

Transfiguration Sunday - February 15, 2026

Prelude:

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

The Holy Gospel

P: *The season of Epiphany reaches its climax this day of Transfiguration. We now hear of the Transfiguration from Matthew's Gospel (Matthew 17:1-9)*

P: And after six days Jesus took with Him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them, and His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became white as light. And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with Him. And Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If You wish, I will make three tents here, one for You and one for Moses and one for Elijah." He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to Him." When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and have no fear." And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only. And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, "Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead."

P: This is the Gospel of our Lord.

C: Praise be to You, O Christ.

Opening Hymn: "O Wondrous Type! O Vision Fair" – Hymn #413

The Call to Worship:

C: Lord Jesus Christ, You are the light of the world. Wise men, guided by light, came to worship You, and we kneel in spirit with them. You calmed the storm, healed the hurting, and released the imprisoned soul; You gave to us the peace of God, the power of hope, and the liberty of forgiveness.

P: Now, with Your disciples, You ascend the Mount of Transfiguration, there to converse with Lawgiver Moses and Prophet Elijah. Prepare our hearts to hear the Father's words that place His signature on You: "This is My Son, whom I love. Listen to Him."

C: Through You, Lord Jesus, God places His signature on us. By faith we are beloved children of the heavenly Father.

P: The time comes when our Lord must descend the mountain and enter the valley—the valley of rejection, of denial, and of crucifixion. Lent must come soon.

C: Lord, grant that we follow You into the valley, for even in the valley of the shadow of death, life does not end. Easter follows, and life begins again. Teach us to live as Your resurrection people, O Lord,

ALL: and let the joy of Easter victory that always follows the time in the valley transform this service of worship into a celebration on the mountain of faith, that

we may all say, “’Tis good, Lord, to be here.”

Hymn of Praise: “’Tis Good Lord to Be Here” – Hymn #414

Entrance Psalm:

P: Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at His holy mountain;

C: for the LORD our God is holy!

P: The LORD reigns; let the peoples tremble!

C: He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake!

P: The LORD is great in Zion;

C: He is exalted over all the peoples.

P: Let them praise Your great and awesome name!

C: Holy is He!

P: The King in His might loves justice.

C: You have established equity; You have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob.

P: Exalt the LORD our God; worship at His footstool!

C: Holy is He!

All: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

P: Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at His holy mountain;

C: for the LORD our God is holy!

P: O God, in the transfiguration of Your Son You confirmed the mysteries of the faith by the witness of Moses and Elijah, and in the voice from the bright cloud You foreshadowed our adoption as Your children.. Make us with the King heirs of Your glory and bring us to enjoy its fullness, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reign with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, one and forever.

C: Amen.

Old Testament Lesson: Exodus 24:8-18

R: And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words." Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, and they saw the God of Israel. There was under His feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness. And He did not lay His hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; they beheld God, and ate and drank. The LORD said to Moses, "Come up to Me on the mountain and wait there, that I may give you the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction." So Moses rose with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up into the mountain of God. And he said to the elders, "Wait here for us until we return to you. And behold, Aaron and Hur are with you. Whoever has a dispute, let him go to them." Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. The glory of the LORD dwelt on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. Now the appearance of the glory of the LORD

was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel. Moses entered the cloud and went up on the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God

Epistle Lesson: 2 Peter 1:16-21

R: For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to Him by the Majestic Glory, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. And we have something more sure, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God

Sermon Hymn: "O God of Light" – Hymn #836

Sermon: "More Sure Witness" - 2 Peter 1:16-21

Now that the Super Bowl is over, the sporting world shifts its attention. Here in Ames, while the basketball teams stumbled a bit earlier this week, there's still hope they'll go far in the tournaments. Outside of that, we turn our attention to baseball. Pitchers and catchers reported to spring training sites this week, and the big change this year is the addition of the so called robo-umpires, an automatic system that evaluates balls and strikes, along with an appeal process if someone thinks that the call was wrong.

The Super Bowl didn't have any controversial calls, but some earlier playoff games did. The NFL seems to still have a problem deciding when a catch is a catch and when it isn't, and when a play can be an interception ripped from the receiver's hands while he's on the ground, and when that doesn't work. Even when a play can be analyzed from multiple angles, even when you can zoom in and zoom out, rewind and fast forward, there can still be disagreement over what happened.

