

Introduction: *“This is my beloved Son; listen to him.”* (9:7). God the Father speaks directly to Jesus’ disciples. It doesn’t happen often, but it did here. Even at the Baptism of Jesus, when the heavens are torn open and the Holy Spirit descends like a dove: Even then, the Father speaks, not to the disciples: but to Jesus only, saying, *“You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased”* (1:11). But, at this, the Lord’s Transfiguration, the Father speaks to Peter, James, and John, and it’s an imperative: *“Listen to him!”* (9:7b). *“Hear Jesus! Pay attention to Him!”* Not only does the Father speak a direct command, but even better: It’s an invitation, to hear the Word made flesh, what He teaches and preaches. It’s the Father beckoning the Church, you, to look at the manifest Son of God, at this miracle of Transfiguration, and especially at His miracle of Resurrection.

That’s the point. The Lord’s Transfiguration points to His Resurrection. What else could this be? Right before Apostles’ eyes, Jesus is *“μεταμορφώω-ed”*: transfigured, transformed, changed. For a brief moment, Jesus appears as He will after His resurrection, in full glory: *“His clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them”* (9:2b-3). Just like the dazzling white robes of the angels at the tomb, who told the women: *“He has risen, He is not here!”* (16:6). Listen to Him! It sounds just like the bleached robes given to you at your Baptism, washed and *“stained white in the blood of the Lamb”* (Rev 7:14).

O wondrous type, O vision fair! God the Son manifest there, made His glory visible just like Mount Sinai. Moses listened the Lord, the Father’s beloved Son, and His face shone *“because he had been talking with God”* (Ex. 34:29). The heavens are opened and the Lord’s glory cloud *“overshadowed them, and voice came out of the cloud: “This is my beloved Son; listen to him.”* (9:7). Jesus! Moses! Elijah! If I were Peter, I would be having really good day. Peter is feeling good. I’m sure you can relate. Ever had a day when you ask *“Wow. Can it get much better?”*

Is this the height of Christ’s glory? It’s certainly His exalted state, but He will come down from this mountaintop experience. Why? Because the Son has more to do: more for Peter/James/John to listen to: more for you hearers of Christ to receive. Jesus will climb a still steeper peak. At first, Peter thought this was it... but no, not quite yet. Not until the Lord’s crucible on Good Friday has passed. Not until the sixth day of the week passes into the seventh day (the Sabbath), and that passes into the eighth day: Sunday. St. Mark cues the resurrection: Our Lord Jesus Christ surely rose on the eighth day, *“after six days”* (9:2).

But Peter is looking somewhere else, and not fully listening to the Father’s beloved Son. Immediately before the Transfiguration, Jesus had begun to teach that He Himself would suffer and be rejected, that He would die and rise again (8:31). But Peter didn’t see and hear Jesus then (8:32b), neither does he fully see on the mountain. He looks at the excitement of the moment: How fantastic! Moses! Elijah! (9:4). Not knowing what to say or do, Peter listens to his own blathering mouth (9:6). He knows there’s more to come, but

hasn't quite grasped it yet. He thinks he sees the Lord's glory, but he merely looks to his own temporary mountain-dwellings (9:5). Peter looks to the seventh day, but not to the eighth.

Do we, like Peter, get caught up, thinking we have found true glory? Do we listen and hope for mountaintop experiences? I don't just mean wishing that Mahomes would have won, nor do I mean seeing harmony in our families, or finding success in the stock market. These are thrills are temporary, and will pass away. Instead, do your own mountaintops make you closer to God?

When you're having a really good day, do you somehow think that means you're closer to God? That he favors you more? If so, then what about your dark moments? Peter denied Christ three times, does that mean he was farther from God? If we seem to be having a terrible year, in a valley of depression, does that mean somehow, that God has abandoned us? What do you look at? The height of your achievements? The depth of your feelings? Do your feelings, or your own ability to transfigure your life, really define you?

No! Jesus has prepared a higher peak for you, and it's not dependent on the craggy cliff of your feelings. Don't think either that the highest peak is merely God's strength either, as the Jews thought Jesus would be some political power. His full glory does not come from being the almighty sovereign, but from His from His weakness on the cross. Before Jesus took the disciples back down the mountain again, and much to Peter's surprise, *"they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only"* (9:8-9a). Jesus charged them *"to tell no one what they had seen,"* until the eighth day, *"until the Son of Man had risen from the dead"* (9:9). Why? Because He did not come to prove His power to you, but to relinquish it for you.

Conclusion: The highest height Our Lord climbed is not when He ascended this mountain. For He suffered the stain of sin, was crucified, died, and buried. And then He climbed down, to the deepest pit of death, to proclaim His glory to those in hell (1 Pet. 3:19). The height of Christ's glory: His triumphant suffering and rising, His making purification for sin (Heb 1:3b). Moses hid his shining face with a veil (Ex. 34:33-35), but the Temple veil was torn at the crucifixion (Matt 27:51). The closest you can possibly get to Jesus, is the Lord's unveiled glory: *"given and shed for you."*

Jesus took His disciples up the high mountain and back down again—not to dwell in His glory there, but to listen to Jesus's work, and see Him transfigured on the tree, and risen from the grave (9:2a,9a). The Father speaks of His beloved Son, right to you: **Listen to Him!** **And when you look around, you will no longer see anyone, but Jesus only. Amen.**