**Matthew 17:1-9**

**1**  And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. **2** And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. **3** And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. **4** And Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.” **5** He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.” **6** When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. **7** But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Rise, and have no fear.” **8** And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only. **9**  And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, “Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead.”

**“The Word of Light Unfailing”**

Intro: Experience is so important for us today. What happens when experience is how we want to search for God? What happens when it becomes more influential than God’s Word? Yet, none of us experienced the transfiguration. It was only for a select few! “For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.”

Transfiguration is not a word we use much today. However, we can turn to see how God changed things around at times. He especially liked to do this on mountains, but make no mistake about it. What makes the difference is the man on that mountain. Only Christ brings us to the mountain that is a light unfailing for sinners.

1. **Mt. Sinai showed the Holiness of God and Moses made that experience known by the Law.**
2. Holiness was thrown on the people!
* “Behold the blood of covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words.”
1. Holiness was carved out on tablets of stones.
* “Come up to me on the mountain and wait there, that I may give you the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction.”
1. Holiness was the glory of the Lord.
* “Now the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel.”
1. Holiness was the Law unfit to save an unholy people.
* “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen” Deuteronomy 18:15
1. **Mt. Carmel showed the one true God and Elijah gave that experience against false idols.**
2. The true God will have no other gods before Him.
* “How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.” 1 Kings 18:21
1. The true God reveals the foolishness of man centered worship.
* “And they cried aloud and cut themselves after their custom with swords and lances, until the blood gushed out upon them. And as midday passed, they raved on until the time of the offering of the oblation, but there was no voice. No one answered; no one paid attention.”1 Kings 18:28-29
1. The true God enlightens the darkness of men by His presence.
* Elijah prayed alone as the only prophet, “…I have done all these things at your word. Answer me, O Lord, answer me, that this people may know that you, O Lord, are God, and that you have turned their hearts back.” Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and said, “The Lord, he is God; the Lord, he is God.” 1 Kings 18:36-39
1. The true God must go beyond a call of repentance to sinners.
* John the baptizer declared, “I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. (Matthew 3:11)
1. **The Mt. of transfiguration showed the sacrifice of God and Jesus takes that experience to Mt. Calvary.**
2. Here is the man who makes any mountain truly holy in His Name.
* “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.”
* The mountain of judgment, death, and ungodliness meets the God of our salvation.
1. Here is the true God who is not afraid to save by His Word of salvation.
* “But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Rise, and have no fear.”
* The mountain that has no comfort now claims life to give for sinners by forgiveness.
1. Here is the Savior who wants us to gloryabove all in His Sacrifice.
* Jesus commanded them, “Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead.”
* The mountain none could find glorious has received from God the highest praise! “Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at his holy mountain; for the Lord our God is holy!” Psalms 99:9
1. The experience of the transfiguration comes to us by the Divine Service.
* It is God at work by the prophets, apostle, and finally resting in what Jesus says. Luther tells us, “For God’s Word can never be without God’s people, nor can God’s people ever be without God’s Word. “For who otherwise would preach or hear the preaching if there were no people of God? And what would or could God’s people believe if the Word of God were not there? . . . We know how this chief part, this Holy of Holies, fosters, preserves, nourishes, strengthens, and protects the Church. So also St. Augustine says: ‘The Church is begotten, fed, nourished, and made strong by the Word of God.’For God’s Word can never be without God’s people, nor can God’s people ever be without God’s Word.

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(On The Councils and The Church 1539).
* It is a foretaste of the feast of victory for all eternity with Jesus stepping into our time to serve us at all times.
* It is longing for heaven and glory that lets us look only to Jesus in our life. “Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.” 1 John 3:2

Last Sunday of Epiphany prepares us for the season of Lent. Only Christ brings us to the mountain that is a light unfailing for sinners.