That expanded use of technology affects how we view most sports now. We depend on replays and videos to make sure the call is right, to see if we agree with what was called. Of course, the problem is we don't agree on what we saw, or what it meant. From the Super Bowl down to kids' sports, people will disagree on what they saw and what it meant, usually thinking that what they saw should go the way they want it to go, the way it would most benefit their team.

The halftime show did the same thing. How did you see it? Was it a joyful celebration of Puerto Rican culture, with dancing and singing and even a wedding? Or was it another halftime show full of inappropriate lyrics and clothing and dancing? Or if you watched the alternate halftime show, was it a celebration of God and country? Or are you still wondering how Kid Rock's lyrics could ever be considered family friendly? Even if you saw the same thing, you might disagree about what it all meant. What was seen was determined by preconceptions.

When Jesus takes three disciples up a mountain, they get to be witnesses to something. Something spectacular. Something miraculous.

They see Jesus with his face shining and his clothes glowing. They see him talking with Moses and Elijah. And they're told what they see and what it means when the voice of God comes from heaven.

Peter doesn't understand it when he sees it. He wants to build tents for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah to stay up on the mountain. But they can't stay. And even though they've seen something spectacular, something miraculous, they're not supposed to share it with anyone. At least not yet. "Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead."

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus tells his disciples not to talk about what they've seen. At least, not yet. He wants them to wait until it's been fulfilled. He wants them to wait until his mission is accomplished. He wants them to wait until they understand what they've seen, and what it means.

When Peter reflects on it towards the end of his life, though, he knows what it means. From this point at the end of his life, Peter could look back on biblical prophecy, the predictions from the Old Testament of what the Messiah would do, and see looking back how it all made sense. He could see how the Messiah had to come to suffer and die. He could see why the Messiah had to work that way, not in a triumphal way that he'd been expecting. He could see how

When Peter reflected back on what he'd seen and heard and experienced, he didn't put it down. But he let his readers, and us, know that we didn't need that. We might not go up the mountain and see Jesus shining. We might not see Moses and Elijah talking with him. We might not see the cross or the empty tomb. But we've got something more sure. We have the word.

The stories of Jesus, reaching something of a climax in the extraordinary revelation of glory at the transfiguration, means that one can now read the entire ancient Jewish scriptures knowing the end from the beginning, seeing with God given hindsight how everything worked together to get to the point of the story. Prophecy had shown that God's glory would be revealed, that the Messiah would come to save his people. But the coming of Jesus hadn't looked like they thought that it would. They needed Jesus' further clarification, further teaching, further words, to fully understand.

Peter holds firm to two things; the ancient scriptures and the newly revealed son of God. Until we see Jesus as he really is, we don't understand where the scriptures were pointing. And if we

don't understand the scriptures, we don't understand or see the point of who Jesus was and what he did.

CS Lewis once said, "I believe in Christianity as I believe that the Sun has risen, not only because I see it but because by it, I see everything else." How we see the world changes when we start with God's word. How we understand our experiences changes when we start with God's word.

The written Word of God is "more sure"—reliable and accurate, trustworthy and true. Scripture is more dependable than personal experience or human wisdom. Scholars can tell us that we have more copies of older copies of the Bible than we do any other book by far. And when the copies are checked, there is almost complete agreement, with minor changes that don't affect the theology. With the Scriptures, you never have any doubt. The written Word is "more sure." It's tried and tested. It has stood the test of time. And you can always go back and reference Scripture.

Peter spent three years wandering around the Judean countryside with Jesus. He was right there with him on the Mount of Transfiguration when Jesus' clothes flashed like lightning and Moses and Elijah appeared in glory having a conversation with him. And now Peter tells us that there's no better way to listen to Jesus than to pay attention to the Scriptures, the written Word of God. It's even better than being on the mountain with Jesus. It's even better than walking around with Jesus. It's even better than being a witness to the resurrection of Jesus!

