



Introduction

The Sundays after Epiphany began with Jesus' baptism and end with three disciples' vision of his transfiguration. In Mark's story of Jesus' baptism, apparently only Jesus sees the Spirit descending and hears the words from heaven. But now Jesus' three closest friends hear the same words naming him God's Beloved. The light of God's glory in Jesus has enlightened us through baptism and shines in us also for others to see.

Confession and Forgiveness

In the name of the Father, and of the ✚ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Gracious God,

have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of ✚ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith. **Amen.**

Gathering Hymn ELW # 611 /LBW # 497 *I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say*

Listen and sing along [here](#).

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, the resplendent light of your truth shines from the mountaintop into our hearts. Transfigure us by your beloved Son, and illumine the world with your image, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

First Reading: 2 Kings 2:1-12

Today's reading centers on the transfer of power and authority from the prophet Elijah to Elisha. Their travels, which retrace the path of Joshua back to Moab (the place where Moses died) and the parting of the waters, demonstrate that Elisha and Elijah are legitimate successors of the great prophet Moses.

Read the text [here](#).

Psalmody: Psalm 50:1-6

- ¹The mighty one, God the LORD, has spoken;
calling the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.
- ²**Out of Zion, perfect in its beauty,
God shines forth in glory.**
- ³Our God will come and will not keep silence;
with a consuming flame before, and round about a raging storm.
- ⁴**God calls the heavens and the earth from above
to witness the judgment of the people.**
- ⁵“Gather before me my loyal followers,
those who have made a covenant with me and sealed it with sacrifice.”
- ⁶**The heavens declare the rightness |of God's cause,
for it is God who is judge.**

Gospel: Mark 9:2-9

Mark's gospel presents the transfiguration as a preview of what would become apparent to Jesus' followers after he rose from the dead. Confused disciples are given a vision of God's glory manifest in the beloved Son.

Read the text [here](#).

Reflection on the Text

Transfiguration. Now that word is hard to pronounce. I've been working on how to pronounce that for years. It is an interesting concept. Transfiguration is "a complete change of form or appearance into a more beautiful or spiritual state", according to the Oxford dictionary. Along those lines, transfiguration can also be a change in appearance into something unexpected. Just like Jesus appearing to be a "normal" person who could do miracles and who was gifted in speech.

Yet in the Gospel of Mark, Peter, John, and James see Jesus change in appearance. Jesus is the same being as all along; his appearance is what changes. And not only does Jesus become so radiantly bright that it frightens the Apostles. The situation becomes even more unreal with Moses and Elijah joining them.

For Jesus, his glory shines in the radiance that broadcasts from him. Moses and Elijah coming to talk with Jesus reflects Jesus' importance. The apostles, along with the readers, become aware that Jesus is just more than some carpenter's son who can do some miracles. Even the lawgiver and the premier prophet from the Old Testament come to him. As we know, Jesus of Nazareth does go on to do things even more impressive.

I can see how Peter, John, and James would be frightened. I do not know about you, but I would be. Even though in chapter 8, Peter had described Jesus as the Messiah, I am not sure Peter fully comprehended what type of Messiah Jesus was going to be.

For there were different images of the Messiah in Israel back then. Some thought the Messiah would be a High Priest, or maybe a military/political leader like David. These messiahs could be fully human. In the Transfiguration event, poor ole Peter and the gang were shown something completely different. They are made aware that Jesus is more than just human. The heroes of the Old Testament defer to him. On top of that, Jesus is God's son. Moses and Elijah are still part of God's plans and promises, but they are not the focus; Jesus is the focal point, the star.

Why does Peter offer to build a tent for each one of them? Some scholars speculate that it was the only thing that fearful Peter could think of to do.

Those scholars say that in some branches of Judaism of the time, the Messiah was expected to come or appear during the Festival of the Tents. Nearly all of Judaism celebrated the Festival of the Tents to acknowledge and remember the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. The festival also looks forward to the deliverance of God in the future.

Maybe this is what Peter was thinking about when he offered to build the tents. Or maybe it is simply be fear talking and that is what came out.

With all that is going on with Peter, James, and John in this moment, something else marvelous happens. A cloud comes over and a voice tells them, "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him."

Now if that sounds slightly familiar, think back to the phrase “This is my Son, the Beloved” used five weeks ago at Jesus’ baptism. The baptism reading says “You are my Son, the Beloved, with you I am well pleased.” (Mark 1:11) But there is a little bit of difference between the two statements. In the baptism story, Jesus is apparently the only one who hears this. In today’s gospel, the apostles are being told who Jesus is. Everyone who is there hears the message.

Another difference between the baptism and the Transfiguration is the command to listen to Jesus. With this whole response from the voice in the cloud, Peter is cut off from speaking. God is helping Peter, James, John and us to focus back on Jesus. Not the building of tents, not the radiant light coming from Jesus, not the fact that Moses and Elijah are present. Listen to Jesus. Grow in faith, knowledge, love, and compassion from Jesus. Follow him.

We all can understand how it would be hard for them to focus on Jesus. We all have had moments where fear, desires of some kind, or a need of some kind interferes with listening to Jesus, to the Triune God. We all have those moments. What makes things even more difficult sometimes is that listening is more than just hearing. Hearing is the catching the noise or sounds of something. Listening means trying to understand. Now there is plenty about God and his activities that we will not understand. That is where faith comes in. Have faith that Jesus follows through.

During this time of pandemic, economic, and political ups and downs, fear can run rampant: just like it did with the three apostles who walked up the mountain with Jesus. There are scary moments in life. But do not lose faith. As we will hear in the upcoming weeks, Jesus will walk through life helping, healing, and loving people that he meets. He knows even then that he is walking toward his death. But Jesus also knows the rest of the story. Jesus knows fear, disease, and death are not the end.

That little bit of glory that we saw Jesus having when Moses and Elijah came to visit is just a foretaste of the glory that Jesus has now. That same Jesus that has done all of this, loves and cares for each of us. Life is not always perfect or happy or easy. But, thanks be to God, we are all able to see and receive a foretaste of the gracious love of God. Amen

Hymn of the Day ELW # 315/ LBW # 89

How Good Lord, to Be Here

Listen and sing along [here](#).

Nicene Creed

We profess our faith with the whole church in all times and places:

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God, begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father, through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human .
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

Guided by Christ made known to the nations, let us offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all people in need.

A brief silence.

For the gospel proclaimed in word and deed, for communities of faith far and near, and for all who show the face of Christ throughout the world, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

For creation: sun, moon and stars; life forming in the dark earth and ocean deep; mountains, clouds and storms, and creatures seen and unseen, and for the Holy Spirit's guidance in our stewardship of God's creation, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

For those responsible for safety and protection: for emergency responders and security guards, attorneys and advocates, civil servants and leaders of governments, that they witness to mercy and justice throughout the world, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

For all who suffer this day (*especially those we name now*), that Christ our healer transform sickness into health, loneliness into companionship, bereavement into consolation, and suffering into peace, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

For companions on life's journey in this worshiping community, for loved ones who cannot be with us this day, and for guidance during struggles we face, that God's glory is revealed around and among us, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

In thanksgiving for the faithful departed who now rest from their earthly pilgrimage that their lives of service and prayer inspire us in our living, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

Merciful God, hear the prayers of your people, spoken or silent, for the sake of the one who dwells among us, your Son, Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Closing Hymn ELW # 318 / WOV # 654

Alleluia, Song of Gladness

Listen and sing along [here](#).

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Today's reflection was written by Vicar Mike Lang.