

Date : 26 February 2017
Series : Transfiguration
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Readings : 2 Peter 1:16-21 Psalm 2 Matthew 17:1-9

2 Peter 1:16-21 New International Version (NIV)

16 For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. **17** 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.”^[a] **18** We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.

19 We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. **20** Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation of things. **21** For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 17:1-9 New International Version (NIV)

The Transfiguration

17 After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. **2** There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. **3** Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.

4 Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.”

5 While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!”

6 When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. **7** But Jesus came and touched them. “Get up,” he said. “Don’t be afraid.” **8** When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.

9 As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, “Don’t tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.”

Psalm 2

- 1** Why do the nations conspire[a]
and the peoples plot in vain?
- 2** The kings of the earth rise up
and the rulers band together
against the Lord and against his anointed, saying,
- 3** “Let us break their chains
and throw off their shackles.”
- 4** The One enthroned in heaven laughs;
the Lord scoffs at them.
- 5** He rebukes them in his anger
and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,
- 6** “I have installed my king
on Zion, my holy mountain.”
- 7** I will proclaim the Lord’s decree:
He said to me, “You are my son;
today I have become your father.
- 8** Ask me,
and I will make the nations your inheritance,
the ends of the earth your possession.
- 9** You will break them with a rod of iron[b];
you will dash them to pieces like pottery.”
- 10** Therefore, you kings, be wise;
be warned, you rulers of the earth.
- 11** Serve the Lord with fear
and celebrate his rule with trembling.
- 12** Kiss his son, or he will be angry
and your way will lead to your destruction,
for his wrath can flare up in a moment.
Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

Transfiguration Sermon

The Disciples encounter the true Christ.

We see this majestic and magnificent spectacle known as the Transfiguration, where Jesus meets with Moses and Elijah. Not only does He meet with them but His face and clothes shine brighter than the Sun and light. This I think would have been a greater look into what Jesus would have appeared as at the right hand of the Father in heaven.

The Disciples would have seen amazing miracles - Jesus stilling of the storm, for example, but this was the first time that they would have really got to see the fullness of God. In the previous chapter, chapter 16, Peter declares Jesus as the Messiah who would come to save the world.

Just after that in Chapter 16, Jesus tells of His death and Peter says you will not die Jesus, as if to say 'we will defend you and lay down our lives in battle for you'. Jesus replies 'get behind me, Satan'.

Jesus knows of the plan and when He talks to Moses and Elijah we don't know what they were talking about so I won't begin to speculate. What we do know is that this would have been an absolutely incredible encounter to observe and once they would have seen this, their faith in Jesus as Messiah would have excelled tremendously. It would have been extra special for Peter who we know to be the disciple of great faith in Jesus. He saw Jesus walking on water and recognised Jesus as Messiah and proclaiming that first, that statement being the rock the church would be built on.

How the disciples would have seen the revelation of the death of Jesus.

They would have expected many lives to be lost in battle to overthrow the Roman Empire but we see Jesus correcting the disciples, saying that He would die but not for earthly reasons but to defeat sin and also pay the price for the lost – to redeem those in need of a Saviour which would be all of us, as we have all fallen short of the glory of God. It would be a sacrificial death, not one of instant glory in battle.

What we see to be interesting here is that Jesus tells the disciples who witness the Transfiguration to keep this meeting secret till after His death and resurrection. He doesn't want them to reveal to the others the strangeness and the fullness of this event. In time all would be revealed to people so that they may believe and understand their need for Jesus as their Messiah.

What happens to us when we have a real encounter with God?

After this spectacular event, all would have been so different, the disciples who were there and even Jesus. Following this time we see Jesus goes back to show great love to those around Him, healing them and casting out demon. Jesus connected people to God, speaking of the kingdom of heaven. He rebuked sin and told of the rescuing of the one sheep to the fold.

We see truths being preached and the preparation of the people around Him for what was to come, even if they didn't know what it was. He was readying their hearts for the need of a Saviour Messiah and eventually to know the Counsellor, being the Holy Spirit.

The Transfiguration is an amazing event in our Christian history but how does that change us? We have mini transfigurations all the time where we have encounters with God. Sometimes they hit us in the face and other times they pass us by without us realizing.

This gets me thinking - when we have a real encounter with God, surely we should be affected the same way the disciples were.

First - with a reassurance of who Jesus is and who He is to us, our Saviour and Messiah who came to deliver the world from sin and transform the hearts of Humankind.

Second - is when you have those encounters, do they not affect you in the same way seeking to share love and tell of the greatness of God and transforming power he has had in your life and in the lives of those around you. How He is the Son of God and He has come to rescue the world from hell by laying down His life for you.

Encounter God in a real way and may your life and the lives of people around you be transformed because of the encounter you have had with God.

Amen