

## The Transfiguration (2)

# Introduction

Last week we considered the end of [Matthew 5](#).

Jesus stated that he had not come to abolish the “Law and the Prophets” but to fulfill them.

This statement is programmatic for Matthew’s gospel.

More than the other gospels, Matthew presents Jesus as the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets.

Matthew’s gospel follows the structure of the Old Testament.

Matthew begins with a genealogy that harkens back to Genesis, the book of genealogies.

From Genesis, Matthew goes on to recast the rest of the OT through the person of Christ.

The Exodus, the conquest, the time of the kingdom, the exile, and the prophets are all seen through the life and ministry of Christ.

Jesus did not come to abolish the Law and the Prophets but to fulfill them; to give the Law and the Prophets their true and complete meaning.

This morning, as we consider the transfiguration, Matthew once again highlights this reality.

When the glory of Christ is revealed, Jesus is accompanied by Moses and Elijah, the two main representatives of the Law and the Prophets.

And just as God commanded his people to listen to his Law and his Prophets, God declares that we are to listen to his beloved Son.

This morning I have divided my sermon into two parts:

1. The glory of Christ fulfills the Law and the Prophets
2. The glory of Christ is shared with his people.

## Jesus Fulfills the Law and the Prophets

### The Exodus & Sinai

The most obvious fulfillment of the Law & the Prophets is seen in the parallels between the Transfiguration and God meeting with Moses atop Mt. Sinai after the Exodus.

In [Exodus 19](#) the LORD descended on Mt. Sinai in the form of a thick cloud and spoke to Moses from the cloud.

Here, verse 5 states that a bright cloud overshadowed the mountain and God spoke from the cloud.

[Exodus 34](#) recounts that when Moses came down from Mount Sinai his face shone because he had talked with God.

Here verse 2 states that Jesus' face shown like the sun when he was transfigured before Peter, James, and John.

In [Exodus 25-27](#), when Moses is on Sinai, the Lord provides him with the instructions for building the tabernacle.

Here in verse 4, Peter suggests building three tents.

Again, in [Exodus 28](#), while Moses is still on Sinai, God provides Moses with the instructions for making the glorious garments of the high priest.

And again, in verse 2, Jesus' clothes became gloriously white as light.

Almost every detail of Jesus' transfiguration points back to Sinai.

But it also points back to all the theophanies of the Old Testament.

## OT Theophanies

A "theophany" is one of those moments where God reveals his glory in the Old Testament.

It was a *theophany* when God's glory descended on Sinai in Exodus.

It was a *theophany* when God met with *Elijah* on Mount Horeb in [1 Kgs 19](#).

It was a *theophany* when God revealed his glory to Isaiah in the temple [Is. 6](#).

But as you encounter these "theophanies" in the Old Testament, you find that God's glory is always veiled in some way.

Neither Moses, nor Elijah, nor Isaiah, see the complete revelation of the glory of God.

But all this changes on the Mt. of Transfiguration.

On the Mount of Transfiguration the glory of God is revealed in the face of Jesus Christ, who is the exact imprint and radiance of the Father.

As Jesus explains to his disciples in [John 14](#), "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father."

In the transfiguration, the veil is pulled back and the glory of God is revealed in Christ: the final, full, and complete revelation of God.

Indeed, the Transfiguration reveals that it was the Son of God whose glory was veiled in all the theophanies of the Old Testament.

When Isaiah saw the veiled and partial glory of God "high and lifted up" in the Temple, he was seeing the veiled and partial glory of the Son.

When God spoke to Moses and Elijah and revealed his glory, they saw and heard the eternal Word of the Father, the Son of God.

## "Listen to Him"

Jesus is the fulfillment of God's revelation that was veiled in shadow and cloud in the Old Covenant.

No longer written on stones and stoney hearts, Jesus is the Word of God made flesh.

The word written our hearts made flesh by the Spirit.

So the question to you is whether you will listen to him?

Will you listen to Christ as God commands in verse 5?

“This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.”

Perhaps the more applicable question for our day and age is, “can you listen to him?”

Or are you so distracted that you cannot even hear the voice of Christ?

In response to the glory of God in the Temple Isaiah cried out, “Woe am I, for I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips!”

But perhaps our response should be, “Woe are we, for we are lost; for we are a people of distraction and we dwell amongst a distracted people.”

Jesus sows the good seed of God’s Word into our hearts but there are thorns there that grow up and choke them out.

You hear the word but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke out the work and it proves unfruitful.

“Be still and know that I am God” says the Lord through the psalmist.

But we are not still.

We fill every passing moment with distraction, lest we would hear Christ and be healed.

We must take heed lest the condemnation that Jesus pronounced on his own generation after telling the Parable of the Sower likewise falls on us.

