

“We Would Rather Build Houses”

(Luke 9:28-36)

Pastor Espinosa

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen. The Transfiguration of our Lord is perhaps the most glorious of all of the epiphanies of Christ which we celebrate. In this epiphany our Lord most certainly once again revealed His divine glory when He was shown in “dazzling white” while being flanked by Moses who had lived about 1450 years before Jesus was ever born and Elijah who lived about 850 years before Christ came from The Virgin. Both of these prophets appeared from heaven and stood there speaking to Jesus about -- as the Scriptures say -- “his departure” (Luke 9:31). The stunned disciples Peter, James and John were so amazed at what they witnessed that when St. Peter finally opened his mouth to speak, his words betrayed the incapacity of the human heart to absorb the glory of God.

And yet even at that, the disciples did not see the *full* and unrestricted glory of God – as I proclaimed a few weeks ago – since God does indeed hide Himself for our own good. If the disciples *had* witnessed the full glory of Jesus, they would not have lived to tell about it. They got to see in accord with what was most likely the limit of their capacity to see, but

even this was dumb-founding to them as proven once again by Peter’s words.

But why all the fuss? Does it seem to you dear Christian like a lot of extra pomp and circumstance? Haven’t the Scriptures up to this point already clearly revealed that Jesus is the true Savior? Surely we already know this by now through the revelation of the Star of Bethlehem, the Baptism of our Lord, His first miracle at the wedding of Cana, and indeed His manifestations in and through His Holy Bride The Church and in and through each and every one of Her members who have been given a manifestation of the Holy Spirit for the common good (1st Corinthians 12:7). It appears that the Lord has had ample occasion for us to get the point. So it just might seem that the Transfiguration of Our Lord is a beautiful and yet somewhat superfluous religious climax to reinforce the theme of Christ’s epiphanies. And if we left it at that, we would be committing a grievous error. The Transfiguration is so much more than that.

Let me explain by asking you a question: “Was Jesus, the Son of God, truly also a man...or asked in a different way, was He also your brother?” Let me ask you another question, “Since Jesus was sinless – possessing true impeccability – how are we to consider His temptations and especially the Scriptures we are about to encounter in the upcoming season of Lent (for in this season of Lent starting this Wednesday

night we come to know the *suffering servant* Jesus)?” If Jesus is Almighty God as the epiphanies demonstrate and if Jesus was sinless and perfect, then why does the Bible present Him as ever suffering and struggling? Is all of this merely a sham? Was Jesus putting on a show? Answer: absolutely not! You see dear Christians we underestimate the significance of Jesus taking upon Himself our true humanity.

He was and is true God for all eternity, and He was truly a man (and He still is by the way)...and to be a man, Jesus knew weakness. Your God and your Savior, knew and knows the *weakness that you know in your life*. **You are never alone in your weakness...ever!** People want to say and do say, “Where is God when I suffer?” The answer is right here: the One being Transfigured in “dazzling white” is the same one who was about to suffer and die for the sins of the world.

The Transfiguration of our Lord Jesus, therefore, was not merely for the original disciples there on that mountain to encourage them and to inspire them especially when the days of their own persecution would rain down on them. The Transfiguration of our Lord Jesus is not merely for us in the Church today as we too much bear our crosses in a world infiltrated by evil and therefore need to know that the One we call “Jesus” (Savior) is the Glorious One able to save us! The Transfiguration of our Lord is *also* about Jesus the Lord

Himself receiving encouragement and strength for what was laid before Him.

Remember that Moses and Elijah stood there speaking to Jesus about His coming “departure.” Jesus knew that the passion He was about to enter into – which again we recount in the season of Lent – was going to be excruciating; it would be more difficult than anyone could put into words. This epiphany, therefore, was as much for Jesus as it was for anyone else, but even more so. What He faced was terrifying. He was going to have all of our sins heaped on Him; He was going to pay for them with His life blood so that we would not be condemned. And in the process, the Father would turn away from Him, treating Him as we deserved to be treated.

Therefore as a true man He felt the weight of what was coming and it was *crushing* to Him. He needed to be encouraged. He needed to be lifted up. He needed a reminder that everything was going to be alright. He needed, He needed, He needed (sound familiar needy one?), because He was like you. He was a man. He is both the One with no weaknesses (your Lord and your God), and at the same time, He is the One who relates to you perfectly as One who had a tremendous need on the mountain that day.

But we still struggle to get it. We are like Peter. We see our needy Lord (the true man) who is also the glorified Lord

(the true God) and we stumble around not even knowing what to say: either forgetting that He is able in His almighty glory to help us with anything, or -- in going to the opposite error -- forgetting that He understands what it means to be low and what it means to feel as though your heart is going to burst.

By committing either error, we cut ourselves off from Him. If we convince ourselves that He is too far above, then we think He does not care; but if we convince ourselves that He is too far below, then we think He is unable to do anything to help us. That is in our sin-sick minds we imagine that Jesus is either unable to help, or unwilling to help. It is the Transfiguration that sets us straight, because the man who desperately needed to be comforted just like you and me is also the One who was in “dazzling white,” the One of Whom the Father spoke of when He said, **“This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!** (Luke 9:35)”

But Peter struggled and thank God the Bible reveals this, not for us to look down on Peter, but to learn of our own sinful tendencies. When Peter was given a glimpse of Christ’s glory, here in this passage we learn a lot about the glory of God. The glory of God – the *doxa* of God – is perhaps one of the more abstract concepts that we find in the Word of God. We may speak of love in very practical terms: love extends itself from the lover to the beloved. If you love someone, then you show it. Pretty simple and pretty direct. But what about

glory? Again, it seems like an abstract concept. But in fact, it is also very practical. When God reveals His glory, He demonstrates that everything is right and good; everything reflects His beauty and His power; everything is put into its proper place; order prevails, peace abounds, light eliminates darkness, and joy seems as natural as the air we breathe. Glory is to be in the presence of God and to have your every need fulfilled. Glory makes us strong because we will once again be restored in the true image of God. In other words, glory is a state in which we never, ever want to leave!

And Peter was right about that much! When Peter saw the glory of Christ, he said, **“Master, it is good that we are here!** (Luke 9:33)” And who could blame poor Peter...surely we would have said something very similar to what he said, **“Let us built some houses.** (Luke 9:33)” **It was like saying let us house or contain this magnificent glory and just soak in it forever!** But they did not understand that the glory was given to strengthen our Savior to do what He had come to do. That glimpse of glory was given for the purpose that you would not die in your sins.

As Christians we must emulate our Lord in this regard. For as long as we live on this earth, we must be mindful that God does not wish for us to try to house His glory. For now, it is enough to imitate Christ; to realize that we are here to share the love of Christ, but to do so is costly. It is hard to bear

the burdens of another person, but then again this is what Jesus did for you: He once tasted glory so as to be propelled by it and empowered by it to eventually taste death for you. In so doing, your death has been rendered ineffective for interfering with the glorious resurrection that is in store for those who trust in Christ!

The glory of God in Christ Jesus is both now and not yet in your life. It has been most certainly won on the cross of Calvary, but it must now be applied. With that, let us read from God's Word:

Romans 8:18: *"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us."*