

Sermon Outline

THE YEAR IN OUR LORD, 2011-2012

CHRIST JESUS, GOAL OF THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS: A MESSAGE ON THE TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD (LUKE 9:28-36)

I. Jesus, the *Autobasileia*

(*Autobasileia* = “Kingdom-in-Person”)

II. Jesus and His Disciples Go Up to a Mountain to Pray (Luke 9:28)

- A. When Luke 9:28 begins, it had been “eight days” since Jesus delivered the teachings of Luke 9:21-27.
- B. Jesus gave his disciples those words to...
 - 1. prepare them for the dark days ahead.
 - 2. warn them against departing from him.
- C. But Jesus also said that some of them “will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God” (9:27).
—That statement prepares us for verses 28-36.
- D. When verse 28 opens, Jesus is taking three of his disciples—Peter, John, and James—to the mountain to pray.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) What words did Jesus give to his disciples eight days ago? Why did Jesus give those words to them? (2) What even is Jesus referring to in verse 27? (3) Where is Jesus taking his disciples when verse 28 begins?

III. The Transfiguration of Jesus (Luke 9:29)

- A. As Jesus prays, something unusual happens.
 - 1. Luke writes: “...the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white.”
 - 2. According to Matthew’s report, Jesus’ face began to shine like the sun (Mt 17:2).
- B. Even Jesus’ ordinary clothing shared in the radiance from his body, becoming pure white.
- C. The transfiguration came from within Jesus, not from without.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) What happened to Jesus while he was praying? (2) According to the Gospel of Matthew, how bright did Jesus' appearance become? (3) Since the clothing changed after Jesus' appearance was altered, what does this say about the nature of the transfiguration? Did it come from within Jesus or outside of Jesus?

IV. Moses and Elijah Appear to Jesus (Luke 9:30)

- A. Two of the greatest prophets of Israel, Moses and Elijah, appear.
 - 1. They "appeared in glory."
 - 2. Having dwelt in God's presence all this while, some of that glory had rubbed off on them as well.
- B. While the glory of Moses and Elijah were from God, it seems as if Jesus was producing his own glory.
- C. Moses and Elijah "spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem."
 - 1. Moses and Elijah had come to talk with Jesus about the events that are about to happen to him very soon.
 - 2. Jesus' departure refers to his death, resurrection, and ascension.
 - 3. Moses and Elijah were not telling Jesus what he did not already know. —They may have come to encourage Jesus and reaffirm his place in the plan of God.
 - 4. Together, Moses and Elijah represent all the prophets of the past. —They represent the Old Testament Scriptures.
 - 5. Something very significant to the life of Israel is happening.
 - a. Jesus has appeared in glory.
 - b. Instead of appearing to the "official" leaders of the Israel, the Sadducees and the Pharisees, Israel's two great prophets come instead to Jesus and to his community.
 - c. We will draw out the implications of this event in a moment.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) Who are Moses and Elijah? (2) What did Moses and Elijah look like when they appeared? (3) Why did Moses and Elijah come to Jesus? (4) Why is the appearance of Moses and Elijah to Jesus so significant to the nation of Israel?

V. Rising to See the Son Shine! (Luke 9:32-33)

- A. Our attention is drawn to the disciples. How do they react as all this is happening?
 - 1. Apparently, the disciples may have been waking up!
 - 2. This suggests they may have fallen asleep while praying. —which may also explain why the opening of verse 29 does not mention the disciples praying.
 - 3. Like us, the disciples struggle to pray!
- B. But the disciples awake in time to see Jesus and the prophets in glory.

- C. But “as the men were parting from him,” Peter offers to make three tents for each of the prophets.
- D. But Peter did not know what he was talking about (“not knowing what he said”).
 - 1. Peter may have just been lost for words.
 - 2. But a part of him may have wanted to impress the prophets by offering hospitality.
- E. But judging from what happens later, there may be more to Peter’s request than just an innocent offer of hospitality. By offering to put up tents for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah...
 - 1. Peter was really asking to preserve the glorious experience. —and perhaps avoid future suffering?
 - 2. Peter was putting Jesus on equal level with Moses and Elijah. —Peter and the other disciples don’t fully realize that Jesus is far superior to even the prophets of old. Jesus is not simply one of the great prophets. He is more.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) How do the disciples, especially Peter, react when they see their transfigured Lord and the prophets? (2) What could have caused their reaction? (3) What was Peter really doing when he offered to put up tents for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah?

VI. The Arrival of the Divine Presence (Luke 9:34)

- A. As Peter was offering his suggestions, “a cloud came and overshadowed them,” causing the disciples to be afraid.
 - 1. We have seen a similar occurrence before in Scripture.
 - a. When Moses ascended Mount Sinai to meet with God, God’s presence came with thick smoke. —Exodus 19:18: “Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the LORD had descended on it in fire...”
 - b. In the wilderness, “the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud” (Ex 16:10).
 - 2. Clouds and thick smoke were associated with the arrival of the glory of God.
- B. The voice of God speaks from the cloud: “This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!” (v 35).
 - 1. God makes no reference to either Moses or Elijah.
 - 2. God calls all attention to Jesus alone.
 - 3. God says three things of Jesus.
 - a. “...my Son...”
 - b. “...my Chosen One...”
 - c. “...listen to him!”

