys, or some other valuable thing. Put them there and keep focused what I'm doing at that moment. But then when I need my stuff, I can't find them. I look everywhere because I forgotten that I put them in the jar. But I still look in there, I lift it, to see if what I'm looking for is there, but can't see it. It's a mess in there. The unimportant things have covered and hidden the important things. Unimportant things? Well, I think those are important, at some point I'll need a screw or a bolt, or whatever I have there. But what a screw or a nut compared to a golden ring, or car key?

Yet that's how sometimes we live our lives. We allow ourselves to be filled with so many things, things that can potentially keep us awake at night, things that will give us anxiety, or spike it, things that can potentially get us sick. Things that will lead our lives, determine our thought process, our actions, and attitudes. But things that if don't check and question them, will us to nothing, only to disappointment.

But today, we are invited to consider and hear Jesus. We are invited to focus on him, to be filled with and of him. "This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!" (Lk 9:35). God says.

Jesus is worthy of glory, much more than the things we have been idolizing and idealizing. Jesus is something else, Jesus is God's son. "Listen to him! My Son! God the Father says.

Of course, what we know now, and what Peter, James, and John would soon learn, is that God's version of glory looks surprisingly like what you and I might consider shame. They don't know that yet. At least don't know the gravity of it yet. That Jesus would display his inner love, his content for the sake of your content. So that on the cross he would remove all that junk, all those things that cover us and in its place fill us with his spirit, with his grace and his love.

Look at all Moses did! Separated the sea! But Jesus walked on water. Moses caused bread to be found on the ground after taking his concerns to God! But Jesus is the bread of life. Moses made water flow from a rock! But Jesus is living water.

Moses wrote all these sacred words! But Jesus is the Word. The very Word of God. That glory the disciples saw also on Moses' face there on the mountain—it's the reflected glory of Jesus. That Promised Land toward which he journeyed, that's rest in Jesus.

Moses took his people from slavery toward freedom! But that exodus, as glorious as it was, is just not even on the same level as the exodus Jesus performs, through death to life, with the promise of the same for his people. Slavery conquered, not to old Pharaoh in Egypt but slavery to sin and death and the power of the devil. Live and believe in him, and you'll never die.

So, do consider Jesus, would you? Because he does offer that freedom today. Freedom to live in him and die in him. And considering him, do heed the voice of God, too, and listen to Jesus. Not just what he says about you and your life but also the words he had spoken to his disciples just days before the transfiguration—and then again on the way

down the mountain—that he must die and rise and lead from the cross the most glorious exodus the world has ever seen.

Listen to him and follow him. And do know that steps down the mountain can be dicey. If you remember only the view and forget to watch where you're going, well, you'd fail to see him walk to the cross, fail to know that you can meet God on that mountain too, Calvary. Follow him to Calvary often. And consider him, who was with God in the beginning, who is the glory of the Father among us. He has dwelt among us and brings light among us and says to all who would believe in him that you, too, can be the daughters and sons of God. And if he says it, it's true, because if the son sets you free, you are free indeed.

Amen.