**3/2/25**

**Experience & Example**

**Vicar Vince Piekarski**

**Luke 9:28-36 [37-43a] (NRSVUE)**

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Corinthians 1:2, NRSVUE) (2) **Amen.**

Hello and welcome on this extremely windy Sunday. As I tried to golf yesterday afternoon, as I tried to sleep last night, and as I tried to focus completing my Sermon this morning all I could think of is my grandmother pacing the house and saying “enough already mit dis fadumptin vind.” So, with that good ole memory I am glad that you got blown in here to join me with exploring the Word in Scripture. For those of you out there on the Conference Call, good thing you managed to stay in and avoid getting your hair all messed up from the wind. To those of you in different areas with different weather, well thanks for joining us in whatever fun climate or weather pattern you have going on right now. No matter the weather, or no matter the place, it truly is a blessing to be able to Worship together with all of you. I really do mean it when I say thank you for joining us in this very community so that we can explore things together and really try to grasp all that is in front of us. Community and togetherness are where it is at!

There is so much packed in our Gospel Reading today, and sometimes the summary to our readings is really spot on. This particular summary really helped me grasp things much better even after reading over the Gospel text several times as well. Sometimes we just honestly need things plainly put in front of us, and that is precisely what this summary delivers. Now, I know some of you out there may be scratching your heads, and others may be nodding in agreement. For I know that you may have read it when you got the bulletin in your email or you may have read it while sitting in your pews prior to our Worship Service. I also know that some of you quite frankly may not have even read it at all and wonder what I am even talking about. Well, no matter what column you happen to fall in that is perfectly fine. For none of us is going to miss this particular summary as I have added it into my Sermon for, I felt that it needed to be heard aloud as well. And it reads, “The conversation about Jesus’ suffering and death is enclosed in a dazzling foreshadowing of the resurrection. God affirms Jesus’ identity, the disciples are stunned speechless, and Jesus resumes his mission with a demonstration of his power over evil.” (1) After that delivery quite frankly, I should probably just wrap things up and sit back down. However, there honestly is way too much good stuff not to unpack as we march on towards the beginning of Lent on Ash Wednesday. So, let’s check things out together on this Last Sunday after Epiphany, that also happens to mark the Transfiguration of Our Lord.

Now, after saying that I know for certain that some of you former Catholics out there like myself, and some of you current Catholic folks who are on the Conference Call or sitting in the pews may very well think that I have lost it. You may have thought that I pulled the wrong readings for this Sunday, and by the weather outside you perhaps think that I should have definitely realized that it is not August. Well, I am here to inform you that this may very well be one of the few Sundays throughout the liturgical year that we really do differ from some of our other Christian brothers and sisters with our choice in Scripture. I happened to learn that not too long ago myself, as it was during my Pastoral Bible Study Session this past Monday that I learned that Martin Luther actually proposed this change. I happened to learn that Martin Luther felt it fit much better and aligned itself at this particular time of the worship schedule as he defined it “as the climax of the time after the Epiphany, (as) a final glorious manifestation of the mystery of Jesus Christ before the season of Lent.” (1)

Nonetheless, no matter where this story is placed in the liturgical year it is very important to focus on. There are several key points for sure. One can even manage to miss a very important point, or example for that fact, if the actual part of the Gospel Reading that we see in parenthesis is omitted or not even read. Now, one may ask why exactly that is, and one may think we have enough to focus on already with the initial part of this Gospel Reading. Well, if you have been here the prior two Sundays and got to listen to anything I shared from the Sermon on The Plain then you would realize that the real work is to be done with the people, off the mountain, on level ground. I realized this point rather easily after reflecting back on my work in the field of human services for the majority of my life. No matter if you are a manager or if you are staff, one has to show how the work is done, and even be willing to get their hands dirty. That is where this very message butts up against the entire message and even wraps it all together. We get glory and we get example. This yet again is where we as Christians really come to understand and relate with Jesus because He came to this earth and did the very things He expected his disciples to do back then, and those of us to do here and now. Honestly, in my mind, omitting this part of the reading does not allow for things to come full circle in our exploration of this text.

Alright, let me slow down a bit and not get so far ahead of myself. Let me break things down here for myself, and with and for all of you as well. First off, our Gospel Reading starts out with prayer. What a centering and grounding principle for each and every one of us in all that we do, and in all that we experience throughout our lives. For we know prayer is vital. That God talk is what allows us to prepare ourselves at times. It also allows us the ability to recenter ourselves at times. It even allows us to show appreciation and admiration for all that God has done for us, and continues to do for us as well.

Secondly, we get to see some very tired disciples get to witness something so awesome. Life and all they had been doing for and with Jesus almost had them completely missing this very moment. Thank goodness they battled through the very physicality of being tired in order to witness Jesus standing with the Law and the Prophets in their human likeness of Moses and Elijah. They got to witness that this man that they had been following was special, that Jesus’ very work was ordained, and that his witness was truly that of the Father.

These disciples in the account of Luke that we read from even got to hear all three of them speaking with one another. They got to hear what was to come in the future as Jesus would eventually go on his way with them to Jerusalem and the events of Holy Week would unwind. They would hear how Jesus would march on towards his very death and resurrection. They got to hear all of this confirmed for them by these three as they spoke of this Exodus and fulfillment of Scripture.