- C. God calls Jesus “my Son.”
1. This means that Jesus is the new King of Israel, the Heir to the throne of David.
—Each king of Israel from the line of David was a son of God (1 Chron 17:13).
 2. Going even further: This means that Jesus is God in nature.
—One reason the Jews sought to kill Jesus was because he was “calling God his own Father, *making himself equal with God*” (Jn 5:18).
- D. God calls Jesus “my Chosen One.”
1. There are two Scripture passages behind this title.
 - a. Psalm 89:3: “You have said, ‘I have made a covenant with *my chosen one*; I have sworn to David my servant.’”
 - b. Isaiah 42:1: “Behold my servant, whom I uphold, *my chosen*, in whom my soul delights...”
 2. Jesus is the ultimate Chosen One of God.
—He is the final King, led by God’s Spirit, who “will bring forth justice to the nations.”
- E. God calls the disciples to “listen to him.”
1. As Jews, the disciples would have highly revered Moses and Elijah.
 2. But a new day has arrived. God’s Son himself has appeared.
 3. Jesus is the Successor of the prophets, the new leader of God’s people.
 4. God has begun to gather the new Israel around Jesus.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) What happened while Peter was making his proposal? (2) What is the cloud an emblem of? (3) What does the Voice from cloud say about Jesus? (4) What do the titles “my Son” and “Chosen One” say of Jesus? (5) Why is it significant that God calls the disciples to listen to Jesus, without making any mention of Moses and Elijah?

VII. Jesus Was Found Alone (Luke 9:36)

- A. Almost as proof that Jesus is God’s final Word, verse 36 says, “when the voice had spoken, *Jesus was found alone.*”
—Moses and Elijah were no longer there.
- B. It’s almost as if God is making a point:
—“Jesus is my Last Word. He is the Kingdom of God-in-Person. You do not need to hold on to Moses and Elijah, because Jesus will give what Moses and Elijah had said—and much, much more.”

***Questions for reflection:** Why is it significant that “Jesus was found alone” after the voice had spoken? What does this suggest to us about Jesus’ relationship to Moses, Elijah, and the other Old Testament prophets?

VIII. Hiding the Glory for Now (Luke 9:36)

- A. As the passage ends, we read: “And they kept silent and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen.”
- B. Why were the disciples silent?
—Probably because they were rendered speechless by the whole experience!
- C. When confronted so powerfully by the glory of God, the most appropriate response is humble, thoughtful, and worshipful silence.

***Question for reflection:** Why would the disciples keep silent about what they had seen?

IX. Jesus—Goal of the Scriptures, Heart of the Kingdom

The transfiguration of Jesus is a very important event because it shows us that Jesus really is the Successor of the prophets—and the final Goal of the Old Testament Scriptures. Those who want to gain the Kingdom of God must go to Jesus and listen to him.

- A. What does it mean to listen to Jesus? Listening to Jesus means...
 - 1. Submitting to Jesus as our Divine Master, the Chosen Son of God.
 - 2. Receiving Jesus as God’s goal for our own lives.
- B. First, to listen to Jesus is to submit ourselves to him.
 - 1. God called the disciples to submit to Jesus by applying titles of divine authority to him (“Son [of God],” “Chosen One”).
 - 2. Although God once spoke through prophets likes Moses and Elijah, Jesus is now the supreme prophet-leader of the nation of God.
 - a. Therefore, God’s people must now take their instructions from Jesus Christ.
 - b. Hebrews 1:1-2: “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son...”
 - 3. God the Father requires us to obey Jesus above all.
 - a. No earthly authority can supersede or contradict Jesus.
 - b. No personal desire or ambition can go against Jesus.
 - c. Jesus himself is the Law of God and Chief Principle for the people of God.
 - 4. When we find ourselves struggling with obedience to Jesus, we must ask:
—*Why is Jesus worthy of our absolute allegiance?*
 - a. Let the transfiguration speak for itself!
—Jesus is the glorious Kingdom of God-in-Person!
 - b. Therefore, Jesus is worthy of the tribute of our very lives!
- C. Second, to listen to Jesus is to receive him as God’s goal for our lives.
 - 1. It is to install our Lord Jesus in our hearts as the primary motivation, the chief purpose, and the final reward of our lives.

2. Jesus is the chief goal in our lives because he is the chief goal of the Scriptures.
3. All the great prophets from Moses to Elijah speak to us about Christ! —Luke 24:25-27: “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?’ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.”
4. Because Jesus is the Kingdom-in-Person, he himself is the Prize of our deepest longings—a Prize which we receive simply by trusting in Christ.
5. Yet, once we have received Christ, there is still a place for striving in the Christian life.
 - a. The purpose of our striving is *not* to earn acceptance from Christ, because we have already been accepted by him (Phil 3:12).
 - b. Rather, we strive to conform ourselves more fully to Christ, even to experience and enjoy Christ more fully (Phil 3:7-11).
6. *Is conformity to Christ your overwhelming desire as well?*
 - a. As we progress in the Christian life, we may find that the freshness of the Gospel weakens over time.
 - i. We get caught in the stresses of life.
 - ii. We get overly concerned with minor doctrinal issues and matters of procedure.
 - iii. Joy in Christ is replaced by sourness, boredom, and obsession with technicalities.
 - iv. But we must repent and relearn the glory of Christ (Rev 2:4).
 - b. Perhaps we do not yet know Jesus.
 - i. Jesus wants to be our Lord and Savior.
 - ii. Jesus wants to be our glory, success, and fulfillment.

*Jesus is the Kingdom of God-in-Person.
Come to Jesus, and come to life.*

***Questions for reflection:** (1) What does it mean to listen to Jesus? (2) What do we need to ask ourselves if we find ourselves struggling with obedience? (3) Why should Jesus be the chief goal of our lives? (4) Why do we lose sight of the preciousness of Christ? What can we do to rebuild our love for and joy in Christ?

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