Leonard Sweet writes "Experience is not the final arbiter of truth. Experience cannot be trusted except it has been transfigured by Scripture ... there comes a time when it's not time for experiences, but for obedience." God's Word is permanent. God's word transcends experience. God's word may be confirmed by experience, as happens to Peter, but it is never overturned by experience. Relying on our own experiences places us in the place of God. Relying on our own experiences make us the final arbiter of truth. That is why experience must be interpreted through Scripture, not the final, authoritative lens with which we read scripture.

That's why we always place the emphasis on God's actions. It's not about waiting for a blinding flash of light. It's not about waiting for God to appear in a burning bush. It's not about waiting for God to give you a mountaintop experience. It's not about us and our experiences any more than it is about a baby's experiences before baptism. It's about the sure promises of God. The sure promises of God that say "Jesus died for you" and "You are forgiven." When we hear those words, we are witnesses of the most powerful force in the universe; grace.

Because of those promises, we have a more sure word we can trust in not only while we wait for good experiences, but while we endure bad experiences. Just as good experiences can shape our beliefs about God, so can bad experiences. When sickness, depression, heartache, death come into our lives, we can become angry with a God who would allow such things to happen. We can withdraw from God, or feel that God has withdrawn his presence from us. God's promises, God's sure and certain word, gives us a foundation to build upon, to trust in no matter what else happens.

We crave experiences. More than that, though, we crave certainty. We crave something sure. We have been given that when we listen to the words of God heard by Peter on that holy mountain. “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.” Along with Peter, James and John, and the whole company of heaven, we are witnesses of Jesus’ glory.

Creed: 2nd Article of Creed and Explanation

Prayer of the Church:

P: Lord in Your mercy . . .

C: Hear our prayer.

ALL: O Lord, graciously receive our prayers and supplications which we bring before You with thanksgiving; and grant that we, whom You in grace have heard, may be genuinely thankful to You, praise Your holy Name, and ever increase in Your love and service through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Sharing Our Ministry:

Offering & Voluntary:

The Confession:

P: God is light; in Him there is no darkness at all.

C: If we walk in the light as God Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from all sin.

P: God does not want us to perish, but to come to His life-giving light.

P: Almighty God,

C: You dwell in light unapproachable. Unprotected, we perish in Your presence. For our hearts are darkened, our minds be clouded; we call for night to cover our deeds; we have loved darkness rather than the light.

P: Jesus Christ is the light of the world, the light no darkness can overcome.

C: For His sake we beg forgiveness.

P: For His sake God hears your prayer. God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

C: We have seen the Lord's glory; we have heard the Lord's voice.

P: Walk, then, as children of light in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

The Preface:

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them up unto the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks unto the Lord our God.

C: It is good and proper so to do.

Prayer of Thanksgiving:

P: It is truly good, right, and proper that we should... evermore praising You and saying:

C: Christ of glory, hidden power stirring the heart of matter, glowing center in which the unnumbered strands of the manifold are knit together; strength inexorable as the world and warm as life; You whose brow is of snow, whose eyes are of fire, whose feet are more dazzling than gold poured from the furnace; you whose hands hold captive the stars; You, who gather up in Your superabundant oneness every delight, every taste, every energy, every phase of existence, to You my being cries out with a longing as vast as the universe; for You indeed are my Lord and my God.

Lord's Prayer: (Inside back cover of the hymnal)

The Words of our Lord:

P: When we eat this bread we share the body of Christ. When we drink from this cup we share the blood of Christ.

C: Reveal Yourself to us O Lord, in the breaking of bread, as You once revealed Yourself on the Mount of Transfiguration.

Distribution of Holy Communion

“Jesus on the Mountain Peak” – Hymn #415

“Alleluia! Let Praises Ring!” – Hymn #822

Dismissal:

Prayer After Communion:

P: Almighty God, on the mountain You showed Your glory in the transfiguration of Your Son. Give us the vision to see beyond the turmoil of our world and to behold the King in all His glory, through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and rules with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Blessing: (pastor)

C: Amen.

Closing Hymn: *“Alleluia, Song of Gladness” – Hymn #417*

(We sing this hymn to remind ourselves that we will not sing “Alleluia” again until Easter as we journey through Lent.)

Postlude