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| ABC Transfiguration C 2Lent | Living without the Mask Luke 9.28-36 | Preached 2/22/2004 |
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Thesis: We are invited up the mountain with Jesus to experience the glory of the Lord, and also follow him down the mountain to our own Jerusalem, challenges, and sufferings - and throughout all this radiate the presence of the Spirit of Jesus.

(Transfiguration Sunday is an option for use on the last Sunday of Epiphany, which varies from year to year.

This sermon can easily be modified for use on A Transfiguration Sunday by changing the gospel to Matthew 17.1-9, or B Transfiguration Sunday by changing the gospel to Mark 9.2-9)

Setup Luke's Transfiguration account

Luke 9.18f: Jesus is praying. He stops, goes to the disciples, and asks, "What are people saying about me?"

They respond, "They're saying you are John the Baptist, or Elijah, or some other prophet who God raised from the dead."

Jesus, "Ok. Now you. Who do you say that I am?"

Peter: "Messiah ... Christ ... sent from God himself."

Luke 9.21f: Don't tell what you know. The next step is...

I will suffer terrible things - rejection by leaders - even religious leaders!

I will be killed, and 3 days later I will be raised.

Know this: if you keep following me then you, too, will face difficulties.

But you will also find real meaning... and eventually, you will find real life.

It won't look like it every step along the way. But trust me and it will turn out.

Read Luke 9.28-35

Why Moses? Elijah?

1500 BC: Moses met Jesus on another mountain.

Ex 34

Setting: Mt. Sinai.

Moses goes up a mountain to meet God. Receives the 10 Commandments, the Law. It's an early installment of God's "Word."

Moses' face glowed. The people fear. Moses calls them together anyway and tells them the Law.

Then Moses puts on a veil so the people won't be so scared.

This sort of encounter happens many other times: Moses goes into the Tent of Meeting to meet with God. God gives Moses another installment of the Word and Moses comes out glowing. Calls the people and tells them God's Word. He puts the veil back on.

If we only had the Old Testament we'd think Moses wore a veil to protect people from the brightness of the Word. Paul says "No, the veil is so people won't see glory fade before next "dose."

Probably not because of Moses' pride. He just didn't want to feed their insecurity.

900 yrs BC: Elijah met Jesus on that same mountain.

1 Kings 19

Elijah is running to escape Jezebel's wrath over what he'd done to her prophets. After 40 days journey God has led him to Mt. Sinai.

God, "Go stand before me on the mountain." A windstorm tore rocks loose from the mountain, but God was not there. Then came an earthquake, but God was not there. And then came the fire, but God wasn't there, either.

Finally came a gentle whisper. It was God's Word and it was affirming. It strengthened Elijah for his next assignment.

Let's return to the New Testament and stand beside Peter a minute.

Peter's an insider, 1/3 of Jesus' inner circle.

He was probably at Jesus' baptism. If not, he heard about it. After the baptism, God's voice from heaven said, "Jesus is my son, I am fully pleased with him."

Peter knew the Moses story. He probably recognized that Moses represented the Old Testament Law.

Peter knew the Elijah story. He probably recognized that Elijah represented the Old Testament prophecies.

Now here's Peter's on his own mountain retreat ... with Jesus.

He falls asleep and then wakes up to see Jesus talking w/ Moses and Elijah!

Peter recognizes Moses and Elijah. Peter realizes he was seeing Jesus in his glory there on the mountain like he'd read about in the scriptures. It was another confirmation that

Jesus was the Messiah.

Peter jumps to conclusion that coronation time is NOW. That his leader, Jesus of Nazareth is about to take center stage as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Peter had the endpoint figured outright. But his timing was off

Someday exactly that will happen ... but not yet.

The next step was not coronation; it was suffering and death.

Jesus tried to tell Peter a week earlier. He will try again in a few days.

But Peter doesn't get it yet. I wouldn't have either.

So Peter proposes to set up shrines - let the pageantry begin!!!

Then a cloud comes in and the whole Triune God is present. Terrifying!

A voice says, "Listen to my Son, my Chosen One."

Listen to what?

To how Jesus was about to fulfill all the Old Testament Law and the predictions of the prophets by dying in Jerusalem!

It's the same thing that Jesus and Moses and Elijah talked about on the mountain while Peter and James and John slept.

You see, Jesus isn't just some isolated holy man in history. For centuries God was preparing the world with the Law and the prophets, with Israel, the Exodus, the 1st Temple, and the rebuilt Temple. All these were preparation for this next event: the suffering and dying part.

Jesus' death for your sin and mine is the focal point of everything that happened before, and reference point for everything that has happened since.

But it's asking a lot for Peter to understand all this before the crucifixion, resurrection ... and ascension.

Later on, another disciple, Paul, will see things clearer.

God showed him that any person of any culture who trusts their life and eternal destiny to this Jesus Christ, the one to whom all history leads, will experience God just like on that mountain. And all these "believers" will take on a radiance themselves - like Moses.

But unlike Old Covenant which faded and needed periodic refreshing, this New Covenant radiance need not fade. There's no need to put on a veil because of the constant presence of the Holy Spirit in life of all who trust in Jesus. This Holy Spirit grows the radiance in Christ-followers as it grows them to look more and more like the Christ they follow.

And this Spirit of Jesus uses the radiant life of Christ-followers to impact others so their FRANS (Friends, Relatives, Associates, Neighbors) may trust the same Jesus, the Christ of all history.

So what does all this mean to us?

You and I are invited up the mountain with Jesus

- To confess our sins.
- To receive forgiveness.
- To experience the glory of the Lord and be filled with his Spirit.
- To follow Jesus down the mountain to our own Jerusalem, challenges, sufferings.
- And do this still radiant with the presence of the Spirit of Jesus - in our case aware of the promise of the resurrection.

Will you follow others who have met Jesus on the mountain and become his follower, too?

Benediction

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| <u>Other resources:</u> |
| Click on the link to get the Google Presentation file for this sermon. |