



*Transfiguration Sunday*  
*March 3, 2019*  
*Luke 9:28-36*

**“A Change of Perspective”**

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Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! In the name of Jesus, dear friends in Christ, everything changed, but nothing changed. Emerson Eggerichs is a well-known marriage counselor who wrote a book called “Love & Respect.” In one of his marriage seminars, he related a story about how everything changed, but nothing changed. Here’s the story:

Imagine yourself in this situation: You’ve just got on an all-night red-eye bus ride. The bus is almost full, but you find a seat and sit down. Everyone is just sitting back in their seats and getting comfortable and at the last minute a dad and three young children board the bus and fill up the remaining seats, but they can’t sit next to the dad who sits down in the seat right in front of you. He sits by the window and just looks out the window. The children proceed to reek havoc on the bus, running up and down the aisle, making all kinds of noise, disrupting the passengers and the dad simply looks out the window oblivious to what’s going on. Everyone on the bus is clearly upset and they all look at you and silently elect you to be the spokesman to get the dad’s attention. So, reluctantly you say, “Sir.” No response. “Sir” a little louder. No response. What, can’t this man hear? Sir! Finally, he turns around and you say, “Look, your children are screaming up and down the aisle, won’t you do something about it??” And he looks at you and everyone else and says, “Oh, I’m so sorry, please forgive them, you see we just came from the hospital, my wife, their mother just died.” He turns and looks back out the window. Everything changed, but nothing changed. Right? Where did your emotions go? From anger to sympathy, care, your heart goes out to him and those children. What had you thought the problem was? You thought the kids were out of control, this is terrible parenting, neglectful, permissive, exactly what’s wrong with America, people don’t discipline their children anymore. But that wasn’t the problem at all. The man had just lost his wife, the children had just lost their mommy and they didn’t know how to act without their mommy. There was the reality and then there was what we *assumed* the reality to be. There was a reality check, a perspective changer. The new information enables us to decode and that happens a lot in life, doesn’t it? We assume we have all the facts, we assume that we know the ins and outs of what’s going on, and yet often, we don’t. That’s true in marriage, that’s also true in life, and that’s also often true in our relationship with God.

In our text this morning, Jesus does something similar. Jesus gives us a bit of information that changes everything, changes the way we view things in life, changes the way we deal with difficulties, changes the way that we deal with death itself. Jesus pulls back the curtain to show us a glimpse of reality. The disciples had been with Jesus for about 2.5 years. They had seen a lot of things. They had seen Jesus do all kinds of miracles, heal people, feed people, even raise the dead. But they were about to see something that was going to rock their world. We’re once again heading into the season of Lent. And what are we about to see? We’re about to see Jesus’ betrayal, suffering, and death for our sins. In fact, shortly before our text Jesus had just finished telling his disciples that he was going to suffer many things, be rejected, and killed. Remember how Peter reacted to that? “No way! That’s not going to happen to you.” He actually rebuked Jesus. But Jesus gave them and he gives us a reality check and it’s this reality check that was to help them in the future and help us too.

Jesus took His three close disciples with Him on top of a mountain to pray. Now perhaps this happened during the night because we’re told that the disciples were “very sleepy”, “burdened with sleep.” But as Jesus was praying His face changed (it shone like the sun Matthew says), His clothes became bright like lightning (dazzling white, as Mark puts it). Then Moses and Elijah, who had been taken to heaven some 1400 and 800 years earlier, also appeared in glorious splendor and were talking with Jesus! They were talking with him about His departure, His death and resurrection in Jerusalem, no doubt how everything in the OT was fulfilled in Him. When the disciples wake up seeing this seen, they’re amazed. Peter knows this is an awesome thing and he wants to capture the moment so he said, “**Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters – one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.**” But Jesus didn’t respond to him. Instead a cloud

came and enveloped them, the disciples were afraid and didn't know what was going on. Then God the Father spoke, **"This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him."** More than anything what does God want? He wants His people to listen to His chosen Son, listen to His words, the very words the disciples failed to grasp! Then they found Jesus alone and ready to go back down the mountain.

Wow! Can you imagine that? This event would have been quite a reality check for the disciples and is for us in specifically 3 ways. It's a reality check in three ways: Life's delights, life's difficulties, and life's death.

