



## MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

[www.mzluth.org](http://www.mzluth.org)

February 10, 2013

Transfiguration

Sermon Text: [Luke 9:28-36](#)

Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: [Exodus 34:29-35](#)

Psalm of the Day: [Psalm 148](#)

Second Lesson: [2 Corinthians 3:12-2](#)

Gospel Lesson: [Luke 9:28-36](#)

### **Listen to the Father's Dearly Loved Son**

As He focuses on his mission  
So that we focus on our mission

Grace, mercy and peace are yours from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

In Christ, dear fellow redeemed:

Who do you listen to? I mean, who do you listen to and actually do what they tell you, and trust, and put faith in their words? When I was in the hospital at the beginning of this year, there was one doctor, all the doctors were great but there was one doctor that was really good. The infectious disease doctor. She listened to what you said, and she sat down and talked with you. She was really impressive. So when she said something, I tend to put a lot of weight in it just because of how she carried herself and the knowledge she demonstrated. She was just a wonderful doctor.

The other one that stuck with me is a nurse, the wound nurse. This woman was so wired up and fired up and excited about teaching you about how to take care of wounds, it was almost contagious. This woman just loved her work. When she is teaching you and telling you this, you are saying, "Yeah, I'm going to do that because I don't want to cross you because you are just so fired up about this." I put a lot of trust into her and what she said, and I'm still doing the things she told me. Ask Paula, I don't do anything for that long and keep on doing it.

There are certain people that you come across in life that you listen to more closely, right? One of the things I wish I had done, and now it's too late, is listen more to my dad and ask him more questions about his life and listen to some of those responses. I wish I would have done that more.

This morning we get a recommendation from a dear friend of ours that tells us, "Here is someone you should really listen to. If you are going to listen to anybody, this is the person I'm saying you should listen to." You tend to put a lot of weight into friends' recommendations at times, don't you? This morning the friend that is making this recommendation to you is the One who said, "Let there be light," and there was light, the One who said, "Let there be you," and there was you. It's your heavenly Father who gave you life. He comes to you and says, "This is my Son, whom I have chosen.

Listen to him.” So this morning we are hearing God’s recommendation to listen to his chosen Son. When he tells you to do something, I guess we ought to do it.

As we listen to this conversation on the Mount of Transfiguration, we listen as Jesus talks with Moses and Elijah about his mission, and then we listen to Peter and learn something more about what our mission is and what it isn’t.

When I read the Gospel from Luke to you and I started out with “About eight days after Jesus said this,” did you wonder, what did Jesus say? That would have been my first question. Earlier in this chapter, what had just happened was that Jesus had taken his disciples aside and asked them, “Who do people say I am?” They gave him the answer. Then Peter made that beautiful confession. “You are the Christ, the Son of God.” Jesus had spoken all those things about that being the truth. He acknowledged that he is the Messiah. Then he did something that had to be like fingernails on a chalkboard to his disciples’ ears. He said, “I am the Christ, but I am going to be betrayed. I am going to be handed over to the chief priest, the teachers of the law. I am going to suffer, and I am going to die. Then I’m going to rise again.” If you read in the Gospel of Luke, from this point on, at least in Luke’s account, he keeps coming back to this truth, and back, and back again about his coming departure as we heard in our Gospel. He’s talking to them about what is going to happen and why, and as you know from your reading of the Gospels, they weren’t real happy about this message. But Jesus said, “This is all going to happen. And I tell you the truth, there are some of you here that won’t leave this earth until you see the kingdom of God.” We sang that in the first hymn we sang this morning if you noticed. “We’ll see the kingdom of God before we leave.” It’s a hard verse to understand and it has a lot of questions, but that’s the last thing that Jesus said right before what I read to you in Verse 28 and following.

“Some of you will see the kingdom of God;” perhaps Jesus is referring to his Transfiguration where he comes in his full divine glory on the Mount of Transfiguration. That’s how our opening hymn understands the verse. That’s what that hymn that we sang says.

