

After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. <sup>3</sup> His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. <sup>4</sup> And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus.

<sup>5</sup> Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” <sup>6</sup> (He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.)

<sup>7</sup> Then a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and a voice came from the cloud: “This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!”

<sup>8</sup> Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus.

<sup>9</sup> As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. (NIV 84)

Theme: We are Given a Glimpse of Glory

1. Of our Savior, Jesus.
2. Of our own

On July 4<sup>th</sup> 2013, President Bush was scheduled to speak at the Air Force Museum at Wright Patterson Air Force Base—not far from where we lived. So my brother, Dad, and I went to see him and hear him speak—the 11 mile trip usually takes 15-20 minutes. That trip took us several hours. We joined over 25,000 others to hear the speech—we were somewhat in the back, so far back that I could barely make out that it was indeed President Bush up at the podium. Another three or so hours was spent driving back to our house. In all I would say we spent 7-8 hours just in order to see and hear the President give a speech on the fourth of July. Why? That’s what we do. We want to see famous people in person. Even in our day and age where we can see the President or some famous celebrity on T.V. or the internet almost 24 hours a day, we see like to see famous people in person. People line the streets or cram themselves into small spaces just to see a glimpse of some famous person.

Today we get to see a glimpse—without waiting in line or standing up for eight hours. We see a glimpse of glory—the glory of our Savior

Jesus Christ. And a glimpse of our own glory that we’ll enjoy in heaven.

Six days before our text took place Jesus was warning his disciples what would happen to him. Mark tells us, **He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again.** Peter wasn’t having any of such talk. In his ignorance, he pulled Jesus aside and rebuked him. How dare Jesus say that he was going to suffer and die. No one wants to hear such things. Jesus in turn rebuked Peter in front of the disciples. But Peter did not have the things of God in mind, but the things of men.

Almost a week later Jesus took Peter, James, and John to the top of a high mountain. Mark tells us what happened. **There he was transfigured before them. His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them.** Jesus changed his form in front of his disciples. As God he always had the glory of God. But in his state of humiliation he chose to keep that glory hidden, to put a veil over his glory. But here on top of that mountain, the Lord removes the veil—he gave three of his disciples a glimpse—just a slight glimpse of his divine glory.

But even when Jesus revealed his glory he still had to hide himself. A large cloud came and enveloped them. This cloud hid the divine glory of Christ from the sight of the disciples. Without it the disciples wouldn’t have been able to handle it. God is too great for us. We cannot look upon him in his full glory and live—he is too holy and we are too sinful. Luke tells us that while all of this was going on the disciples became sleepy. Perhaps God was shielding them from fully seeing or realizing his divine glory in order to protect them.

Nowadays, with our unprecedented access into the lives of others, we know more about celebrities than ever before. We love to hear stories that make celebrities sound normal. They are just like us—there is nothing special about them. They are just good at something that earns them a lot of money, or makes them famous.

But we can’t say that about Christ. There is no comparing us with him. He is greater, there is something special about him. He’s not just a regular man. He is the son of God. He is true God from eternity. He is

so great that we can't even look at him in his full glory and live—he has to hide himself from us.

Peter, James, and John caught that glimpse of Jesus' divine glory. It was something that Peter remembered years later as he wrote in 2 Peter 1 about Jesus, **we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.**

It wasn't just the voice that Peter remembered, but also the lesson that Jesus taught him. It was less than a week before Peter and rebuked Jesus for talking about his suffering and death and about six months or so before Jesus would die. He was preparing his disciples for that event. Soon they would see him betrayed, arrested, mocked, beaten, crucified. Soon they would see his lifeless body taken down from the cross, wrapped in linen, and placed in a tomb. But they need not worry—Jesus is God—he just showed him his divine glory! Even though all those things would happen to him, they would only happen because the Almighty God allowed them to happen. They need not worry because glory would follow after suffering.

And that is something we don't forget as we enter the Lenten season on Wednesday—even though Jesus suffered and died, it was followed by glory. He rose from the dead and now he sits on the throne of God in his full glory.

