

Sunday 6 August 2023

The Transfiguration



Sermon © Pete Haslam.

Liturgy and prayers of intercession © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

Bible readings © the publishers of the NRSV translation.

The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration are included at the end.

The hymn can be accessed via a YouTube link. Please click on the links.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page,
<http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

HYMN 1 [Christ whose glory fills the skies](#) (click on this link to hear the hymn)

The welcome

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

All **Amen.**

The Lord be with you

All **And also with you.**

The Preparation

All **Almighty God,**
 to whom all hearts are open,
 all desires known,
 and from whom no secrets are hidden:
 cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
 by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
 that we may perfectly love you,
 and worthily magnify your holy name;
 through Christ our Lord.
 Amen.

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,

with all your soul, with all your mind,

and with all your strength.’

And the second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

All **Amen. Lord, have mercy.**

When Christ appears we shall be like him,

because we shall see him as he is.

As he is pure, all who have grasped this hope make themselves pure.

Therefore, let us confess our sins that mar his image in us.

All Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry
and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name. Amen.

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

The Gloria

This version of the Gloria is sung to the tune of 'Cwm Rhondda'. Click [here](#) for the tune.

All Glory be to God in Heaven,
Songs of joy and peace we bring,
Thankful hearts and voices raising,
To creation's Lord we sing.
Lord we thank you, Lord we praise you,
Glory be to God our King:
Glory be to God our King.

Lamb of God, who on our shoulders,
Bore the load of this world's sin;
Only Son of God the Father,
You have brought us peace within.
Lord, have mercy, Christ have mercy,
Now your glorious reign begin:
Now your glorious reign begin.

**You O Son of God are Holy,
You we praise with one accord.
None in heav'n or earth is like you,
Only you are Christ the Lord.
With the Father and the Spirit,
Ever worshipped and adored:
Ever worshipped and adored.**

The Collect for The Transfiguration

Father in heaven,
whose Son Jesus Christ was wonderfully transfigured
before chosen witnesses upon the holy mountain,
and spoke of the exodus he would accomplish at Jerusalem:
give us strength so to hear his voice and bear our cross
that in the world to come we may see him as he is;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All Amen.

First reading

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Daniel

As I watched, thrones were set in place and an Ancient One took his throne; his clothing was white as snow and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames and its wheels were burning fire. A stream of fire issued and flowed out from his presence. A thousand, thousand served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood attending him.

The court sat in judgement and the books were opened. As I watched in the night visions, I saw one like a human being coming with the clouds of heaven. And he came to the Ancient One and was presented before him. To him was given dominion and glory and kingship, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and his kingship is one that shall never be destroyed.

Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from the Second Letter of St Peter

We did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received honour and glory from God the Father when that voice was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory, saying, ‘This is my Son, my Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.’ We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven, while we were with him on the holy mountain.

So we have the prophetic message more fully confirmed. You will do well to be attentive to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. *2 Peter 1:16–19*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 We are walking in the light of God

[\(click to hear the hymn\)](#)

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

All Glory to you O Lord.

Jesus took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him.

Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, ‘Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah’—not knowing what he said. While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. Then from the cloud came a voice that said, ‘This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!’ When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. They kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen. *Luke 9:28b–36*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

The story of the transfiguration of Jesus is one of only a few that appears in all three synoptic gospels. This transfiguration takes place about three years into Jesus' three-and-a-half-year ministry. The disciples had followed Jesus for months and years; they had seen his miracles; they had done miracles in His name. They knew something about the power and the reality of who Jesus was, yet, when He began to talk about dying, it was staggering to the disciples, and they began to wonder if He really was the Messiah. Jesus took Peter, James, and John to a high mountain away from the others. Together with Peter's brother, Andrew, these three disciples have been with Jesus the longest since Jesus called them away from their fishing nets alongside the Sea of Galilee.

'Transfiguration' is defined as, 'a state change from one thing into something quite different while retaining one's original nature'.