He takes his disciples off to pray about eight days later, and they go up and pray. Evidently it wasn’t just a quick, “Hi, Lord. How are you doing? Help me out please. Amen.” It was more lengthy because it says they got very sleepy. They spent some time in prayer, probably longer than some of you spent sitting on bleachers yesterday. They spent some time in prayer. The disciples get pretty sleepy, but while he is praying, something happens that had never happened before, at least in their sight. His full divine glory is revealed as his face changes. His full divine glory even transforms the clothes he was wearing so that they became whiter than a flash of lightning.

You read the other Gospels and you get the feeling that these people are trying to describe with human words what human words can’t describe. Human words cannot encompass and enfold the divine glory of true God from all eternity, which is what Jesus is, so they are reaching. They are trying to put it into something that we can try to picture because we won’t be able to picture it perfectly until Christ returns.

It says they start waking up. As they wake up, they see that full divine glory. They see Moses and Elijah there. Moses, the law giver. The one whose face got radiant from reflecting God's glory so he covered it up. The one who is called "The Prophet," and there would be a prophet that would come like him, which Jesus is the fulfillment of. Elijah, the "Great Prophet." The one who said "Some say you are Elijah," which was the discussion they had just had. The one who often pointed ahead to the Messiah who would come.

It says they came and they talked about Jesus' departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem. They aren't talking about catching a plane. They aren't talking about catching a train. They aren't talking about a bus departure. They are talking about Jesus going to Jerusalem and continuing resiliently on his way, as we talked about last week, to take your sins and my sins to the cross, to suffer and die the agony you and I deserve. He is going to go there and endure the very agony of hell. The physical suffering of Jesus is nothing compared to this agony of having the Father forsake him. So don't get tripped up by Satan's diversion to only focus on the physical agony of Jesus in the upcoming season of Lent. Recognize that he endures the agony of hell because you are a sinner. That's what his departure is all about.

I wonder what that conversation was like. Did they talk about what this cup of God's wrath would taste like? Did they talk about the affect it would have on us? What did they talk about? I wish I knew.

But they are talking about Jesus' mission for coming to this earth, which is to live perfectly in our place, to die in our place so that filthy rotten sinners like you and me can go to heaven some day. It's amazing that when Jesus is about to face the agony of hell coming up, as he continues the path that goes to Jerusalem, he talks about the effect it will have on us. That's the depth of his love for you and me. That's what you and I are told to love each other like, with that depth of love.

It's an amazing thing, one of the things that Satan does. Satan is just happy that we are not focused on Christ, so sometimes he makes these great blessings of God a challenge to us. Either he turns them into something to drive a wedge between us and God, or he wants to make the blessings of God so familiar to us that we don't treasure them anymore.

This past week I talked about worship with the Youth Group. We started a Bible Study on worship. Worship means "worth ship," that Jesus is worthy of our time and praise. Our God is worth setting aside time. He's worth putting effort into worship so that we get something more out of it. He's worth doing things instead of sitting back passively like we are watching TV and saying, "Just entertain me." He's worth it because of who he is and what he has done. He's created us and has given us life, but he has also redeemed us. I asked the kids, "How often have you come in and sat down and prepared for worship and just sat there and thought, isn't it amazing that your God loves you so much that he died to take away your sins?" None of them said that this thought is something they really focus on when they come into worship. They all know it. I

believe they all treasure it, but Satan sometimes wants to take the familiar, that God loves us so much that he took away our sins, and make it so familiar to us that we no longer stand in awe of it. Do you ever struggle with that? Tell me something new and different pastor. Don't just tell me the same old thing. I'm not going to tell you anything different except God's love in Christ, because there isn't anything more important in this life.

Our job is to work at seeing how much Jesus is worth our time and effort and energy and faithfulness. When we see it, we get fired up and wired up and there is a part of us, that new self, that wants to do something in response to what he has done for us. The problem is that sometimes we pick the wrong things. That's what we see Peter doing today, right?

