



An Order of Worship for the Home

February 14, 2021
Transfiguration Sunday

Guest Preacher
Rev. Dominic Rivkin

This service is written for two speakers. Ideally, family members can speak and declare God's grace to one another following this format. For those who live alone, this worship outline can be followed with a brother or sister in Christ over the phone. You may call on a friend to fill this role, or your elder or pastor can worship with you by phone.

There is an "offering prayer" included in this outline. As we shelter in place, please continue to worship through giving. You can mail offering envelopes and checks to Calvary or visit www.calvaryslz.org to give online.

Invocation

Reader 1: We gather to worship. We gather to pray.

Reader 2: We gather to our God and to his word.

Reader 1: We gather in the name of our God who is...

Reader 2: Father, Son and Holy Spirit...

Together: Amen.

Psalm 50:1-6

¹The Mighty One, God the Lord,
speaks and summons the earth
from the rising of the sun to its setting.

² Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty,
God shines forth.

³ Our God comes; he does not keep silence;
before him is a devouring fire,
around him a mighty tempest.

⁴ He calls to the heavens above
and to the earth, that he may judge his people:

⁵ “Gather to me my faithful ones,
who made a covenant with me by sacrifice!”

⁶ The heavens declare his righteousness,
for God himself is judge!

Confession & Absolution

*Make sure each person present has opportunity to confess to a brother or sister in faith.
Go through both parts as many times as needed to accommodate all who are gathered.*

Christian Confessing: Jesus, you alone are my guide. Yet, I have often followed the guidance of this world or presumed to guide myself. You alone are the goal of my life. Here too, I have made substitutions, and I’ve allowed lesser goals to capture my heart. Forgive me and change me. Discipline my heart to love you, my will to follow you, and my hands to serve you. Grant this, Lord, by your grace.

Christian Responding: Your Lord always hears your confession, and he faithfully answers with grace, mercy, and pardon. When his children ask, he forgives. This promise is for you, and his forgiveness yours! Further, in Baptism he’s given you his Holy Spirit. God’s Spirit will guide your heart, your will, and your hands in every calling he’s placed on your life.

Together: Amen.

2 Corinthians 3:12-18

¹² Since we have such a hope, we are very bold, ¹³ not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not gaze at the outcome of what was being brought to an end. ¹⁴ But their minds were hardened. For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away. ¹⁵ Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts. ¹⁶ But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. ¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸ And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Mark 9:2-9

² And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, ³ and his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them. ⁴ And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. ⁵ And Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." ⁶ For he did not know what to say, for they were terrified. ⁷ And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice

came out of the cloud, “This is my beloved Son; listen to him.”⁸ And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only.
⁹And as they were coming down the mountain, he charged them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

Message

The Discipline of Celebration

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. ⁴In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. (John 1:1-5)

I pray these words of John Chapter 1 are not SO familiar that we lose sight of God’s vision...

We are hearing the Spirit of God, speaking to and through the Disciple Jesus Loved – St. John the Evangelist. We LISTEN as God is proclaiming who Jesus Christ, His Son, ACTUALLY is.

He is the WORD by whom we LIVE and the LIGHT by which we SEE.

Piercing through the darkness, Jesus is the true light, which gives light to everyone.

Shining forth with gracious invitation and joyous welcome, Jesus gives us the RIGHT to BECOME children of God – That’s a NEW VISION for our lives...

We are born of God – REBORN in CHRIST

With the very WORD become FLESH dwelling in and among us –
Full of GRACE and TRUTH.

Proclaiming the words of John 1:1-14 CHANGES things.

These words TRANSFIGURE a first-century, Galilean peasant into one far GREATER than we could ever ask or imagine.

These words TRANSFORM our hearts and our minds...they even have the power to TRANSFORM our bodies and our relationships from being hidden in the darkness of sin and death to being fully revealed in the light of salvation and life in Jesus Christ!

John goes on to say that it is from from HIS fullness – the fullness of the God/Man Jesus - that we have all received GRACE UPON GRACE.

GRACE, MERCY and PEACE to you from God our Father, and our LORD and SAVIOR Jesus Christ! Amen!

For this final installation on the value and practice of the Spiritual Disciplines, Pastor Matt extended the invitation for me to speak with you today. I'm Pastor Dominic Rivkin, and I serve your neighbors and the followers of Jesus to the South and East – as Mission and Ministry Executive of the Pacific Southwest District of the LCMS.

That's a bunch of words that I can summarize like this:

I'm a pilgrim, just like you. I'm journeying with you and others – seeking the Kingdom of God and the righteousness of Jesus in our lives and in our world.

