



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

Do any of you know who Larry Walters is? He is best known as "Lawn chair Larry". He was a 33-year-old truck driver that lived in San Pedro, California. As a kid he had a dream about one day being able to fly. But somehow Larry never had the money or opportunity to learn to fly.

And so, Larry spent many afternoons just sitting in his backyard in his old lawn chair. While daydreaming one warm afternoon Larry decides to do something about his desire to fly. He hooked forty-five surplus weather balloons onto his lawn chair and filled them with helium. He puts on a parachute, attached a six pack of his favorite beer to the chair. He then set a CB radio on his lap, tied a paper bag full of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to his leg and slung a BB gun over his shoulder. Everything a man could want including a BB gun to shoot the balloons when he wanted to come down.

Prepared for lift off, Larry is excited to see if he can raise a couple hundred feet above his neighborhood with his helium filled weather balloons. But

much to his surprise, he ascended eleven thousand feet right through the approach corridor to Long Beach Airport.

After his 45-minute ride Larry ascended safely and was immediately arrested. He was fined \$4000 which the judge lowered to \$1500. Yet it was a small price to pay for fulfilling his 20-year dream.

When asked by the press why he did it, Larry said, “well you can’t just sit there.” They also asked if he was scared during his flight, and he replied, “Yes, wonderfully so.” If you want to read the full story just google it and you will find much more information.

I do believe that our very favorite disciple Peter would have said the same thing, if someone had asked him how he felt seeing Jesus transfigured. I believe that Peter would have said yes, he was scared, wonderfully so.

Our story for today starts out in a way that is seemingly ordinary. Jesus invites his closest disciples to join him for a hike in the mountains. Supposing that they are going for a time of relaxation and a chance to see the view from the summit, Peter, James, and John follow Jesus. Arriving at the peak, Jesus talks with them about the significance of his ministry. He tells them about God’s purpose in revealing the history of Israel. He shares with them the importance of the Law and the magnificence of the Prophets.

Those three men, I am sure were taken back to their memories of the past. In fact, it was almost like a dream. Seeing Moses and Elijah was like a vision from hundreds of years ago. And then the illumination of Jesus was surreal. Glowing in the light of God, Jesus communicates without words his revelation as the Messiah. Peter not wanting to remain speechless, says “it is good for us to be here.” And then offers to make three tents.

Instead of basking in this moment of the glory of God, Peter is filled with nervous and holy fear, wonderfully so. He wants to remain in this place forever. Just a Lawn chair Larry goes up in his lawn chair as he planned and traveled further than he could imagine, so too Peter climbs the mountain as he intended, but arrived at a startling destination. God’s light and love call out Jesus as, “This is my son, the Beloved, with him I am well pleased; listen to

him.” Peter is awestruck. But wonderfully so. So much that he wants to preserve the moment.

It was only a few days ago that Peter had admonished Jesus for saying he would fulfil the prophecy to suffer and die. Peter resisted this thought, but on this mountain, he begins to see the reality of what is to come. Peter had the door opened to him to sneak a peek, a glimpse of the glorious conclusion of the story of Jesus. Peter is forever changed.

Never again will Peter view life as he did before. Never again will he view death as he did before. He will never be able to forget these moments on the mountain. This experience filled him with fear, wonderfully so. You might say that just as Lawn chair Larry got more than he expected with his flight, so did Peter. Peter was also ambushed by seeing God open the door to eternity.

How do you think you would have felt if you were on that mountain top seeing Jesus be transfigured? Would you see beyond your doubts and grasp the beauty, truth and goodness that is steadfast in our creator, God? I would sure hope that I would have embraced the moment of holy awe and been changed to go forward and listen to Jesus more closely. Listen to our Savior with faith and walk in his footsteps to eternity.

**AMEN**

On Wednesday, our Lenten journey to the cross begins. We have these few days to plan how we will observe this season. I urge you to make a plan, write it down, and challenge yourself. Whether it be adding more devotion time for reading Scripture, praying, helping others, or just living a life attentive to walking in His steps, you have this opportunity to do something for Lent. Make it realistic, goals that you can accomplish yet something that also challenges you. Whatever practice you decide to do, however important, remember that it is only the beginning. Like strapping helium balloons on your lawn chair or walking up the mountain, those actions show the Lord that you do not want to stay where you are. They simply position you for a God inspired ambush. Such practices show that you are ready to be wonderfully scared by the God who prepares good things for you, things that surpass your understanding. So, ramp up your lawn chair or walk the mountain and be ready for God to ambush you! Be ready to be transfigured. Let it be wonderfully so!