The cobwebs go out of his eyes. He looks. There's Jesus in his full glory. No one has ever seen a cooler sight than that. There is Moses and Elijah. How he knows it's Moses and Elijah, I don't know. I don't think they're wearing name tags, but he knows that's who it is. He says, "Hey, this is great God! Jesus, here is what we'll do. I'll do it. I'll build three shelters, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah, because I don't want to leave here. This is the coolest thing I've ever seen. I love this. I want to stay here forever." Can you understand Peter's thought process here, wanting to stay on the mountain? How cool would that be to be in the presence of God and see his glory? The people you have to worry about, they aren't so frightening anymore when you can see how glorious and powerful Jesus is, right? I can understand that. I can sympathize with that. I would just as soon go build some of those shelters and have them come live in my living room and never go outside again. That would be really cool.

But that's not the mission God has given us, is it? Just because we would like it doesn't mean that's what we should be doing. "Since he bids us leave the mount, come with us to the plane"... didn't we sing something like that earlier today? He bids us leave the mount... he has given us the task of being his witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth. That means we can't just be huddled in a shelter with Moses, Elijah and Jesus and bask in their glory forever. That day will come when we will see Jesus in his divine glory, but it's not today. And it's not tomorrow. It's not until he calls us out of this world and takes us to heaven. For now our focus should be on him and the task, the mission he has given us, not just on what we like and what we don't like. But that's a challenge for us, isn't it?

We want to carry out that mission only in ways that we like. We are just like Peter. I like it. I want to be here. Because it benefits me, that's how it should be done. We forget sometimes, because we are so inward focused, about carrying out that mission of getting God's Word to the most people possible. That's what he leaves us here for. Sometimes getting God's Word to the most people possible makes us a little uncomfortable. Maybe it's even something we don't like. Do you think Peter liked it when he was thrown in prison for preaching Christ crucified? Do you think he went, "This is cool. May I have another?" I doubt it. I don't think he liked it, but he knew he had to do it. When he got out of prison the next day and they said, "Quit making us

guilty of this Jesus' blood. Quit telling everyone that we killed Jesus and he is the Savior. Quit talking about him." They said "No. We must obey God rather than men." He knew his mission then. Here in Luke 9 he really didn't yet. He was inward focused on what benefitted him.

As a congregation, at times we are tempted to do that, aren't we, just to focus on what we like and what benefits us personally and forget about the greater good of getting the Gospel to more and more people. That's what God has put us here for as a congregation. But if we only focus on, it's good Lord to be here because I like the way we are doing it right now and never want to change and do anything different, we aren't going to carry out the mission God has given us as faithfully as we could.

Individually we are the same way. God has told us our mission is to live to glorify him and live according to his will as an individual. Whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God. That's a personal mission statement that God has given to every single one of us, right? Sometimes we change that to, whatever I do, I want to do what makes me happy. God has told us "what God has joined together, let man not separate." Your commitment to your spouse is to be for life. Often we want to change it to, my spouse no longer makes me happy, so it should be over and God would want it to be over because he wants me to be happy. God wants you to be happy, but he wants your happiness to be found in the fact that he lived and died for you.

Each of us, in our own way, puts our own happiness ahead of God. The extra drink will make me happy. The extra whatever will make me happy, and God wants me to be happy. We know God has said certain things are against his will, and yet we can convince ourselves that certain things are okay because it makes us happy, when if you do it, I would say that's a sin, but when I do it, I can come up with my own excuses. We are all that way. What we need to do is just be honest with ourselves and say where we have failed our God that those words "I am a poor miserable sinner" are not just words we mouth to stretch out our vocal chords at the start of a worship service, but they are words that we take to heart and we live with every day of our lives and we confess and see our sin. Then we rejoice each and every day as we see that God has forgiven those sins. No matter how many times you and I loved ourselves more than we loved God, Jesus' love overcomes that. He lived in our place. He died in our place. He washes those sins away and he says, "I remember them no more," because he carried out his mission. That forgives us for the times when you and I have not carried out our own.

That forgiveness and that love that encompasses us is what moves us to want to be better at focusing on our mission. Hope makes us want to listen to God's chosen Son, not just every now and then but each and every day of our life. Not just once a week, but each and every day of our life to listen closely and focus on this incredible love that he has poured out on us. Amen.