It's on this journey that I am learning the value and practice of the Spiritual Disciplines.

I love this quote from Dallas Willard's book, aptly titled *The Spiritual Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives...*

“A discipline for the spiritual life is...nothing but an activity undertaken to bring us into more effective cooperation with Christ in his Kingdom.”

Since Pastor Matt has spent the last few weeks preaching and teaching on the Disciplines, themselves, I'd like to share what it means to be trained by the TRANSFIGURED Jesus on this TRANSFORMATIONAL journey of Life in Him.

To get there, let's take another look at our Gospel lesson for today. Now, I'm going to read through it and I'd like us to use the simple spiritual discipline of HEARING the plain words of the Scripture.

Here it goes...

And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, ³ and his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them. ⁴ And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. ⁵ And Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." ⁶ For he did not know what to say, for they were terrified. ⁷ And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him." ⁸ And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only.

⁹ And as they were coming down the mountain, he charged them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. (Mark 9:2-9)

What did you HEAR in the text?

Well...time has passed. Six days, in fact. In the words of Mark Chapter 8 we last heard that Jesus and his friends were in an area called Caesarea Philippi. Here Jesus asked a critical question about His IDENTITY – “Who do people say that I am?” Fair to say that many people had many ideas about who Jesus was – in fact, that's STILL the case today! Some say teacher, some say prophet, some say God – some say fraud, some say fairy tale, some say a mythical idea of who we'd hope to be. Peter said “You're the Christ!” and Jesus promptly told him to shush...

Jesus started to teach what it would mean for him to suffer many things, be rejected by the “church” people of his day and be killed by the political authorities. Even though he concluded by saying that he’d rise again, Peter rebuked him. And Jesus rebuked right back...

Peter didn’t yet know. Peter hadn’t yet seen – Peter may have HEARD Jesus, but his heart was still being trained to LISTEN!

What else do we HEAR in the text?

Jesus takes Peter, James, and John and heads out on a hike up a high mountain. We all know the payoff of a great mountain hike is the majestic view of the countryside when you reach the peak. Jesus’ friends received so much more as Jesus was TRANSFIGURED before their eyes.

Now, what does that mean? One author says, that “to be TRANSFIGURED is to be changed in outward form or appearance. Jesus’ TRANSFIGURATION does not change who he is, but gives to those who see a new understanding because they see him in a different light.”

Different INDEED! His radiant brightness bouncing off two other figures – Moses and Elijah – each of whom were also TRANSFIGURED in their own right.

Peter pipes up again – RABBI (which means TEACHER) It’s SOOO good that me and the other guys are here to see this! Let’s put up tents for you all so that we can bask in your glowiness!! He didn’t know what else to say – he was terrified.

I can’t imagine a booming voice helped ease the fear!

THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, LISTEN TO HIM!

Then...everything suddenly returns to normal. Jesus is there in his dirty old tunic and ratty sandals, just like before. They head down the mountain with Jesus’ warning not to tell anyone what they saw until he has risen from the dead.

There was SO much more to see! They may have HEARD God's voice, but soon they would learn what it means to LISTEN!

So, how does this activity of HEARING the WORD, the Spiritual Discipline of STUDY bring us into more effective cooperation with Christ in His Kingdom?

Hearing the word is also called Meditating on the word of God. This Spiritual Discipline often opens our eyes to the details we may not have seen since the last time we read these words. Thinking about the fact that the TRANSFIGURATION happens after Jesus critical IDENTITY question, Peter's subsequent affirmation and failures, and GOD's direct intervention. That must have had a TRANSFORMATIVE effect on Peter, James and John-

TRANSFORMATION is an essential and often complete change. Sometimes it can take experiencing many TRANSFIGURATIONS in order to experience TRANSFORMATION. The Spiritual Disciplines are activities that help us pay attention and make sense of the experiences of God's encounter with us – strengthening and building us up toward ever increasing cooperation with Christ in His Kingdom.

I'd like to illustrate TRANSFORMATION using a slightly different Spiritual Discipline. I'm going to read the Gospel lesson again – and this time challenge you to not only HEAR the words, but LISTEN to them – To use your GOD GIVEN imagination to place yourself in the scene with Jesus. Not only is he taking Peter, James, and John on this journey...but he is taking YOU and me!

Sometimes it helps to close your eyes and picture the scene. It's been six days of traveling on dusty roads and through tiny settlements and towns. The question Jesus asked about his identity and the challenging response are still ringing in your ears and swirling in your mind.

You ask yourself – “Who is JESUS really? Who is Jesus to ME?”

