

Pastor Geoffrey R. Boyle  
The Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord  
19 February 2012  
Grace-Trinity Lutheran Churches, Wichita  
Mark 9:2-9

*In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit*

What do you do when you're nervous or scared?  
Do you get quiet and bashful,  
or do you run your mouth with nervous chatter?

St. Peter's always a man of words—  
when he doesn't know what to do or how to react, he speaks.  
He runs his jaw; and more often than not, gets himself into trouble.

It's no different today on the mount of Transfiguration.

Here Peter sees the miraculous—  
he sees Jesus change before his very eyes,  
the man with whom he's been traveling and following for a couple years now.  
Here Jesus is revealed as much more than a man—  
*very God of very God.*

Our text in Mark says,  
“**His clothes became radiant,  
intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them**” (Mk 9:3).  
And more than that, two of the great Old Testament saints appeared there with Him,  
Moses and Elijah talking with Him.

It's no wonder Peter was terrified.

Here he was in the very presence of God, looking at the radiant face of God—  
*and he wasn't dying.*

In fact Peter was more alive here on this mountain than he'd ever felt before.  
He was terrified, but wanted to stay.  
He was afraid and in awe at the same time—  
that's how it is with this Jesus.

And in this fear, Peter spoke.  
He let his words make their way into this heavenly conversation.  
But that's not why he's here.

Jesus didn't bring Peter, James, and John up this mountain for *their* words—  
He brought them for *His* words.

Our words are full of uncertainty.  
We speak from our emotions and our feelings, which often lie to us.  
And when we're afraid we let our mouth run, and that gets us even deeper into uncertainty.

Peter's words were all about him:

**"It's good that we are here. Let us make tents"** (Mk 9:5).

It's as if Peter said, "It's a good thing I came, otherwise I would've missed this!"

We often do the same thing when we talk.

We like to hear about us, what we do, what we've accomplished, what we've achieved.

"Isn't it great how far I've come?" or "Can you believe I used to be like *that*?"

And, "It's a good thing I'm here."

We like to be the smartest and best, the bravest and most successful—  
or at least making improvements along the way.

We like to measure our worth and ability against others—

and then we dream of how others will talk about our progress, too.

We even do this sometimes with Jesus.

We talk about how much we've done for Him or for the Church.

We talk about decisions we've made for Him or how we've given our heart and life to Him.

We talk about our goals and vision for the Church and for His kingdom.

And in all of this it's about "me, me, me...I, I, I"—

we love to talk about ourselves.

But that's not why Jesus brings us along.

And same with Peter, James, and John.

Jesus brings us along to hear *His* word.

As Peter's mouth ran all about how good it was for him to be here—

as if he had anything to do with it in the first place!—

suddenly Peter's words were cut short.

A cloud overshadowed them and a voice was heard.

Not Peter's voice, the Father's voice: **"This is My beloved Son; listen to Him"** (9:7).

With that, our voices fade to the background.

Our accomplishments and pride and good-intentions all disappear.

That's the voice Peter was meant to hear.

That's the voice that spoke of Jesus.

And that's the voice that is sure and certain and worth staking your life on.

It's the same voice that spoke creation into being:

**"Let there be light, and there was light"** (Gen 1:3).

But that's also the same voice we heard earlier—the voice at the Jordan.

When Jesus came up from the water, and the heavens were torn open,

and the Spirit came down as a dove,

it was *this* voice, that said,

**"You are My beloved Son; with You I am well pleased"** (Mk 1:11).

And so today at the mount of Transfiguration we're brought back to the Baptism of Jesus—  
seeing Him for who He really is.

And not only Jesus' baptism, but ours too.

In Baptism, it's not our words that count—

not our decisions or plans or improvements or success.

It's all about our Lord's words.

What He says about us and for us.

We live constantly in a world of uncertainty—

“Who can I trust?”

“What do I want to do with my life?”

“And why do I keep doing all these things I hate doing to myself and others?”

Every time we say to ourselves, “that's the last time, no more!”

And then we fall right back in.

Our words leave us on very shaky ground.

But not His words.

When He speaks at Baptism, He actually does what He says!

And what does He say?

**“I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit”** (Mt 28:19).

That's the voice of God Himself.

God does the work.

God baptizes.

God preaches.

God feeds and forgives and teaches.

And in all of this, God gives you faith.

The pastor?...well, I just work here.

You?...you just receive it all from Him—freely, truly, and to your eternal benefit!

And it's His words that we cling to.

His words that comfort and give life.

His words that raise our poor, sinful bodies up from their graves and draw us to Himself.

His words do what they say.

They forgive, they heal, they comfort, they give life, they save:

**“Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved!”** (Mk 16:16)

And these words are as sure and certain as God Himself.

He clings to His word. He won't be found apart from it!

And so for us Baptism is our Mount of Transfiguration.

There we meet God face-to-face.

There His presence overshadows us and His glory is revealed.

There His radiance draws us to Himself, along with all the saints of old.

But unlike Peter we don't need any nervous chatter—

not our words, not our works, not our decisions, here—

but His.

Baptism is His decision and work to save and forgive us.

It's His way of calling us His own, of saying to us:

**“This is My beloved Son!”** “*You are My beloved Son.*”

Today we gather around this sure and certain word of His.

Because with His word is life.

His life. For us. In the midst of simple water, and simple words.

And wherever you find His words—

there you have also the forgiveness of sins.

And with the forgiveness of your sins:

life and salvation!

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