

“And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light.”

We read about this event in Jesus' ministry and we wonder why all the lights? Why the show? Why the special guests: Moses and Elijah? What's with the voice from the cloud? JESUS' TRANSFIGURATION SHOWS US HE IS TRUE GOD, EVEN WHEN HE ONLY APPEARS HUMAN AT TIMES.

I brought a sculpture with me today. It might be hard to see from the back, but I'll show it to you: top, bottom, left, right, front, and back. You've seen the sculpture and that's all there is to it, right?

Many people take the same attitude toward Jesus. I. Many say that Jesus is just like other men. These days, there's very few people who deny that Jesus existed. Most people will say that Jesus was a real person who walked this Earth, but they won't agree on who He is.

Many people will have the same thoughts about Jesus as they have toward this sculpture: beautiful and glad that it's here. Jesus was a great teacher: His parables still amaze us to this day. Jesus was a good man whose example we can follow. His moral teachings and way of life shows us how we can live. Jesus was a great prophet like Moses or Elijah: His teachings regarding a coming Kingdom teach us what life means. Jesus changed the way we as modern people think.

But they get a bit uncomfortable when the Bible claims He was something more. Sculptures are for looking at, nothing more! The miracles must have been made up, there had to be other naturalistic explanations for the healing of the sick and the calming of the waves. And His resurrection? Well... those must have been tall tales like Paul Bunyan or Johnny Appleseed.

That's the thing, you can see Jesus without really seeing Jesus. You can see this sculpture without really seeing it for what it truly is. Even in Jesus' ministry, there are people who met Jesus who thought He was a special guy, but just another guy. Even Jesus' disciples had their doubts at times.

As you all probably know, this isn't simply a sculpture, this is a lamp. It may not turn on if the cord is just dangling, but once it's plugged in, you see that it shines. It shines quite brightly, in fact. You could say you really haven't seen this entire sculpture until you've turned on the lamp.

Likewise, we could say that you really haven't seen all of Jesus unless you've seen Him glorified, seen Him like Peter, James, and John saw Him at the Transfiguration mount. Second, II. Jesus' transfiguration shows us He is true God.

Jesus is no mere human. He is both God and man. His face shone like the sun and His clothing as white as light at the Transfiguration Mount. The glory of Jesus and the voice of the Father from heaven was enough to make Peter, James, and John fall on their faces in fear.

Have you ever made a dumb comment when you were nervous? **“And Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.””** Peter did also. I think we can relate.

What we learn from our Gospel text today is that the same God who Moses saw on Mount Sinai as detailed in our Old Testament text is the same God who shines before Peter, James, and John. The same God whose glory shook the foundations of the thresholds when Isaiah saw a vision of Yahweh—that’s the same God who is talking to Moses and Elijah in our text today.

The same God who visited Abraham and Sarah, wrestled Jacob, freed the people from bondage in slavery, whose very presence filled Solomon’s temple, that’s the God we see on the Mount of Transfiguration.

And it’s this God who shines His light on His fallen creation and changes the way we think, act, and behave. Last month we talked all about light, and you can find this light in no other than Jesus Christ Himself. The past few weeks we talked about the Church as a ship, and Jesus is the Captain of the ship who we can gladly serve. After all, the Father said, **“This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.”** And so we listen to Him rather than starting a mutiny and going our own way.

Yes, the light is bright. Yes, it is kind of distracting and maybe you can’t see me as well. Yes, it may hurt your eyes to stare directly at it. But that is who Jesus is according to His divinity.

Paul writes in Colossians 1: **“[Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,”** The Transfiguration is not a changing of who Jesus is, it’s a revelation of what was there the whole time.

It becomes difficult for some people to believe this. That’s why founding Father Thomas Jefferson edited and compiled *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth*—the so-called Jefferson Bible—by taking the Gospel text and literally cutting out the miracles and supernatural because this (turn off lamp) is simply beautiful but has no effect on your life or behavior.

This demands that you pay attention, that you change your life, that you’re not the star of the show when the sun’s shining in broad daylight.

Finally, III. Jesus' divinity remains even in adversity. If you go to a friend’s house, you’d be hard pressed to find someone who has a lamp exactly like this.

What's missing? A lampshade. A lampshade is more than just decoration. The lampshade helps distribute the light and shields our eyes from direct exposure to the light bulb.

Jesus could have walked this Earth looking like He did on the Transfiguration Mount. There would be no question to anybody that He was truly God. But that's not how God works.

Paul writes that Jesus “...**though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.**” Jesus chose to shade His glory so that the people who approached Him wouldn't be terrified of Him like Peter, James, and John were. Jesus chose to hide His divinity, revealing it in bits and pieces in each miracle with the greatest miracle of all being the resurrection.

This morning, we are to remember Jesus whose glory shone brighter than the sun on the Transfiguration Mount so that when the dark times come, we know what's hiding behind the lampshade: the true God who has the power to heal all our woes, the true God who has the power to forgive sins, the true God in whom the world lives and moves and has its being.

Because things are going to get darker in Jesus' ministry. He will go to Jerusalem to be rejected, arrested, tortured, crucified, and killed. The sun itself will refuse to shine at His death. It is almost as though you kept on tossing blankets on this lamp until you couldn't tell whether the light underneath was on or off.

Yet we all know Easter is coming, and the same Jesus whose glory shone at the Transfiguration mount will shine on that day He rose from the dead. So too, we know that as our lives go to dark places—a cancer diagnosis, a sin habit, or the crippling silent anguish of a mental health struggle—that Jesus is still there shining His light, even if it seems He's absent.

The Transfiguration was just one day in Jesus' ministry. Perhaps a lot of Jesus' ministry was normal by your or my standards. We take comfort knowing that the light is hiding behind those seemingly normal interactions with Jesus: a daily devotion, a Scripture reading, or listening to a sermon.

The voice came from the cloud: “**This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.**” Listen to Him now as He calls out, “**Take, eat; this is my body.**” “**Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.**” See that hidden behind ordinary bread and wine is the very God who shone so brightly on the Transfiguration Mount. It's not going to make you glow, but through it Jesus comes and touches you and says, “**Rise, and have no fear.**” Amen!