Now, as you can imagine, this all was so overwhelming to these disciples that they could do nothing but look on and listen in astonishment. Well, that is of course until Peter decides to open up his big mouth right before Moses and Elijah depart from Jesus. This is where no matter how many times you read this scripture you may even make the rather simple error and transition what Peter said to Jesus into a question instead of a confirmation. This is precisely where Peter confirmed that it was good for them to be there and witness this very moment and hear these very things. This is also where Peter errors and tries to hold on or capture the moment for a little longer. He offers to build tents, or permanent dwelling places, for all three of them. He may very well have been thinking that he was asking or saying so out of a manner of respect. However, we are reminded that there is no need to prolong a fleeting moment. God manages to make the save though as he rolls in on the clouds and cuts Peter off. God speaks up and speaks out in total confirmation of who Jesus is, was, and will forever be. The disciples manage to get even more of an overwhelming and astonishing experience with these very words that we hear in verse 35, “This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!” (2) And then, in almost a blink of an eye, (snap fingers) all that they had experienced was gone. Jesus was standing there yet again by Himself with them.

Now, please keep in mind that not only confirmation was provided here, but the forever call to listen was also provided. If you think back or recall, you then realize that we even talked about that last week. We spoke of that very purposeful listening, hearing, and even digesting. The call to really take to heart what is said. This very instruction is precisely what guided the disciples back then, and it is what continues to guide us to this very day.

As we look at this very occurrence, all this shinning and all this change, all this confirmation, all this amazing stuff that occurred, then one might think that these disciples were so overjoyed that they would immediately go on out and share everything with everyone and anyone they encountered. However, we actually hear the complete opposite. They actually kept these very personal and awesome experiences to themselves. They kept this to themselves because let’s be honest, most people back then would have probably thought they were nuts, or possibly even drunk. Quite frankly they could barely grasp what they had seen and heard, and there is no way people would have really grasped or understood what all this meant for they did not even experience it themselves. Not to mention that their very work and ministry might have been discredited if they shared it instead of allowing time for it to marinate, and allowing it to feed them and power them along their continued journey.

Speaking of marinating, and speaking of food, now we are getting to the proverbial meat and potatoes of our very Gospel Reading here. Now we are getting to that very part I was speaking to you all about earlier, that very part of the Gospel Reading that has parenthesis around it where we hear faith put into action, doubt being created and addressed, and what happens when we only count on ourself. Now we are getting to hear what it is like in the proverbial trenches, and we are getting to experience a loving and compassionate Jesus show and tell all of us what ministry and faith are all about. Now we are getting the very best and awesome example, as well as a little human side of Jesus as well.

These six and half verses do not mess around, and they deliver an entirely different perspective. These six and half verses buckle everything together, and make this a full story. These six and half verses are quintessential to this message, and even a Pastor admitted this past Monday at our Bible Study that he should have not left them out when he Preached on this lesson in the past.

So, what exactly do they deliver to all of us that is so important? They deliver the very active work and example set forth by Jesus here on earth, as Jesus is casting out demons and healing. But first, they deliver doubt, for the disciples could not do this when they had tried prior to their very mountaintop experience. They also deliver doubt from the very man whose son is dealing with all of this. They also deliver a Jesus who gets so frustrated with everyone and their lack of faith that he even blurts it out in verse 41 by saying, “You faithless and perverse generation, how much longer must I be with you and put up with you?” (2). They deliver how hard it really must have been for Jesus to shift in mindset from that mountaintop to that valley. To drive it all home, we also get the very last half verse where those people back then, and those of us now continue to be astounded by the very greatness of our Triune God. And to this we all say, **Amen.**

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 It Is Good For Us To Be Here

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 Denomination: Lutheran

**Luke 9:28-36 [37-43a] (NRSVUE)**

 The conversation about Jesus’ suffering and death is enclosed in a dazzling

 foreshadowing of the resurrection. God affirms Jesus’ identity, the disciples are

 stunned speechless, and Jesus resumes his mission with a demonstration of his

 power over evil.

 28 Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John

 and James and went up on the mountain to pray. 29 And while he was praying,

 the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash

 of lightning. 30 Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him.

 31 They appeared in glory and were speaking about his exodus, which he was

 about to fulfill in Jerusalem. 32 Now Peter and his companions were weighed

 down with sleep, but as they awoke they saw his glory and the two men who

 stood with him. 33 Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it

 is good for us to be here; let us set up three tents: one for you, one for Moses,

 and one for Elijah,” not realizing what he was saying. 34 While he was saying

 this, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were terrified as they

 entered the cloud. 35 Then from the cloud came a voice that said, “This is my

 Son, my Chosen; listen to him!” 36 When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found

 alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they

 had seen.

 [37 On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd

 met him. 38 Just then a man from the crowd shouted, “Teacher, I beg you to look

 at my son; he is my only child. 39 Suddenly a spirit seizes him, and all at once he

 shrieks. It convulses him until he foams at the mouth; it mauls him and will

 scarcely leave him. 40 I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not.”

 41 Jesus answered, “You faithless and perverse generation, how much longer

 must I be with you and put up with you? Bring your son here.” 42 While he was

 being brought forward, the demon dashed him to the ground in convulsions. But

 Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the boy, and gave him back to his

 father. 43a And all were astounded at the greatness of God.]