

## **“Something More” – Pr Jim Sprengle – Transfiguration Sunday March 2, 2025**

- I. **Luke 9:29-31** – <sup>29</sup>And as He was praying, the appearance of His face was altered, and His clothing became dazzling white. <sup>30</sup>And behold, two men were talking with Him, Moses and Elijah, <sup>31</sup>who appeared in glory and spoke of His departure, which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.
- II. **It's hard to recognize Jesus for who He really is.**
  - a. Throughout the season of Epiphany, I've been saying that Jesus is revealing, or showing Himself to be the true Savior and Messiah.
    - i. The word epiphany means to show, reveal, or manifest – and the season begins with Jesus being baptized in the Jordan River, as it says in Luke chapter 3, “the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on [Jesus] in bodily form, like a dove; and [the Father's] voice came from heaven, ‘You are My beloved Son; with You I am well pleased.’” (Luke 3:21-22).
    - ii. Today, we are at the end of the Epiphany season, and it is the story of the Transfiguration, or the second time that a voice from heaven calls down, “This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him!” (v 35).
  - b. Even with these two miraculous events that revealed Jesus as the Savior and God's own Son, His disciples and those around Him struggled to comprehend that He was something more than just a man.
  - c. Our reading starts with, “eight days after these sayings,” (v 28) which refers back to when Peter gets it right and calls Jesus the Messiah, but when Jesus says He must suffer and die, Peter will have none of it... and Jesus told him to get behind Me satan! (Mt 16:23; Mk 8:33)
    - i. So, in one moment Peter gets it right, then in the next moment He doesn't understand who Jesus really is.
    - ii. Now, eight days later, Peter, James, and John go up the mountain with Jesus to experience a miracle that reveals Jesus to be God in their midst.
      1. Jesus becomes glorified... His face is different... His clothing is shining brightly... and two prophets of old join Him.
      2. Moses, the one who told the Israelites 1500 years before, “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.” (Deut. 18:15)
        - a. Now Moses hands off the torch to Jesus as the one that we listen to... and the Father backs it up... “listen to Him!”
    - iii. An interesting point here is that it says Moses and Elijah were talking to Jesus about “His departure,” (v 30), but the word in Greek is “exodus”.

1. Moses and Elijah were speaking to Jesus about His exodus, or His departure – His death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven.
  2. The most important story of the Old Testament is God's deliverance of His people from the hands of Egypt as Moses led them to the Promised Land... The Exodus.
  3. Jesus would now be the one to lead His people out of the hands of sin's bondage and to the Promised Land of heaven.
- d. In all these things we see Jesus telling and showing who He really is, and yet they could not fully grasp that He was something more than a human being... He is God Himself – sent into the world to deliver us all.

III. **Even today, people still don't recognize Jesus as something more.**

- a. As a pastor, it's strange, but all kinds of people feel emboldened to share with me their understanding of God, and usually why I'm wrong.
  - i. Some will say that Jesus is just a great teacher or had great charisma which attracted many people to Him.
  - ii. Others say that Jesus is a "chosen one" to be like a prophet – something like the miracles that Moses and Elijah did in the Old Testament – but again, He was just a human, empowered by God.
  - iii. Still others wonder if He existed at all, and the Bible is a book that misleads billions of people into believing in a myth.
  - iv. Then there are those who believe Jesus is "a god" – but not actually God – so, He is a step down from the Father as some sort of created being that is very powerful, but not God Himself.
- b. Time and time again, people get the Jesus part mixed up or wrong, and that's a problem because then they do not believe in the true Jesus Christ... the only way to the Father. (John 14:6)
  - i. We don't actually believe in Jesus when we believe in the false Jesuses... Faith in Christ means we take the Scriptures at face value, that He is God, who came in human flesh to deliver us from our sins.
- c. The sad part is that soon after Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension, people started to teach falsehoods about Him... and these falsehoods have endured for over 2000 years.
  - i. The Gnostics taught about a false Jesus... and then false teacher after false teacher arose to mislead and cause faithful followers of Christ to walk away.
  - ii. Even Paul rebukes the people in the region of Galatia by saying they were following a different Gospel than the one they first believed.
  - iii. It didn't take too long before the Church decided to clarify the truth about Jesus in something we call a creed... or a statement of our belief.

1. In the Nicene Creed, we say that Jesus is “God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father.”
2. They were trying to make it abundantly clear that Jesus Christ is God, and that we must believe in Him as God if we are to have this saving faith.

d. Only God can save humanity... and Jesus Christ is very God of very God.

IV. **The exodus of Jesus began as He walked down that mountain.**

- a. From that point on, Jesus’ face was set for Jerusalem, or the place that He would be betrayed, arrested, tortured, and executed.
  - i. None of His disciples could imagine that this would be possible – given the great miracles Jesus did and their understanding of how the Messiah would free them from the Romans.
  - ii. None of them could possibly imagine the horrors that lie ahead for Jesus, but He kept reminding them that He must do these things in order to save the people from their sins.
- b. Many wonder why it’s so important that we believe that Jesus is both God and man... why can’t a man do what Jesus did?
  - i. It’s about the sacrifice that was required – the one time, all availing sacrifice for the sins of the world.
    1. Many people have died for a good cause, but only God Himself could pay for the sins of all... even the sins that would come long after Jesus died – the sins that ravage our world today.
  - ii. Jesus was the perfect human being in the image of God, and He became the Adam that lived without sin – and a perfect sacrifice... but He is also God, and by His death and resurrection, every single sin is paid for – the sins of past, present, and the future.
- c. That is the good news of our salvation and our own exodus story – that as we believe in Jesus Christ for who He truly is, we are saved from an eternity in hell without Him... the bondage of sin, death, and satan are broken, and we can enter the Promised Land of heaven.

V. **The real Jesus is something more...**

- a. He is the God of the universe, there at the foundations of creation... equal to the Father and the Holy Spirit... and yet, He became one of us.
- b. For many, it’s hard to recognize Jesus for who He really is, but we know because the Word helps us to believe the truth.
- c. I’m reminded of a story about Elvis Presley, who was a regular at a steakhouse in Tennessee – even after he got famous.
  - i. He happened to go there while they were having an Elvis impersonation contest, so he went up and sang Love Me Tender.
  - ii. The crowd politely clapped, and he ended up getting 3<sup>rd</sup> place.
  - iii. These folks missed the real thing when he was standing in front of them... and so can we.<sup>1</sup>

- iv. We may think Jesus is a prophet, a teacher, or a miracle worker, and miss the whole point... but He is the real thing.... Our God and Savior who came to us in the flesh.
- v. Make no mistake... God alone, our Savior Jesus, leads us in the true exodus—from sin and death to life and salvation. Amen

<sup>1</sup> Blog, *"The True Complete Story of Mark Hanks,"* 706UnionAvenue.com (Accessed 1/28/21).