

**Sermon Notes of
Assistant Pastor Fred Stevens' Sermon on March 3, 2019:**

**"Transfigured and Transformed
(Matthew 17:1-8)"**

[In today's sermon, Assistant Pastor Fred Stevens shows the impact of the transfiguration of Jesus in the lives of His disciples and how we can be transformed by having the transfigured Jesus living in us.]

Notes

Introduction:

- When Fred was growing up here in Southern California, his family did things together.
- They often went to “America’s First Amusement Park” which is Knott’s Berry Farm.
- One unusual thing they did there was to go the Little Chapel by the Lake.

- They went into the chapel, sat down and soon the lights dimmed and audio presentation began.
- It began by talking about Jesus and what He might have looked like and not looked like.
- And then at some point, the big doors in the front of the room opened which revealed a painting of Jesus, which the Knott’s owners had commissioned to be done.
- The painting was done on glass which was around 6 feet 9 inches tall.

- But what was interesting is that during that presentation, the lighting on the painting changed.
- They changed from incandescent to ultraviolet.
- And because of the special paints that had been used in this painting, it seemed like Jesus’ eyes opened, as the lighting changed.

- And the painting was called the “Transfiguration of Christ.”
- Fred was left with an impression – “Jesus is looking at me!”
- It was a very interesting experience for him.

Objective of today’s message:

- So today, we going to focus on the transfiguration of Jesus as recorded in Scripture.
- And we’ll also consider the lessons of the Transfiguration of Jesus and how they apply to each of us today and forever.

Background:

- Shortly before the transfiguration event, Jesus and disciples have been in Caesarea-Philippi in the north above the Sea of Galilee.
- Jesus asks His disciples, ““Who do people say the Son of Man is?” (Matthew 16:13)
- Most people thought Jesus was a prophet.

- Then Jesus asked His disciples directly, “Who do you say I am?” (:14)

- Peter speaks up and says, “You are the Christ/Messiah, the Son of the living God.” (:16)
- That’s a major statement for Peter to make, given his Jewish background.
- The Jewish community, today, is still looking for the Messiah to come.
- Jesus told Peter that “Only my Father in heaven could have revealed that to you.” (:17)
- Then Jesus explained to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and there He would have to suffer and die. (:21)
- Peter took Jesus aside and told Jesus that would never happen to Him that He wasn’t going to die. (:22)
- Jesus then said to Peter, “Get behind me Satan!” (:23)
- Jesus then went on to talk about aspects of the kingdom that the disciples didn’t understand.
- And He told them, “There are some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.” (:28)
- Jesus and disciples have been in Caesarea-Philipi in the north.
- They have dialoged about who is the Son of Man.
- Peter states that Jesus is the Christ. Jesus says he will suffer. Peter objects. Jesus rebukes him and says that some of them will see him coming in his kingdom.
- It’s an amazing statement, but it will be fulfilled, in about a week, when Peter, James and John see the transfiguration of Jesus.

The transfiguration on the mount:

Matthew 17:1, 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.

- Wow! What an experience for Peter, James and John.

Consider who was present there:

- The three main disciples, Jesus, Moses and Elijah were there.
- Jesus, Moses and Elijah standing together are the MVPs, the All-Stars of the faith.
- Peter’s comments show that he was overwhelmed by what he saw.
- Now way earlier in time, God had spoken to Moses on the mountaintop of Mt. Sinai.
- When Moses came down from the mountain after talking to God, what happened?
- Moses’ face was glowing.

- And God also spoke to Elijah – at the entrance to a cave, in “a still small voice” (1 Kings 19:12 KJV).
- Jesus represented God; Moses represented the Law and Elijah represented the Prophets.
- Both the Law and the Propjets were foundational to that society.
- But then a bright cloud descended and 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!”
- This statement was upsetting the disciples’ whole world and their approach to religion, because it placed Jesus above Moses and Elijah.

A New Testament example:

- Also, later Saul, on the road to Damascus, had an experience of a blinding light and hearing the voice of God.
- Saul, at that time, was the chief persecutor of Christians.
- What was the result of this experience? – Saul was befuddled and blinded.
- But it began a process where Saul, the chief persecutor of Christians, was ultimately transformed into Paul, one of the chief spokesmen for Christianity.
- Perhaps, part of the lesson here is that when God speaks directly to you out of a cloud or bright light, it should transform your life, it should be the beginning of a big change in your life.
- Our focus needs to be on Jesus and to listen to Him, as He leads us.
- This is the beginning of a process that truly applies to us today.