Jesus took three of his disciples up on that mountain alone to pray. And yet, they weren't alone. Moses and Elijah joined them on that mountain. They were there to talk to Jesus about his suffering and death. These are two of the most well-known members of the Old Testament Church. The Law of given through Moses on Mount Sinai, where he talked with God face to face. Elijah too talked to God; through him many Israelites rejected Baal and followed the Lord. Elijah, we know, was taken up in a whirlwind so that he never died. Moses died and was buried by God himself. So you have Elijah, soul and body talking with Jesus. And we assume, the soul of Moses talking with Jesus on Mount Sinai.

Two regular human beings—not hiding their faces, not falling asleep, with no need to be hidden from Christ's glory talking to him. That will eventually be us. The glory of Christ is our glory too. Because of his suffering and death our sin has been removed and paid for. On the cross Christ will give us his perfect life and as a result we are considered pure and righteous in the sight of our Lord. And Christ's resurrection, which took place three days after his death, is a guarantee that we too will rise from the dead. Through faith we'll live with him in heaven forever. And in heaven we'll share in his glory. As Paul mentions in Philippians 3 about Christ, (he) **will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.** And because he has removed our sins and given us his perfect life, because he will give us a share in his glory we will be able to see him in his full glory. John mentions this in third chapter of his first letter, **Now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.**

It seems as if Moses and Elijah were talking with Jesus for awhile. So Peter asked if Jesus wanted them to build three shelters—really tents. One for each of them. It was a ridiculous comment, really. And Mark tells us that Peter was so afraid he really didn't know what he was talking about. There are two reasons why people need shelter: For protection from the elements and for a place to sleep. Of course Jesus in his glory and Moses and Elijah who share in that glory did not need any shelter. Peter was thinking that it would be great if everything stayed the way they were. Moses and Elijah were on the earth, Jesus was in his glory—why change a thing?

But then, just like that, it was all over. The disciples looked up and noticed that Moses and Elijah were gone. Only Jesus was left—back in the form he had before. He looked like any other human being once again. Why did Jesus end it? He was in his glory. Moses and Elijah were with him. Peter wanted them to stay—perhaps forever. But that wasn't part of the plan. That wasn't going to pay for the sins of the whole world.

For the disciples to share in Christ's glory, Christ needed to suffer. He needed to hide his glory once again. It was necessary for him to walk down that mountain and then to head to Jerusalem—to the place of his death. To give up his life on the cross. To suffer through many things so that we would join in him in eternal glory. Peter may have rebuked

Jesus six days earlier—but now he understood. It was necessary for him to suffer and die so that we could share in his glory forever. There was another lesson that Peter learned on the mountain that night. When a cloud enveloped them the Father spoke from heaven. He spoke words of approval—similar to what he said at Jesus baptism, **This is my Son, whom I love.** But then he added, **Listen to him.** This is a continuous command. We are to listen to Jesus continuously. We might translate, “be listening to him,” or “continually listen to him.” Because he is the Son of God and God himself we are to read, learn, study, and obey his word. All the days of our lives we want to serve and honor the Lord by sitting at his feet and listening to his Word and by obeying his commands.

On the way down the mountain Jesus gave his disciples a curious command. Don’t tell anyone that you saw until I rise from the dead. It wasn’t time for the other disciples and the world in general to know about Jesus’ divine glory. But once they knew and believe that Jesus rose from the dead—then they would better understand what took place on the Mount of Transfiguration. Of course, Jesus has already risen from the dead. His prohibition no longer stands. We are free to—and even encouraged to spread the gospel. To tell others about the love of Christ. To share with them the story of his transfiguration and the glimpse of his glory that we will soon share through faith in him.

People do many crazy things simply to get a glimpse of their favorite celebrity. And afterwards the celebrity goes on with his great life and we go back living like we always have. Today, before his suffering begins, we see a glimpse of Christ’s divine glory. And the difference is, Christ’s glory is a glory that we’ll share in—but he has to suffer first. For through his suffering comes our glory. Amen.