**Matthew 13:15 ESV**

<sup>15</sup> For this people’s heart has grown dull,  
and with their ears they can barely hear,  
and their eyes they have closed,  
lest they should see with their eyes  
and hear with their ears  
and understand with their heart  
and turn, and I would heal them.’

To listen to Christ you must be able to hear him.

And to hear him you must put aside those things that would distract you from his voice.

Delete your social media accounts, unsubscribe from the podcasts, turn off the screens, and listen to Christ.

For what you receive when you listen to Christ is the very words of God.

Sweeter than honey and more precious than gold.

When you turn to Christ and listen to his words, what you will find is nothing other than the fulfillment of all your desires.

You will find the glory your heart yearns for freely offered to you in Christ.

Because, one of the things that the revelation of Christ's glory shows is that God shares his glory with his people which is our second point.

## God Shares His Glory

### Human Glory

In taking on our human flesh, Jesus elevates and glorifies our humanity.

While Jesus shines with the glory of God in the Transfiguration, the Transfiguration isn't mainly about proving his divinity.

Rather, as one scholar put it, "the Transfiguration shows the destiny of humanity, the destiny of being conformed to and filled with the glory of God." (Leithart)

This is what we just sang in our hymn of ascent:

"O wondrous type! O vision fair of glory that the Church may share,

In the Transfiguration, we get a glimpse, not only of the glory of the Second Adam, but indeed, of the glory of the new humanity in Christ.

This is a consistent teaching throughout the New Testament:

In [John 17](#) Jesus prays that the glory he has may be given to his people.

In [Romans 8](#) Paul states that we are children of God and that we will be glorified with Christ.

And in [Colossians 3](#) and [Philippians 3](#) Paul says that we will be glorified with Christ when he comes again.

### Be Godlike

I concluded last week's sermon by calling you to be like God when considering Jesus' words about loving one's enemies.

In loving our enemies we become like our heavenly Father, who loved us even when we were his enemies.

This week I do much the same thing.

The Bible really does encourage you to be like God.

You are made in God's image.

And God's Spirit dwells within you to conform you to the image of Christ, the God-man.

In your salvation, God is raising you up that you might share in his glory.

"Those whom he predestined he also calls, and those whom he calls he also justifies, and those whom he justifies he also glorifies." ([Rom 8:30](#))

But the Scriptures encouraged you to be magnanimous in sharing glory just as God is.

That word "magnanimous" literally means having a great soul!

The idea is to be big and generous, not pusillanimous, “small souled”.

## Relationships

God is generous with his glory and it is how we should be in our relationships with one another.

One of the characteristics of people who are pusillanimous or “small souled” is they put down other people.

Think about husbands who put down their wives or wives who put down their husbands.

Or think about parents who put down their children or visa-versa.

The list could go on but you get the point.

The husband who puts down their wife or the wife who puts down their husband think they are gaining glory for themselves, but the opposite is true.

The reality is that you come across as small and inglorious.

Instead of putting down others you should be looking to lift up those who God has connected you with, not bring them down.

This is what God does with us and we should follow his example.

## Glory and Suffering

But this is often hard.

Sometimes your wife really isn't all that glorious.

Sometimes your husband really is difficult to live with.

Sometimes your children really are stubborn.

In those times, to raise them up, to glorify them, means you must suffer!

But when you do this, you shine with glory.

And this is the paradox of glory.

It is when you suffer for others in love that you are most truly glorious.

The mother who suffers in love for her children is glorious.

The husband and father who suffers in love for his family is glorious.

The king who suffers in love for his people is glorious.

Consider the context in Matthew of the Transfiguration.

Immediately before the Transfiguration Jesus tells his disciples that he is going to Jerusalem to suffer and be killed.

Then he calls his disciples that if anyone is to follow him then they should deny themselves and take up their cross and follow him.

Directly after the Transfiguration he tells his disciples again that he is going to be delivered into the hands of men and killed.

The gospel draws this connection between the glory of Christ and his suffering.

Jesus' incarnation and his suffering are acts of humiliation.

The Eternal Son of the Father leaves the glory of his Father's side and humbles himself by taking on our flesh.

But(!) the gospels show that there is a glory in this suffering and humility.

There is something revealed about God's glory in the suffering of Christ for our salvation.

The glory of the crown is connected to the shame of the cross.

What this means for you is that your path to glory is the same path that Christ took.

It is the path that leads to calvary and the tomb.

You were made for glory; it is right to pursue it.

Not only that, you serve a God who is eager to share his glory with you.

So much so that he took on our humanity to bring us into his glory.

But he also shows us the way path of glory.

The path leads to a crown of thorns, a cross, and a tomb.

But he doesn't leave you alone to walk this path.

He himself has gone before you.

And by the Spirit he enables and leads you down this path to glory.

And, on this path, you shine with the glory of Christ in your love toward one another.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. AMEN!