Observation from Oswald Chambers:

- He lived about a hundred years ago and was a Christian pastor in England.
- He wrote the devotional, “My Utmost for His Highest.”
- Let’s read what he says about this whole matter of being face to face with Jesus and becoming transformed.
- In one section of this devotional, Oswald is explaining 2 Cor. 3:18, “We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image.” (KJV)

The outstanding characteristic of a Christian is this unveiled frankness before God so that the life becomes a mirror for other lives. By being filled with the Spirit we are transformed, and by beholding we become mirrors. You always know when a man has been beholding the glory of the Lord, you feel in your inner spirit that he is the mirror of the Lord’s own character. Beware of anything which would sully that mirror in you; it is nearly always a good thing, the good that is not the best.

The golden rule for your life and mine is this concentrated keeping of the life open towards God. Let everything else – work, clothes, food, everything on earth – go by the board, saving that one thing. The rush of other things always tends to obscure this concentration on God. We have to maintain ourselves in the place of beholding, keeping the life absolutely spiritual all through.

Let other things come and go as they may, let other people criticize as they will, but never allow anything to obscure the life that is hid with Christ in God. Never be hurried out of the relationship of abiding in Him. It is the one thing that is apt to fluctuate but it ought not to. The severest discipline of a Christian's life is to learn how to keep "beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord."

- What an encouraging statement!

Back to the transfiguration on the mount:

- Did seeing the transfiguration of Jesus change the disciples and transform them?
- Yes, it was the beginning phase of their transformation in perceiving who Jesus really was and how important Jesus was to them individually and to the world.
- Yes, indeed, Peter was transformed, because he wrote about it.

2 Peter 1:5, For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; 6) and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; 7) and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love.

- And then a little later in this chapter, Peter goes on to say:

12) So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have. 13) I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, 14) because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ, has made clear to me.

- Peter felt that Jesus had made it clear to him that he was about to die soon.
- So, Peter is writing his last letter, which is like his last sermon to believers to help them understand more about Jesus.

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." 18) We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.

- Peter is showing the importance of seeing the transfiguration of Jesus in his life.

Conclusion:

- So, what are the lessons out of all of this?
- Paying attention to Jesus transforms your life.
- And as Oswald Chambers writes that the everyday challenge for us is to keep ourselves present before the glory of Jesus, in presence of His transfiguration, because it will ultimately change us and we reflect Him as He lives through us.
- In Isaiah we read some of the same thoughts:

Isaiah 45:21, And there is no God apart from me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none but me. 22) Turn to me and be saved, you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other. 23) Before me every knee will bow; by me every tongue will swear. 24) They will say of me, ‘in the Lord alone are righteousness and strength.’” All who have raged against him will come to him and be put to shame. 25) But in the Lord all the descendants of Israel will be found righteous and will exult.

- Yes, Jesus is Lord of all and our Savior.
- Fred’s prayer for each one of us is that we may behold Jesus and that He becomes transfigured in glory before our eyes.
- And that Jesus is not just looking at us, but rather he is looking at us and smiling and says, “Don’t be afraid.”
- May we each see Jesus transfigured (and smiling!); and may we each be transformed by Him forever.

Communion:

- Nothing is more transfiguring, literally and transforming, literally, than eating.
- Now, as we are going to partake of the elements of communion, we will be with Jesus and Jesus will be with us.
- It’s so good to be here taking communion and being here with Jesus.
- Jesus wants us to fellowship and eat with Him.
- In partaking of communion, we symbolically take in Jesus.
- And, as the elements are being passed out, we will read one of Jesus’ prayers and let Him pray about us, for us and what we are about to do here.
- During the night just before Jesus was betrayed, He prayed to the Father for His followers.

John 17:6, “I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. 10) All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. 11) I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. 12) While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me.

13) “I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. 14) I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. 15) My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. 16) They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. 17) Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. 18) As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. 19) For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

20) “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21) that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22) I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are

one – 23) I in them and you in me – so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. 25) “Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. 26) I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”

- These are words of transformation as Jesus is praying for our transformation.
- Let us be transformed by having Him live in us.

- The elements of communion – the bread and the fruit of the vine were then taken.

Closing prayer