The purpose of the transfiguration of Jesus was so that the 'inner circle' of His disciples could gain a greater understanding of who Jesus was. Jesus underwent a dramatic change in appearance so the disciples could behold Him in His glory. The disciples, who had only known Him in His human body, now had a greater realization of the deity of Jesus, although they could not fully comprehend it. Transfiguration would give them the reassurance they needed after hearing the shocking news of His coming death. A face shining like a sun, clothes of dazzling white, a voice from a cloud: something powerful was occurring on that mountaintop, but it was difficult for the disciples to comprehend. They had known Jesus as a teacher, a healer, and even a prophet like Elijah or Jeremiah; each of these was a role that Jesus filled, but none alone captured his complete identity.

Matthew tells us, 'Just then, there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.' Remember that Peter, James, and John were just small-town fishermen, not educated scholars. But even they knew that Moses and Elijah were not only the two most influential figures in Jewish history but were the two people who would one day announce the arrival of the Messiah. Moses and Elijah had both been dead for a thousand years or so. Yet, there they were. The appearance of Moses and Elijah symbolically represented the Law and the Prophets. But God's voice from heaven said

Clearly showing that the Law and the Prophets must give way to Jesus. Jesus is the new and living way replacing the old, the fulfillment of the Law and the countless prophecies in the Old Testament. Also, in His glorified form, they saw a preview of His coming glorification and enthronement as King of kings and Lord of lords. The voice from heaven instructed Peter, James, and John to do one thing: 'listen to Jesus.'

The disciples were asked to forget their thoughts and plans; and listen to Him. As God had declared from the heavens, 'He is My Beloved Son.' Above all else, 'Hear Him.' And while they were lying there, quivering with fear, Jesus touched them and said, 'do not be afraid.'

The second thing they saw in the transfiguration was the promise of eternal life. In Jesus' earthly life, he was a humble carpenter and rabbi. But when Jesus' face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light, Peter, James, and John got a glimpse of his true identity as our resurrected Saviour. Soon, they would see him arrested, put on trial, beaten, spat on, and nailed to a cross. They would witness him die an agonising and shameful death. If only for a moment they needed to see the resurrected Jesus in his glory and majesty. They needed to know that God's story would end in victory and everlasting life.

Peter was the one who noticed it first. He just always seemed to be the one that caught things more quickly. Matthew said that while they stood there:

'He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light.' They were trying to figure out what was happening; they needed some assurance of their future. We all need that assurance.

I am sure we've all faced change that has caused us to stumble and fall, paralysed us, or left us overwhelmed. We need to regain our balance and get our feet back under us, stepping into a new life when we aren't sure what that looks like or if there is a new life awaiting us.

Jesus speaks a word to and for you and me. Are we listening to that word, to his voice? Jesus tells all of us to 'Get up.' But it's more than 'get up.' A more literal translation would be something like 'be raised up,' 'be aroused from the sleep of death,' or maybe even 'be resurrected.'

If we believe that's true, then it means that every change—whether good or bad, wanted or unwanted, joyful or sorrowful—is illuminated with divine light and filled with God's presence. So we all need to listen to him. Be raised up. not be afraid.

Now there are a number of what if questions that come to mind: What if those words are holy wisdom for times of change? What if they are how we step into our own transfiguration?

Maybe it wasn't Jesus who changed on the mountaintop; perhaps it was Peter, James, and John. The transfiguration opened their eyes, and their seeing changed so that everywhere they looked, they saw Jesus for the first time as he had always been.

- What if the church lived out its life in such a way others could not help but see the transfiguration?
- What if Christians were so different that society looked to see the working of the congregation?
- What if Christians were the people, children and adults pointed their fingers at and said, 'Hey, look at that!'?
- What if we so lived the love, salvation, peace, and hope of God that we seemed out of place in the world around us?
- What if we were truly transformed into the very people of God? Wouldn't it be fun, exciting, and wonderful if people in our communities living around our churches wanted to see what makes us so odd?

Transformed people—that is what is needed now! Transfigured people who let their lights shine, have radiant smiles, and tell glowing reports of what God has done in Christ and continues to do in the Holy Spirit. Transformed Christians need to share with others the coming attraction of God's reign.

