



## “They Saw His Glory”

Luke 9:28-36

September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018

We are going to be in Luke Chapter 9 this morning where we see that three of the disciples of Jesus will see a marvelous display of the glory of the Lord. I pray that we will be given eyes to truly and deeply see this as well. I also pray that we will be affected by the account of His transfiguration.

As I studied this passage I started thinking about growing up with Mom, Dad, and Lance through the years over on Carfax Avenue in Lakewood, CA. I remembered a ritual that my Dad had. It was something that took place on Sunday mornings, especially during our teenage years. Dad is a member of this church. Many of you know him well. So, I wonder if you will believe me when I say to you that my dad took great delight in coming into our room at 7:00 AM on Sunday mornings when the shades were closed, and the room was still dark. Dad would burst through the door and start flipping the light switch on and off, on and off, creating this strobe light effect in our bedroom. As he turned the lights off and on, he would issue forth a wake-up call, making vocal noises that sounded like the Army wake-up call. As he got to the end of the song he would say loudly: *This is the day that the Lord has made. I will rejoice and be glad in it!* Lance and I would lay in bed moaning and turning over in frustration. It seemed that the more we would groan, the more delight my dad took in it.

Fast forward thirty years. There is an old saying: The apple does not fall far from the tree. So, guess what happened this very morning at the other Saltzmann home on Studebaker Road? At right about the same time, lights were being turned on and off and I sounded forth the Army wake-up call. There was the same stretching and moaning from my three boys. One of my sons said: Dad, never do that again! Oh, dad's going to do it again!!

I have always been fond of a little saying that is quoted in Ephesians 5 and Verse 14. Some people think that this may have been drawn from a First Century praise song, because the Apostle Paul quoted it as a saying that they were familiar with. Here it is:

**“Awake, O sleeper,  
and arise from the dead,  
and Christ will shine on you.”**

Wake up! Wake up. Wake up from sin and spiritual death. Wake up from the deadening effects of sin. Wake up, O sleeper, and Christ, the Messiah, will shine on you with His glory, His goodness, and His grace. It is grace that will cause us to wake up in the first place, but you will shine!

Sleep is a good thing in one way. The body is designed for physical sleep, and we need a lot of it. I think that most of us who are older don't get as much sleep as we need. And we need to get the proper amount of physical rest. We need to sleep.

While we need to physically sleep, let's be cautious that we don't fall asleep spiritually. Let's be careful that we don't slumber, that we don't slip into a spiritual coma, that we are not alert to the things of the Lord. We must stay awake. We must stay vigilant.

By the grace of God, we must keep our eyes open, because, while this is a beautiful world that the Lord has made, it is a fallen and cursed world. There is darkness and we have got to keep our eyes open to the goodness and the truth and the glory of the Lord. We must be careful to see all the blessings as well as all the dangers that surround us every day. We need to be spiritually awake.

This morning as we enter in to the Gospel of Luke once again, I pray that there would be that awakening that occurs within our souls once again—that we would have our eyes open to Christ and to how great and powerful and how good He is. I pray that we will have an awakening and renewal once again as we see something astonishing that happened and that three of the disciples experienced.

As we have been studying in the Gospel of Luke together, we recall that this incident happened during a time right after Jesus had been teaching His disciples some very heavy truths about His coming suffering in Jerusalem and about the call on their lives to deny themselves and live sacrificially as well, and in that find life. Jesus had been teaching some heavy-duty things to His disciples.

Then about a week later, Jesus picked out three of His disciples—Peter, James, and John. He took them on a hiking trip up high on a mountain. They were emotionally and physically exhausted, so they fell asleep when they got there. Then they were woken to the glory of Jesus in the most marvelous of ways.

Let's see how this went down. Let's read Luke Chapter 9 and Verses 28 through 36. Here is what we read in the Sacred Test, the Living Word of the Lord to us:

**<sup>28</sup>Now about eight days after these sayings he took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. <sup>29</sup>And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white. <sup>30</sup>And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, <sup>31</sup>who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. <sup>32</sup>Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep, but when they became fully awake they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. <sup>33</sup>And as the men were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah"—not knowing what he said. <sup>34</sup>As he was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. <sup>35</sup>And a voice came out**

**of the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!” <sup>36</sup>And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen.**

That, brothers and sisters, is what we call one awesome story. I often feel the need to remind you that, even though I have a background in surfing, I am not using that word *awesome* as a surfer. I am using it as a man who likes to study the Bible and theology.

This story is awe-inspiring. This is awesome! That was a soul-shaking, heart-pounding experience for those men who went up on that mountain with Jesus Christ. I pray that by the Spirit within us, we will once again be stirred this morning.

There is a little phrase that I got hooked on as I was studying this passage through the week. I love the later portion of Verse 32:

**<sup>32</sup>...but when they became fully awake they saw his glory...**

They saw the glory of Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of God. Boy, that woke them up! I understand that was speaking of an awakening from physical sleep that was very unique to them in that situation. That encouraged my heart this week and I prayed that the Lord would not let me be found sleeping in my walk with Jesus Christ. Let me be awake!

