

Transfiguration
 January 24, 2010
 Exodus 34:29-35; 2 Peter 1:16-21; Matthew 17:1-9

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Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Today we celebrate the Festival of the Transfiguration. We have already heard the account from Matthew 17, where on the mountain the glory of God is unveiled in Jesus with Peter, James, and John, Jesus' brother, present. Yes, the transfiguration of Jesus is about an unveiling - the unveiling of Jesus, the Christ - the Holy Son of God.

Jesus' identity is unveiled by His metamorphosis on the mountain and by the Father Who said, much like at Jesus' baptism, **"This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him."** Yes, Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Flesh and blood didn't reveal this fact that day, but it was revealed by the Father in Heaven (much like Peter's confession a week or so before recorded in Matthew chapter 16.) However, is seeing under the veil that in Jesus the fullness of God dwells bodily (Col. 2:9) comforting?

Of course the Father is well pleased with His Son, Jesus. Jesus stood on that mountain that day, and every other day, perfect, righteous, and sinless. But, what if it was you standing on that mountain that day? Would Holy God the Father be well pleased with you? We, sinners, can become good about veiling our sins so others can't see them. We try to keep our lustful thoughts concealed from the rest of the world. We strive to cover our pride with a blanket of pseudo humility. We secretly think ill of people and hope for bad things to come their way. We are jealous. We do bad things when it is dark, when we think no else is around watching, when we think that we can get away with it. No one can see that deep down we don't love God with our whole heart, whole soul, and whole mind.

Yes, we try our best to veil our sin from other people. And to some degree we have success in hiding the reality of who we are - poor miserable sinners. However, the all knowing - all seeing - Holy God isn't duped. He sees the unsolved murders, the adultery, and the sinful thoughts. Even when people live their whole life never getting caught for committing murder, having sex outside of God's Holy institution of marriage, and hating people -- they can't escape the punishing eye of Holy God. He always unveils us for who we really are. None of us can conceal our sin from Holy God. There isn't a blanket thick enough, a room dark enough, to hide the things we do and don't do. No, amount of us trying to be, and seem like, a good person, that often times fools other people, will ever fool God.

So, it is great that the Father is well pleased with sinless Jesus, but there is no way He is pleased with sinful you and me. He demands perfection. He demands that we never sin. He demands that we always put Him first and love our neighbor as ourselves. Furthermore, God has promised to punish sinners like you and me. God must punish sin. He can't let anything slide. He must punish the sin He sees, and He sees all of it.

The transfiguration of Jesus is about an unveiling. The unveiling of Jesus, the Son of God. The eternal Son of God Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, veiled in human flesh. Jesus, fully God, is also fully human. So, is seeing under the veil that in Jesus the fullness of God dwells bodily comforting? Most certainly, yes! He came fully human so He could live the life that God demands that we live. Jesus lived the perfect sinless life in our place. He never had hatred or lusted. He always loved His neighbor as Himself. The Son of God accomplished what we are unable to accomplish, a perfect sinless life that is pleasing

to the all seeing eye of Holy God. This is why the Father says, **This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.**” The Father is well pleased with His Son Who willingly submitted to the Divine plan of Salvation – to live the perfect life for sinners and then die for their sinful ones. This is what the Christ, the Messiah, the Savior came to do. The presence of Moses and Elijah help reveal to Peter, James, and John that Jesus was truly the promised Messiah of the Old Testament. He was the fulfillment of the law and the prophets. **And a cloud appeared and enveloped them and a voice came from the cloud: “This is my Son, whom I love, keep on listening to Him.”**

They were to keep on listening to the teachings of Jesus. That He would rescue the world from sin, death, and the devil once and for all on the cross. By His death and resurrection He would give the world life. They were to listen to Jesus and know that Good Friday is good, even though it seems veiled with defeat. They were to listen to Jesus when He spoke His last will and testament in the upper room and instituted Holy Communion. They were to listen that His glorious body and blood is given to us, the Church, veiled in, with, and under bread and wine, for us to eat and drink for the forgiveness of our sins. They were to listen to Jesus give the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations by baptizing and teaching them everything He commanded. They were to listen that in Holy Baptism sins are forgiven -- that we are covered with Christ’s perfect righteousness – that we are veiled with His sinless life -- that Holy God doesn’t see our sins, but only sees us forgiven and covered with Jesus’ blood – that covered with the beloved Son in Baptism, The Father is well pleased with us. They were to keep on listening to Jesus, and to keep on teaching that Jesus works gloriously in non-glorious things. We too are also to keep on listening to the voice of Jesus that is veiled in the preaching of the Word. Listen to the words of Peter for our epistle lesson, **16 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. 17 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,” 18 we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. 19 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, 20 knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. 21 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.**

God unveils everything we need in His Word. We need not look for a metamorphosis of our sinful lives into sinless ones. We need not look for God to unveil some truth to us in the clouds or in the next church fad like, “A Purpose Driven Life,” “Fireproof,” and the like. He gives us all that we need in His Word. He gives a sure Word that we do well to hold onto. And we do continue to hold onto, as the Church has for 2,000 years, that Holy Communion is the body and blood of Christ veiled under bread and wine for forgives, life, and salvation. We do pay attention that Holy Baptism saves - and is for all nations, including babies. The Word of God is a lamp shining in a dark place that unveils through the eyes of faith the unveiled glory of Christ that is given to us. On the last Day when our Lord unveils Himself for the whole world to see, we will stand safe, covered with His glorious sparkling white robe of righteousness. **Amen.**