

Listen to Jesus!

☆ **The prophets foretold Him.** (vv.1-3)

👁 **The disciples beheld Him.** (vv.4-6)

👂 **“Don’t tell anyone...”** (vv.7-9)

In the name of Jesus, our beautiful and glorious Savior, dear fellow disciples of our Lord:

Maybe it’s human nature, maybe it’s mush down between the ears and heart. But no one really likes to face reality. Some Christians pride themselves in being “realists,” but their constantly negative attitude is very unrealistic in the light of Jesus’ victory over sin, death and the grave. Yet our problem in trying to correct this may be like a panicked driver over steering an icy skid right into the ditch. Skip the cross and you skid right into spiritual disaster in the “theology of glory.” But everyone wants the crown! If the church is not growing, “Our doctrine must be at fault.” If offerings aren’t big enough, “Maybe the Bible is too strict.” The “theology of glory” can never take a long, hard look at itself and say, “Where do I need to repent – whether of my negative attitude, or my lazy love of spiritual ease?” The TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD is a great day to turn the driver’s seat over to God. As our dear heavenly Father tells us today: **Listen to Jesus!** God saw all this coming because...

☆ **The prophets foretold Him.** (vv.1-3)

American “Christianity” today has a strange fascination with prophecy outside the Bible. Two popular examples, the *Da Vinci Code* and the *Left Behind* series, both claim to be some kind of foretelling of the future, but neither takes God’s Word as it is written in the Holy Scriptures. People under the banner of Christianity will spend hours and hours reading these books by human authors from cover to cover. Yet most have not read the Bible through even once, and even fewer have more than a single passage or two memorized. Is it any wonder that so much spirituality is the blind leading the blind?

If you want truly fascinating prophecy, no book dares to promise nor cares to deliver more accuracy in foretelling the future than the Holy Bible. Without reading your palm, checking your horoscope, or even knowing anything about you, I can predict the general pattern of your life and precisely its outcome for eternity. And it’s not because I know a medium. I just know the **“one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”** He tells us that **“God wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”** (1 Timothy 2:5,4 – literal) If you learn God’s truth and put His Word into practice, Jesus has some great news for you. No matter how hard the storms of life may blow, your life will stand fast like a sturdy house built on a rock. But if you reject God’s Word, the destruction of your life will be a catastrophe on earth and in hell. (Matthew 7:24-27)

But it’s fair to ask, “How do you really know all that is true?” And wouldn’t Jesus’ disciples be asking the same question since He had just started telling them about His suffering and death at the hands of His fellow Jews? We know how Peter and the rest felt. Our first reaction at undesirable test results is so predictable: We all question God one way or another. We can go from praying, “Thy will be done,” to tearful disappointment and anger in a matter of moments. Our fickle, sinful hearts constantly dare God to turn His back and let our house crumble, our ship sink, our lives fall apart. We don’t want to listen.

That’s why **“after six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.”** Our merciful Triune God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – knew that disciples of all ages needed to see Jesus in His divine glory as God. According to Luke’s Gospel,

Moses and Elijah were talking with Jesus about the *fulfillment* of their prophecies by His death and resurrection *at Jerusalem*. (Luke 9:31) They were using God's Word to strengthen Jesus before He began His resolute journey to the cross and His Easter triumph over the grave. Let's face it. Even some in our own congregation have not yet attended a Lenten service to follow Jesus in His Passion. Without judging hearts, we have to ask them and ourselves, "Did you see Jesus' face up there? He was shining like the sun! In absolute holiness and purity *his clothes became as white as the light*. And two of **The prophets** who **foretold Him** were there. What Peter and the Jewish rabbis did not want to face was the fact that all God's prophets **foretold** the suffering of the Savior – the cross before the crown. **Listen to Jesus!**

👁️ **The disciples beheld Him.** (vv.4-6)

This is yet another time I'm so glad Jesus is so patient because my heart really goes out to Peter on this one. How many times in my life I've wanted more than anything else to sit down and have a talk with Jesus. But to be up in the cool, mountain air with Jesus and Moses and Elijah – what Christian would not blurt out? "*Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.*" Even a non-camper would figure out the tent poles and stakes for that! Even bad backs would sleep on the rocks to hold onto such a mountaintop experience! **The disciples beheld** Jesus, but for all their enthusiasm, they were way too much like us.

We're at a very critical time in Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod history. Nerves are really rattled. But it's not predictions of financial collapse that scare me. Critics said the same in the 1960's when the WELS courageously stood alone with the ELS against the false teaching of the Missouri Synod, then grew as never before or since. Scary are loud voices in the WELS that seem to blame solid Biblical teachings like the fellowship principles or God's roles for men and women. They seek help from outside our fellowship in spite of the fact that denominations like the United Methodists only grow by merger and the Missouri Synod's slide began long ago. It makes no logical sense and even less if we open our ears at Jesus' Transfiguration: "*While Peter was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"*" It's not enough to see Jesus or work to grow His church. We need to **Listen to Jesus**. But why would He say...?

👂 **"Don't tell anyone..."** (vv.7-9)

Remember when Jesus fed the 5,000 men plus women and children with the little boy's lunch? The Jews "*intended to come and make him king by force.*" (John 6:15) Even His disciples were seriously tempted as we can see from the fact that "*Jesus made [them] get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd.*" (Matthew 14:27) See the problem? The Jewish people wanted a bread-king "messiah," but so did Jesus' disciples. Our Savior, however, would not buy the theology of glory, by giving up the cross. He came to this earth to suffer and die in order to rescue us from the hellfire and damnation we deserve because of our sins. We're still blessed by His loving resolve.

But you know that "**Don't tell anyone...**" is not the end of the command then or now. So why do we keep living as if it is? How hard did you pray this week for your unchurched or unbelieving friends, relatives, associates and neighbors? Did you invite them again, or just give up? Jesus commands us: "*Do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.*" (Matthew 7:12 NIV) He said *as they were coming down the mountain, "Don't tell anyone...until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."* Has He not risen? Are we not living in the time when silence is a sin for which we need to repent? Having seen Jesus on the sacred mountain, this Wednesday we begin the Lenten journey through His Passion to the cross and the empty tomb. It's no time for silence when Judgment Day is nearly 2,000 years nearer now than when Jesus was transfigured. Don't keep camping on the mountain or sulking on the plain. Christ's command is, "Go and tell!" Who will you bring to worship considering how boldly and courageously Jesus came down that mountain for you to take away your fears of sickness, sorrow and death? The cross now; the glory then. It's so predictable. God wants this for your destiny in eternal glory with Him. The cross proves it. **Listen to Jesus!** Amen.