The transfiguration story says there is only one voice to listen to. The voice of God speaks from the bright cloud overshadowing Peter, James, and John, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; with him, I am well pleased; listen to him' (Matthew 17:5)

What if, during change, we sought to hear and listen to that one voice, the voice of Christ? What if we kept our ears open to what He is saying in our life and world today? We must let ourselves become aware of, and attentive to what He is saying and doing, let His concerns and desires become our concerns and desires, and let His way of engaging life and the world become our way of engaging life and the world.

It would mean that whatever changes come upon us do not have the final word. There is another voice. Jesus' voice is always larger and more powerful than all the other voices. Amid change, Jesus speaks of a word of life, a word of hope, a word of forgiveness, a word of mercy, a word of beauty, a word of generosity, a word of courage, a word of love, a word of healing.

Jesus moved down from the Mount of Transfiguration and toward Jerusalem, where He would be lifted on another distant hill and die. And there, He would give forgiveness for this world's sin, banishing death, and conquering the devil. So, we, too, move forward, bearing our crosses in faith, trusting not in our self or efforts but in the grace of God to see us through and to bring us at last into His glorious kingdom. Amen

Prayers of intercession

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ, let us pray to the Father.

Lord of glory, it is good that we are here. In peace we make our prayer to you. In trust we confirm our faith in you ... Help us to set our faces steadfastly to where you would have us go.

Lord, look with favour.

All Lord, transfigure and heal.

Lord of glory, look with favour on your Church, proclaiming your beloved Son to the world and listening to the promptings of his Spirit ... May she be renewed in holiness that she may reflect your glory.

Lord, look with favour.

All Lord, transfigure and heal.

Lord of glory, look with favour on the nations of the world, scarred by hatred, strife and war ... May they be healed by the touch of your hand.

Lord, look with favour.

All Lord, transfigure and heal.

Lord of glory, look with favour on those in need and distress, suffering as your Son has suffered and waiting for the salvation you promise ... May the day break and Christ the Morning Star bring them the light of his presence.

Lord, look with favour.

All Lord, transfigure and heal.

Lord of glory, it is good if we suffer with you so that we shall be glorified with you. According to your promise bring all Christ's brothers and sisters ... to see him with their own eyes in majesty and to be changed into his likeness from glory to glory. To him be praise, dominion and worship now and for all eternity.

Lord, look with favour.

All Lord, transfigure and heal.

Merciful Father,

**All accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

The peace

Christ will transfigure our human body and give it a form like that of his own glorious body. We are the body of Christ. We share his peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you:

All And also with you.

HYMN 3 Walk in the light

[\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below.

The Dismissal

Christ Jesus,
the splendour of the Father and the image of his being,
draw you to himself
that you may live in his light and share his glory;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

All Amen

HYMN 4 Holiness is your life in me

[\(please click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All In the name of Christ. Amen.

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Eucharistic Prayer (prayer E)

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is truly right and just,
It is indeed right and good, our duty and our joy,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
holy Father, almighty and eternal God,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
For on this day he revealed his glory
before his chosen witnesses
and filled with divine splendour
the human flesh in which he is one with us.
So he prepared his disciples
to bear the scandal of the cross
and showed that in the Church, his body,
the same glory would be fulfilled
that shone forth from him, its head.
And so with joyful hearts we echo on earth
the song of the angels in heaven
as they praise your glory without end:

**All Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and as we obey his command,
send your Holy Spirit,
that broken bread and wine outpoured
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he praised you.

He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:
Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,
we proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

All Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

Lord of all life,
help us to work together for that day
when your kingdom comes
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,
gather us in your loving arms
and bring us with St Mary Magdalene and all the saints
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,
for ever and ever.

All Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

All **Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

All **Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

All **Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.**

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ
which he gave for you,
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts
by faith with thanksgiving.

All We do not presume
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,
trusting in our own righteousness,
but in your manifold and great mercies.
We are not worthy
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.
But you are the same Lord
whose nature is always to have mercy.
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ
and to drink his blood,
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,
and that we may evermore dwell in him,
and he in us. Amen.

Communion is distributed.

Prayer after Communion

Holy God,
we see your glory in the face of Jesus Christ:
may we who are partakers at his table
reflect his life in word and deed,
that all the world may know
his power to change and save.
This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen

All Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out
in the power of your Spirit
to live and work
to your praise and glory.
Amen.