

Called to Glorify Jesus as the Messiah

This coming Sunday is called in the church calendar “Transfiguration Sunday” and it’s the end of the season of Epiphany, the season that emphasizes that Jesus is the savior of not only one nation, the Jewish people, but for every nation, tribe, language and people. The Gospel of Mark describes the scene of the transfiguration saying that having gone up to a mountain, probably Mount Tabor, with three of his disciples, “There he was transfigured before them. His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them.” (9:2b-3). The verb “to transfigure” (metemorphothe in Greek) is known in English by the word metamorphosis, which is the process of transformation from one type of organism into another. The idea is that Jesus was transformed into his real being before coming to this world. In essence, he showed his glory and splendor as the God almighty.

In the previous scene in the narrative of the gospel, Jesus had performed miracles and foretold his own death. In this new revelation, two important characters of the history of Israel appeared with him: Moses, the giver of the Law, that set the stage for Israel as the elected people of God, and Elijah, the first clear known prophet in a series of others that will come after him. Even these gigantic characters point to Jesus as the anointed One, the Messiah. He is the fulfillment of the Law and the prophets (a messenger sent by God).

But in the scenery of the transfiguration, it’s not only these two people that point to Jesus as the Messiah. God himself proclaims it with unequivocal words: “This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!” The message of this unique revelation is not only to let the disciples (and us) know about who Jesus is (God himself) but also to declare him as the One sent by God as the long-expected messiah, the chosen One, the anointed One. If we want to know God, we have to listen to Jesus. “No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.” (John 1:18).

So, we end this Epiphany season being reminded who Jesus truly is under his veiled human form, and he is the one that reveals the only true God, the Father. We are called to worship and glorify him. But this glorified scene is just momentarily. We cannot remain focused on it because the next movement of the larger gospel narrative is Jesus’s way to the cross, the only way that will really fulfill his mission: to give his life for our sins. There is no glory without cross. No cross, no crown. The path of glory is suffering. And he set the stage for his followers. Don’t be surprised that you encounter pain, suffering, trials, before any victory.

Jesus was transfigured to give us a glimpse of who he really is, but before we see him in glory, we have to learn to carry our cross. In His name. Amen.

~ Pastor Borges – Associate Pastor

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