

Sermon for the Transfiguration of Our Lord

By Rev Samuel Mori Yengi

Text: Matthew 17:1–9

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Dear heavenly Father, send your Holy Spirit so that, whether we are on the mountaintop or in the valley, we may listen to your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Many of us have watched superhero movies. Often the hero lives under an ordinary identity. Think of Superman. By day he appears to be just Clark Kent mild, unnoticed, even awkward. But we, the audience, know his true identity. We wait for the moment when he reveals his power and saves the day.

In today's Gospel, something like that happens but far greater. Jesus, the ordinary-looking Rabbi, takes Peter, James, and John up a mountain. And there He is transfigured. His face shines like the sun. His clothes become dazzling white. Moses and Elijah appear beside Him. This is no costume change. This is revelation. The disciples see who Jesus truly is.

Why Moses and Elijah? Because both had met God on mountains. Moses received God's Law and reflected God's glory. Elijah heard God's voice and spoke with His authority. Together they represent the Law and the Prophets the whole Old Testament.

Now they stand with Jesus. But notice the difference: Moses reflected God's glory. Jesus radiates it. Moses and Elijah spoke God's Word. Jesus is God's Word in the flesh. He is not merely another prophet. He is God Himself among us.

Then comes the voice from the cloud: "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him." That command changes everything. God's people had long listened to Moses and the prophets. Their words were authoritative because they came from God. But now the Father directs us to His Son. The authority of God is revealed fully and finally in Jesus.

This does not mean the Old Testament is set aside. On the contrary, it points to Jesus. The Law and the Prophets find their fulfillment in Him. Everything God promised now comes together in Christ.

And when does this happen? Just after Jesus tells His disciples that He will suffer and die.

As He turns toward Jerusalem and the cross, He is revealed in glory. The disciples see the end of the story before the suffering begins. They see that the One who will hang on a cross is no victim. He is the beloved Son of God. But unlike a superhero, Jesus does not save us by displaying power and strength. He saves us in weakness.

He does not rescue us while shining on a mountaintop. He rescues us as the suffering servant. He goes to the cross. He takes our sin. He dies our death. His words are not flattering. He tells us the truth: our problem runs deep. Sin is not just a mistake on the surface; it is a sickness that leads to death. We cannot fix ourselves.

So, He does what we cannot. He dies in our place. He sheds His blood for our forgiveness. He rises to give us life.

And He does not leave us alone.

Like the disciples who fell in fear, we too are afraid of suffering, of guilt, of death. But Jesus comes to us and says, "Get up. Do not be afraid."

He touches us still. He touches us in Baptism, joining us to His death and resurrection.

He speaks forgiveness into our ears in absolution.

He places His body and blood into our hands and mouths in Holy Communion.

Through these gifts, the glorious Son of God comes to us in humble ways not shining light, but simple words, water, bread, and wine.

Through the ears of faith, we see who He truly is.

Moses and Elijah fade from view. Their work was to point forward. Now Jesus stands alone. The Father's command remains: "Listen to Him."

Listen to Him when He says your sins are forgiven.

Listen to Him when He says, "Do not be afraid."

Listen to Him when He promises eternal life.

Jesus is more than a prophet. More than a teacher. More than a hero. He is our Lawgiver, our Prophet, our Priest, and our King. He alone has authority to save. On the mountain, the disciples caught a glimpse of His glory. Soon they would see Him in suffering. But after the resurrection, they would understand: the glory and the cross belong together.

So, whether we stand on mountaintops of joy or walk through valleys of hardship, we know who Jesus is. The One who shines in divine glory is the same One who died for us and now lives for us.

Therefore, listen to Him.

And may the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. **Amen.**