

1. While mountains are not much a part of Kansas life, mountaintop experiences are a part of everyday life. And there are two kinds.
 - a. There are those that are created by man and those that are created by God.
 - i. If man creates his own mountain-top experience, you can be assured it will be inclined to evil— that it will be a perverted version of what God gives. But if God gives the mountain-top experience, we can obviously trust that it is good, that God will use it for our benefit, that by it He will show us who He is, and what our destiny as mankind actually is—that like our hymn says, we are destined to share in this glory.
 - b. So often in the Scriptures, God chooses to interact with us by way of mountains.
 - i. Even from the very beginning where God places the Garden of Eden on a mountain
 - ii. Then of course the Ark of Noah lands on a mountain
 - iii. Abraham and Isaac
 - iv. Moses on Sinai
 - v. Elijah on Mount sinai
 - c. However, even after every mountaintop experience God has provided for us, we still manufacture our own.
 - i. We take the good gifts that God has given to us and pervert them for our own vices to create our own mountaintop experiences.

- ii. We see it everyday in the entertainment culture—where you have to be given a constant mountaintop experience of pleasure or you will lose focus, pull out your phone, and find something else to do. Even entertainment as simple as Netflix, Hulu, or Amazon prime. Where we create this mountaintop experience of both entertainment and sloth where even Netflix is concerned for you that after a 3 hour binge eventually asks *are you still watching this show?*
- iii. Or if it's the mountaintop experience that we create with pride. Where we take some small thing and bolster ourselves up about it. Whether it is a skill or a lifestyle or some sin we think is impressive. Or even this pride of narcissism—that you are just so special and no one could every understand you. We think we are so clever and sneaky when we use our presumed uniqueness to put someone down so that we can achieve that mountain top experience of pride.
- iv. Or perhaps it's the mountaintop experience of lust. Where we find ourselves more saturated with pornography and sexual deviance than ever before in human history and just live in this cultural high of lust.

Repent.

- d. But as you repent, know that this is nothing new, God's people have always made their own mountaintop experiences since even the Old Testament
 - i. Every time in the Old Testament you see someone erect a *high place*, that is them forsaking the Temple Mountain in Jerusalem for their own self-made

mountaintop entertainment culture experience. And these are all perversions of God's gifts because He had already given them mountaintop experiences just like today in the transfiguration.

2. And so in this Transfiguration, what does Jesus teach us?

a. In the Transfiguration of our Lord on Mount Tabor, He shows us one final mountaintop Epiphany before we enter into lent.

i. We started with Jesus manifesting His Glory to the magi on epiphany. Then we saw the manifestation of his glory at his baptism, and his presentation, and now we find ourselves on the last day of Epiphany with the transfiguration.

b. The transfiguration teaches us that both old and new testament point to Jesus with Moses and Elijah pointing to him from old and now Peter James and John from the new.

i. Law and Prophets, Apostles and Evangelists point our gaze to Him

c. And in so doing, the Transfiguration teaches us our destiny

i. That we are called, not to live in our sins, or just do whatever is convenient, prideful, lustful, lazy, or pleasurable, but rather to live in the beatific vision of Christ's glory and that by virtue of our union with Christ we are called to reflect and radiate this light

ii. Also that you don't have to create your own mountaintop experience God has provided them for you. It means you don't have to exalt yourself on

some high place of pride or any other vice. Because God is already exalted you in creation redemption and participation at this eucharistic table.

- d. Therefore, our Gospel also teaches us who participate in the mountaintop experience of Eucharist to behold the son of God—like Peter, James, and John—and listen to him
 - i. That in the same way as they heard the heavenly voice in the cloud saying this is my beloved son, you now hear the heavenly voice in the cloud of incense saying *this is my body*.
 - ii. As you come to this mountain of the altar that God has given you, you ascend this altar and like Peter, James, and John, and you witness the transfiguration of our Lord with Elijah and Moses and all the saints who have gone before you as you behold Jesus on this altar—where you receive him in this beatific transfiguration vision of the Eucharist.
 1. So as peter, James, john, Moses, and Elijah all direct you to Jesus, listen to him to whom these prophets attest
 - a. Listen to Him with humility and not with pride. Listen to Him when He calls you out for your sins either by clear Scripture or the preaching of pastors.
 - b. Listen to him when on the stone of this altar he says this is my body, on the stone of this floor where he says I forgive you, or on the stone of the font where he says “I baptize you”

- e. One important thing the transfiguration teaches us is about Christology where we see the fullness of Jesus' glory. However, while the transfiguration is indeed one final manifestation of Jesus' glory before the cross, it isn't Jesus showing his true form – that he really isn't man but just God. Rather, the Transfiguration doesn't entail the body of Jesus disappearing. Jesus doesn't become some faceless dehumanized deity. He reveals himself as the God-Man. Precisely both man and God.
- i. This is the preview of the crucifixion where Jesus doesn't shed his divinity so that only His humanity dies. Rather, God Himself will die. He's not divesting his humanity here just like he doesn't divest his divinity at the cross. He is one person with two inseparable natures.
- f. Finally, the transfiguration shows us a *behind the scenes preview* of what will happen at the crucifixion where he will not have Moses and Elijah on each side but rather two criminals. At his feet wont be peter and James and John but John and Mary
- i. So from Tabor to Golgotha, the disciples are called to **“Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is crucified and raised from the dead.”** Because only in the crucified and resurrected Lord would they truly see Jesus transfigured before them. Only then would it all make sense because the transfiguration is a behind the scenes look at what really happens at the crucifixion—though veiled. Where on Jesus shows us his fullest and most complete glory as he is nailed to the cross and dies for the sin of the world

1. From mount Tabor, Jesus looks to Mount Calvary. Because 40 days from today, we will find ourselves at a mountain on Good Friday.

In the old testament, mount Tabor was the place where massive burning beacons would be lit so that the countryside would know that a feast is coming. So now Jesus gives us this Transfiguration 40 days before Good Friday so that we can prepare ourselves for holy week.

Like Peter, you would probably just want to stay here forever—but there is work to be done. As we descend this mountain on our way to enter lent, we have a journey to take to get to Easter. As we descend this hill and begin our trek, God calls us to behold his son and to listen to him. So come back here on Wednesday get your ashes and spend some time in repentance at Jesus' feet seeing him as the son of God and listening to him. and from Ash Wednesday to Easter Vigil, spend time in the Lenten disciplines. On this journey to the cross, spend some extra time in fasting, almsgiving, scripture, and prayer to curb your flesh, repent of your sins, and fix your eyes not on yourself but on Jesus.

These next 40 days for lent, with ashes and alms, with fasting and prayer, with repentance and confession, with Scripture and Eucharist, join us on the journey, abandon yourself to Jesus, behold God's **beloved Son, with whom he is well pleased;** and **listen to him.** and then having come through lent, having repented of your sins, having abandoned your vices, having died to yourself and reconfigured your priorities...come share in the glory of our transfigured Lord.; gaze upon the mountain of this altar, participate in the sacrifice on the mountain of Golgotha, enter back into the mountain of Eden and **lift up your eyes** from your repentance **and see no one but Jesus only.**

To God be all ✠ Glory forever and ever. Amen.