Jesus had asked, “For what does it profit a person to gain the whole world and forfeit their soul? For what can a person give in return for his soul?” (Mark 8:36-37)

You've been looking into your own heart, your own soul - asking yourself "Where have my priorities been?"

Jesus says:

Whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. (Mark 8:38)

Now you ask yourself..."Have I been ashamed of Jesus? Have I been afraid of speaking about him and about my faith in who he says he is?"

After this journey, Jesus takes with him Peter and James and John AND YOU, and leads you all up a high mountain by yourselves. (HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE ON THIS JOURNEY WITH JESUS?)

And then he's transfigured right before YOUR eyes, "his clothes become radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them." (WHAT DO YOU FEEL IN YOUR HEART TO SEE THIS SIGHT?)

And there, with Jesus, you also see Elijah with Moses. How amazing! There they are, talking with Jesus! (WHAT ARE THEY TALKING ABOUT?)

You hear Peter saying to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." He didn't know what to say, you were all terrified. (IS IT GOOD FOR YOU TO BE THERE? ARE YOU FEARFUL OR COMFORTED?)

And a cloud overshadowed the whole scene, and a voice comes out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him." (WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THIS VOICE FROM THE CLOUD? HOW DOES IT CHANGE THE WAY YOU VIEW GOD?)

And suddenly, looking around, you no longer saw anyone with you but Jesus only.(DO YOU FEEL DIFFERENT HAVING EXPERIENCED THIS TRANSFIGURATION?)

Coming down the mountain, Jesus says to tell no one what you have seen, until HE, the Son of Man, rises from the dead. (WHAT TRANSFORMATION IS GOD DOING IN YOUR HEART?)

Once again, I turn to the words of Dallas Willard who writes:

“The highest level of fellowship- involving humility, complete honesty, transparency, and at times confession and restitution- sustained by the discipline of submission.”

Submitting to the WORD of GOD – living and active – more than words we simply read or hear, words that change things. By the work of the Holy Spirit, the WORD transfigures how we VIEW and HEAR Jesus. At the same time and by the same Spirit, the WORD transforms how we SEE and LISTEN to Jesus. The WORD changes everything!

These simple Spiritual Disciplines are training our eyes and ears to be those who have experienced the encounter of God in Christ Jesus, and who desire nothing more than to cooperate with Christ in his Kingdom, here and now!

The prophet Isaiah pointed to the TRANSFIGURED God doing the TRANSFORMING work when he heard and shared this word from the Spirit:

*Have you not known? Have you not heard?
The Lord is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He does not faint or grow weary;
his understanding is unsearchable.
²⁹ He gives power to the faint,
and to him who has no might he increases strength.
³⁰ Even youths shall faint and be weary,
and young men shall fall exhausted;
³¹ but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles;*

*they shall run and not be weary;
they shall walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:28-31)*

And when it comes to the Spiritual Disciplines, they're just a training regimen, like athletes go through to get stronger and faster. The Apostle Paul says all athletes are disciplined in their training. But they do it to win a prize that will fade away. We do it for an eternal prize.

²⁶ So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing. ²⁷ I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. (1 Corinthians 9:25-27)

My prayer is that, in the midst of the Spirit's training program we all realize the tremendous opportunity this TRANSFIGURED view of God gives, seeing Jesus for who he truly is – our Crucified and Risen Savior who TRANSFORMS us to be as he is, fully forgiven children who live our lives to the Glory of God our Father.

Amen!

And now may the peace of God, which is beyond all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Prayers and the Lord's Prayer

Share prayer requests with one another. Pray over the requests shared, then pray the Lord's Prayer together.

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Offering Prayer

If you have an offering present as you worship, you may place your hands over it during the offering prayer.

Reader 1: With thankful hearts we receive from you, O Lord.

Reader 2: With thankful hearts we respond.

Reader 1: Receive our thanks and praise.

Reader 2: Receive our offerings.

Together: Receive us as your own.

Blessing *(Numbers 6:24-26)*

Reader 1: The Lord bless you and keep you.

Reader 2: The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you.

Reader 1: The Lord look upon you with favor...

Reader 2: And give you peace.

Together: Amen.

The Ongoing Invitation

Continue putting the spiritual disciplines to practice in your life individually, as families, and as a church community. Pursue the rhythm of FAITH5 as we strive for a faith conversation in every home every day. Plan for a celebration like we saw in Deuteronomy 14 last week. We do not create the music of an abundant life, but we engage practices which help us listen well.

As applicable, please share this resource with others who would benefit. An electronic version is available at www.calvaryslz.org. We can also add friends to our mailing list if that is preferred.

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