

The title for today's message is: **Is today a good time to be here?**

God said: ***This is my Son, whom I have chosen; Listen to Him.***

Grace and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Today's Gospel lesson is one of those sections of scripture that for many, leads to more questions, than answers.

Today's Gospel is about our Lord's "Transfiguration", but what does the word "Transfiguration" mean? It means a "Transformation", or "Changing."

And today on this Transfiguration Sunday, something else happens. We move from the Epiphany season into the Lenten season.

We move from the season when Jesus' glory is revealed, into the time when His glory, is covered up, a time when it's hardly seen at all during His suffering and death.

Now in our text we here Peter making a confession of sorts. He says, '***Master, it is good for us to be here.***'

We learn through years of listening to God's word, and of studying God's word, that we too, would agree with Peter's confession.

It is good for us to be strengthened in our faith, and to grow in the knowledge of our salvation.

Now, Luke begins by saying: ***Now about eight days after these sayings he took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray.***

Here Jesus was teaching His disciples a number of things. First He was teaching them that: even though He is the Son of God;

He also needed time alone with His heavenly Father. And by this He was teaching his disciples the importance of prayer.

And the importance of being off by themselves to pray, in order to concentrate, and focus, solely on God.

Now, His disciples would learn even a greater lesson here. Luke said: ***And as he (meaning Jesus) was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white.***

God was revealing His glory, directly to Peter, John and James, and indirectly to you, me and all believers, in and through, His Son Jesus Christ.

And to think, they almost missed it, that's right, Luke said: ***Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep,*** They were asleep.

The original text, said they were indeed sleeping. We know it was late at night, and they had a very busy day.

And just as Jesus would have it, the disciples woke up, right at the same time that Jesus was Transfigured.

Luke tells us: ***but when they became fully awake they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him.***

Yes, their eyes were opened, their hearts were opened, their minds were opened, and they saw with their own eyes, the full glory of God.

They not only saw the full glory of God but they saw, and recognized the two men with Jesus, as being Moses and Elijah.

Now, it's clear that Peter realized the enormity of this event, I mean here's Moses, the first law-giver, the one who delivered Israel to the Promised Land.

And Elijah, the great prophet. Now this was such a great event, Peter didn't want it to end, he wanted it to last longer if not forever.

By this time in Peter's discipleship he had seen many things happen to Jesus, he saw Jesus being made fun of, and rejected by the chief priests.

He had also seen Jesus turned away in His own hometown. And now, he sees Jesus' in His full glory.

Luke says that after a little while Moses and Elijah began to leave Jesus, so Peter quickly shouted out to Jesus, saying: "***Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters--one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.***"

Here Peter felt safe on this mountain, and comfortable with Jesus, Moses and Elijah standing before him.

However, a cloud appeared, and enveloped Peter, John and James, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud.

Surely they remembered the cloud of glory that went with the children of Israel as they wandered in the wilderness.

No one could enter that cloud. It stayed over the temple as a sign of God's presence, and they were frightened.

That is really a part of the glory of God. When we look at His glory, we too, as sinners, are terrified.

Because we see Jesus, God's perfect Son, and ourselves as God's imperfect children.

Look, we realize because of our sinfulness, we cannot stand in the presence of our Savior.

We cannot even view His glory completely, because it would literally frighten us to death.

The prophet Isaiah says to us in chapter 64: "**All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away**".

We too, are terrified by God's glory in relation to our sinful nature, yet at the same time, as we look to the glory of Jesus, we also find comfort.

We find comfort in knowing that Jesus is the Savior of all mankind; and that Jesus didn't come with just the law, but He also came with God's loving grace.

Because of our Lord's death and resurrection He defeated death, and was able to overcome Satan, putting our sins into the tomb forever.

In Him we have redemption through His blood, and the forgiveness of our sins, all in accordance with the riches of God's grace".

This too, is the glory of Jesus that you, and I see, day after day, the forgiveness of our sins.

It was very bold for Peter to say what he said to Jesus, even Luke thought that, because Luke said: (**He did not know what he was saying.**)

Its clear Peter and the others, simply didn't understand what Jesus' real mission was.

Luke tell us why Moses, and Elijah was there with Jesus, he said: **Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor. They came to discuss something.**

They spoke about his (meaning Jesus) departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem.

That's right, Jesus was going to leave, He wasn't just going to walk down the mountain and leave.

No! He was going to go to Jerusalem where He would depart in death, and in the presence of His disciples, and those who loved Him.

Now apparently Peter, James and John were confused by what was happening, and again they were afraid of the cloud that appeared around them.

Luke tells us that out of the cloud came a voice, saying: "***This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.***"

Here God was instructing them to listen to Jesus, because things were going to change yet again, that is from seeing Jesus' glory to seeing His suffering, and death.

Luke says: ***when the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone. The disciples kept this to themselves, and told no one at that time what they had seen.***

We could say they were too scared to say anything, or they didn't understand what they saw, so they didn't want to say anything.

But the truth is they did understand what they saw. They saw that Jesus' real mission was to be the savior of the world.

You and I today, make a step of transition where we leave behind the glory of Jesus for the next six weeks as we here about Jesus' suffering and death.

We listen to Jesus, the words that He speaks. And we see Him clearly in the sacrifice that He makes for all humankind.

True, it's a sad time, yet it's a blessed time too because it reminds us of Jesus' mission.

Mark tells us in chapter 10: "***For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many***".

Jesus did this with His words, and His actions, and we find that the ransom that God demanded, was no more, or, no less than the life of His only Son Jesus Christ.

That's how Jesus fulfilled His mission. In Philippians chapter 2, Paul said: "***And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross!***".

Once again, Jesus' mission was to fulfill the law. He became obedient unto death. He died so that you and I would not have to die, but rather live forever.

He died, not in a very pleasant way, or in a normal way, but He died hanging on a cross to take away the sins of the world.

You and I see Jesus' glory in His death, and we realize that this was His mission. We see it in His Word; we experience it in His sacraments.

My friends, every Sunday that we gather here in worship, we say, 'Master, it is good for us to be here.'

Every time that we gather together to study God's holy word, we say, 'Master, it is good for us to be here.'

And every day when we open up our Bibles and read, we say, 'Master, it is good for us to be here.'

And its true, our sinful nature doesn't want us to read God's word, doesn't want us to study God's word.

As the author of Proverbs chapter 8 said: "***Listen to my instruction and be wise; do not ignore it. Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway. For who-ever finds me finds life and receives favor from the LORD***".

Therefore my friends, Like Peter, we too confess, 'Master, it is good for us to be here.'

Amen.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all. Amen.