



Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. **AMEN**

Today is the second in our Created for Community mid week Lenten series. Our topic for today is "In Community with all the Saints". Our first reading for tonight is from Mark, chapter 9, the transfiguration. This encounter of the transfiguration of Jesus reaffirms Jesus' identity, reveals His glory and calls the followers to listen to Him.

There is also much significance in the fact that Moses and Elijah were present during this transfiguration event. Interesting too that Mark puts their names in a different order than we are used too. Elijah and Moses were talking to Jesus. Moses usually comes first not only due to chronology but also importance. For Moses was the great lawgiver. Elijah was the greatest prophet. Together they represent or embody the Law and the Prophets. The Old Testament comes alive, as these two men are part of this transfiguration moment. In either order, these two men, Moses and Elijah have both experienced prior mountaintop encounters with God. And their presence here reinforces that God has and will always be God, before or after Jesus' arrival. The fact is true that although these men are both important in the story of Israel and important to our faith, it is Jesus that is the central figure.

This mountaintop experience of transfiguration has Jesus taking with him His inner circle of disciples, Peter, James and John. These three men were often chosen to accompany Jesus at special occasions. And this important event was

no different. Going up the mountain was also significant as it is where people encounter God.

So here we have a very important event in the life of Jesus where Moses and Elijah of old and Peter, James and John of current day experience Jesus in a different light and hear from God, together. To me this was to signify that we all stand as equals before God. Whether we are generals in the army, doctors at the most prestigious hospital, garbage collectors, pastors, data entry clerks, shepherders, tribal elders, or dads, we all stand before God as equals. And so it was with Moses, Elijah, Peter, James and John as they stood before a mighty God as their Savior was transfigured.

Folks we are bound for all time together as God's children, no matter what our occupation is, how sinful we are, or how outspoken we might become. We all are a fellowship of believers that keep searching for God in daily life, whether that life was 2000 years ago, last week or tonight. In fact we are all here tonight in this sanctuary to find the grace of God, to worship Him and uphold our faith. We do all of those things better as a group of believers than we can do alone. We need each other to witness to what God is doing in our lives.

Here at CTS that is why our coffee hour, men's group and quilting time are so important. Yes, we do make quilts for Lutheran World relief, study Scripture and tell stories, but we folks are in this life together. And not only are we connected to each other in the faith, but we are connected to the folks that came before us. How many times have we heard how blessed we are that the founders of this church faithfully paid off the mortgage or even built this beautiful facility for us to worship and serve in? Their profound stewardship and forward thinking faith allow us to be here tonight. For those people we should be thankful.

Also, think with me about the many Christians that have come before us. Martin Luther, who steered us in a right path and to the understanding that it is by faith alone in Christ alone through God's grace alone that we are saved. Or how about the martyrs hundreds of years before that kept the faith alive? What of the faithful men that were present at the council of Hippo that selected writing to be in our canon, our Bible. We should continue to think about all those that have gone before us. Bringing it closer to home, how

about our personal saints: grandma, mom, dad, Aunt Louise, and all that have influenced our faith journey.

Let's take a minute to open your hymnals to page 104 for a minute. Have you ever noted the difference between the Nicene Creed and the Apostles Creed? What do you notice? Length certainly. What else? We and I. "I" being the singular nominative pronoun and "We" being the plural nominative pronoun. And even when we use the Apostles Creed what do I usually say. "Let us confess our faith together in the words of the Apostles Creed."

Folks we are all in this together over time and space, we are all children of One Heavenly Father.

Now look down at the bottom of p 105. The prayers of intercession are described here. They usually begin each Sunday with something like the statement printed. "With the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, let us pray." Each week our assisting minister leads us in this prayer. Usually, there are six petitions that they follow for each particular Sunday. Note the first one, for the church universal. That means the church of Jesus Christ in all places and for all times. Usually the last petition is for the saints that have gone before us. Last Sunday the words, Liz used to lead us in the final petition were "Lead us by your example of all the saints whom you have called to take up their cross and follow you, that together we may find our lives in you. Hear us, O God." Saints are those that have died in the faith as well as those still living who have shared the faith with others.

Tonight, I also read the text from Romans, that reminds us that Abraham's descendants whom we are, are heirs to the faith. God's grace is promised to all Abraham's descendants. If we share the faith of Abraham this promise is ours as well. Verses 23-25 of chapter 4, Paul says, that "The words, "it was reckoned to him" were written not for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification."

This was the same passage that Max Lucado used in our Unshakeable Hope study two weeks ago when he talked about our inheritance, that we are an heir of God and coheir with Christ. We are all children of God and have a right to the family jewels and fortune of heaven. Just as the Israelites had to trust

the promises of God as they were led to the promised land, so too do we have to believe that God's promises are true and forever to all his children.

So where do you find your hope? Do you trust God's promises that have been kept for all people, for all time? Well, As Max Lucado suggested, in the closing lines in his book in Chapter 4, "it is time to choose hope, not despair. Choose life not death. Choose God's promises. It is time for you to live out of your inheritance."

So be in community with all those that have gone before you and all those that surround you today. As Jesus was transfigured so we will be, as we continue to believe in the goodness of God and the gifts of forgiveness, abundant and eternal life. **AMEN**