

## Faith in the Home

Transfiguration Sunday: Matthew 17:1-9, "Rise, and Do Not Be Afraid."

Fear is something that we all have. What we are afraid of may vary, but fear is something that we all deal with. Sometimes we can put on a brave face, and do something that terrifies us. Sometimes that fear has a paralyzing effect on us.

Obviously fear has its place in our lives. Fear can caution us from taking ill-conceived action. Fear can also make cowards out of us when action is warranted. The fact that we have fear is probably just one more sign that we live in a fallen, broken, and corrupted world. Our relationship with Jesus changes how we respond to fear in this world.

In the Gospel lesson today, Peter, James, and John go up to a mountain alone with Jesus. During their time up there, those three disciples see Jesus transfigured, or in other words, they see the true and pure glory of God revealed in Jesus. They also recognize that next to Jesus is Moses and Elijah. These are two faithful prophets of God, and they are seen as the two most superb prophets by God's people in those days.

Those two men being there in that moment do two primary things. One, this connects Jesus to God who revealed Himself through these prophets. Meaning, Jesus is one with the God of the Old Testament, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel. The God who created the heavens and the earth. Two it demonstrates that in God there is life after our death in this world. God is the God of the living and it is an understatement to say that Elijah and Moses hadn't been seen in the world for a long, long, long, time.

One of the things that occurs throughout the accounts in Scripture is that when something supernatural and divine takes place, the mere human mortals fall down in fear. A lot of this is our fallen state. Alone, we cannot stand before a holy God. I am sure that a lot of the fear felt by the witnesses of Jesus' works, was from the sheer awesome occurrence that of what they witnessed (the word awesome is overused to the point where it has lost its descriptive potency). Imagine seeing God supernaturally at work! Peter, James, and John were at awe in this account. But we also want to respect that God is good and just and that there is a terrible wrath from God if we turn away.

However, wonderful gospel message from this account. We see in this account another example that Jesus is God. We see through the presence of Moses and Elijah that there is indeed eternal life with Christ, and we learn that we do not have to fear God's wrath if we place our faith in Jesus. When the disciples lay trembling, Jesus comes to them and

says, "Rise, do not be afraid:" He comes to us to lift us up. He comes to us so that we do not have to fear Him because He makes us holy again. He took on God's wrath for us on the cross, and He rose again. Ultimately, when we understand who Jesus is and that He is with us, paralyzing fear melts away. Fear not, Jesus is with you.

### ***How do we teach and model these things to our children?***

1. When we are afraid, we have to run to God. It is not enough to just tell our kids to trust in Jesus, but we too, must also trust in Him. If they see us genuinely trusting in God in hard times that will build their own trust in God and help them to do the same thing for their children. It is also good to share with our children how God has helped us.
2. Respect God more than you fear being rejected by the current culture. If you honor God's Word, your kids will be more likely to honor God's Word in their life as well. They will have times of rebellion, but they will be ready to receive God's grace when they see their need to repent.
3. How do we know that our trust in God is not misplaced? One, Jesus shows us God's character and will. He died and rose for you. That is love and awesome power. Two, the Holy Spirit enables us to believe in God, and furthermore to believe through accounts of Jesus that were written down. Well, how reliable is the Bible? You have all heard attacks from non-believing scholars who use language that makes them sound more educated than you or I. (A lot of that is pompous intellectual dribble made to make you feel stupid.) Remember this, the Bible is a collection recorded events that were written down by eye witnesses of God interacting with His people. Furthermore, the New Testament is a collection of events recorded by eyewitnesses, and when it was recorded other eye witnesses were still alive. When Paul wrote 1 Corinthians there were over 500 eyewitnesses to Jesus' resurrection! 500! He went on to write that a few had passed away, but many were still alive. This is just one example. But rest assured, if the Bible is not reliable as an historical account than there is no such thing as a reliable historical account of anything, period.
4. Live life with the hope that no matter what happens to you, God is with you. God may lead us into situations where we will feel fear, but ultimately it is to reveal His goodness to us.