First, life's delights. Peter recognized that he was in a delightful situation here. Yes, it's terrifying, but it's awesome! He had Jesus shining in divine splendor, he had Moses- that awesome OT leader and deliverer, and he had Elijah – that incredible preacher and prophet- there. Somehow he knew who Moses and Elijah were. He wanted this moment, he wanted it to last. So, he offered to build some shelters for them so that they'd stick around, he didn't want this moment to end, he wanted a "heaven on earth" so-to-speak. But that's not why Jesus came. Moses and Elijah disappeared. Jesus' glory once again was hidden and he walked down the mountain. Why? That's not why Jesus came. Jesus didn't come to give us a wonderful life here on earth. Not only are the things of this world fleeting and temporary, but so often they can distract us from what isn't fleeting and temporary, what is absolutely important: God and His Word. Let's not get caught up with looking for a "heaven on earth." Let's be ready to leave anything, forsake anything for the sake of following Jesus.

Second reality check: Life's difficulties. Jesus disciples were about to follow Jesus from the mount of Transfiguration into the valley of suffering and death. It was after this event that Jesus would make his last and final journey to Jerusalem. And what would happen there? He would be betrayed, mocked, suffer physically, but far greater than that – suffer God's eternal wrath for the sins of all people. The disciples were going to see it all. It would sure be tempting for them to be discouraged, to doubt God, to be depressed. They would be tempted to fight back, flee in fright, fasten doors in fear of the Jews. But did they need to be? What do they see here? Jesus isn't just some normal human being. Jesus is God's very own Son! Jesus has all the power, glory, and majesty as God's Son all the time! He's shining as bright as lightning!

Jesus has promised that just like He descended the mount of transfiguration and would go through much suffering and even death that anyone who would come after him must also deny themselves take up their cross and follow Him. But that's not easy, is it? As soon as something goes against us, as soon as something goes wrong in our lives, as soon as something doesn't turn out the way that we planned, what thoughts enter our mind? "Oh, Lord, I know this is not what I planned, but may your will be done. I firmly trust in your grace and love to work all things out for my eternal good, instead of leaning on my own understanding I trust in you. I will serve you with my whole heart no matter what my circumstance will be." Is that our prayer when things aren't going right? Or do we say? "What in the world is going on, Lord? Why is this happening? Are you really in control? I mean, it sure doesn't seem to be! You're not doing what I want to be done! Do you really care about me? God, after all I've done for you, this is how you repay me? Come on!" Hmm. Jesus said, "Deny yourself." Don't lean on your own reasoning or your own understanding, but trust in him no matter what. And think about it, if the disciples had only taken to heart this scene on the mountain of transfiguration. Instead, with trusting hearts they would think, "This is the very Son of God, who has all glory in heaven and on earth, this is God himself, whatever He does or allows to be done to Him will be for the best! This is God! Even if He dies, He's able to rise from the dead!" That's a reality check!

And this is the reality for you and me too. Here we see without a doubt that Jesus is God Himself, shining with all the power as God. You know what that means? We're about to head into Lent and see all of Jesus' suffering and death. Lent would never be possible, unless Jesus chose to do it! What depth of love that God Himself would lower Himself to suffer and die for YOUR sins! Transfiguration shows that God must love you with a depth beyond tracing out. And if God Himself went through so much to rescue you eternally, will he not also take care of you every day, watch over you, protect you, work out all things for your good? Absolutely, this is a reality check for life's difficulties.

And finally, death. Did you ever wonder why Moses and Elijah show up here? Now there've been all kinds of guesses as to why Moses and Elijah, but what do we know about them? They were taken from this earth hundreds of years before! But they're not dead, they're alive, they're talking with Jesus, they see Jesus in His glory and they're not afraid. Why? Because they are in heaven. In fact, they're even talking with Jesus about "his departure" – really Jesus' upcoming suffering and death on a cross, which is the very reason why they're in heaven. Yes, death is a reality of life, isn't it. But here's a reality check. The fact that Moses and Elijah, both true believers and in God in the Savior, appeared with Jesus shows that they are alive and well and already for a long time enjoying the eternal glory of heaven! Our loved ones who die in the faith in Jesus are right now enjoying eternal glory and we will see them again!

A little piece of information can give you a reality check and a total attitude change about unruly children on a bus. So, Jesus' transfiguration gives us a reality check on life's delights, difficulties and even death.