It is so easy to get in to spiritual catnaps where we are apathetic, where we become dull to the things of the Lord. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak and sometimes we can be led astray by the fallen desires within us. We need to be those who stay awake spiritually. So, I pray that this passage will help us to see the glory of Jesus, that we might be those who are walking with Him with alertness.

I want us to notice how this story began. It so important to understand the order of why Jesus did this at that time. It says in Verse 28:

**<sup>28</sup>Now about eight days after these sayings he took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray.**

This account of the transfiguration is explicitly tied to all the important sayings that are recorded in the verses that we have been studying these past weeks in the Gospel of Luke. If you can scan your eyes over Verses 22 through 27, you will be reminded of the utterances and declarations of truth that had been spoken by Jesus just eight days earlier.

In these previous verses, Jesus had affirmed His Messianic identity to His disciples. Yes, He is the Christ. He affirmed that He is the glorious Son of Man—that eternal and Royal Figure that is prophesied in Daniel Chapter 7 and Verse 13 and 14. Jesus is the King. He is the Son of Man, but then He sent shock waves into His disciples when He went on to say that the Son of Man must suffer at the hands of the religious leaders. He must die. That was not what the people were expecting of the Messiah. This was so shocking to

them that I think it flew right past them when He also said that on the third day He must rise from the dead.

After this, as the disciples were still trying to gain their footing from that, Jesus went on to start talking about crosses and said: If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and let him do this daily and let him follow Me. That is the basic call to discipleship. Jesus said that for anyone who will save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. They will truly live.

Jesus went on to give the rationale for denying ourselves, taking up our cross and following Jesus by saying: For what does it profit a man if he were to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his very soul. Jesus also said that if anybody is ashamed of the Son of Man and His words, then the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when He comes in His glory and the glory of the angels and the Father in Heaven.

Then Jesus said: I tell you all the truth. Some of you will not taste death before you see the Kingdom of God coming in power. The key words here are *some of you*. Not all of them would see it. Some of them would.

Then Jesus pulled up His prime leaders, the ones that He would call to lead the way in that cross-bearing life—the inner three, Peter, James and John. He took them up on a mountainside where they saw the glory of who He is.

Notice that our text states that the account of Jesus going up on the mountaintop, shining forth His radiance and glory, happened eight days after these sayings. So, there was a logical order to it. Jesus laid down the call of discipleship which, from a certain manner of speaking, it could be a challenging call because it involves sacrifice.

And right after that, Jesus took them up on a mountainside and He revealed Himself to them in a way that would indicate that the sacrifice is so worth it! In essence Jesus was saying: Let me give you a very clear picture of who I am. So, the transfiguration gives us a glimpse into eternal things so that we can know that it is worth it to deny ourselves and to take up our crosses and follow Christ.

With this incident attached back to the cross of Christ and the call to discipleship that is upon each of us, I would like to identify three reasons why we need to follow Jesus; why we need to take up our cross and follow Him.

Why follow Jesus Christ?

### **1. He is the Glorious One (28-29)**

He is the glorious One. The glory of God manifests from Him. Verses 28 and 29:

**<sup>28</sup>Now about eight days after these sayings he took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. <sup>29</sup>And as he was praying,**

**the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white.**

We read that Jesus was transfigured. The words *transfigure*, or *transfiguration* are not here in the text of Luke's Gospel. Matthew and Mark also tell what happened on that mountainside, and they use that exact word—He was transfigured before them.

The New Testament was originally written in Koine Greek, as we talk about often. The word for transfiguration in Greek is a word that I think many of you will be familiar with. The Greek verb is *metamorphao*. What happens to caterpillars? They turn in to butterflies. It is a metamorphosis. It is a transformation that occurs. That transformation occurs as qualities inherent to that lowly little caterpillar comes forth to be seen visibly.

There was this metamorphao, this transfiguration of Jesus, where the glory that is essential to who He is began to shine from within Him. So, when the text says that His face was altered, it is talking about that which was part of who He was by nature beginning to make itself visible in a way that could be seen.

Jesus opened the cloak of His humanity so that we could see His divinity, His deity. God is light. In Him there is no darkness at all. Jesus was transformed in such a way that even His clothing started to burst with light as well.

I love this story of the transfiguration. I have read through it so many times through the years, and I remember early on when I was thinking about the transfiguration, I would say that this is probably the greatest miracle in the Gospel accounts. Maybe it is not as big as the resurrection, but wow, what a miracle that He would burst forth with light like this.

Then I started thinking about it differently. That is not the miracle, because miracles are something unusual. The miracle is that His glory was ever covered in the first place—that He added a human nature to Himself. A human nature that could be pierced and that could be hung on a cross.

The miracle is that He was not shining forth like this all the time, because this is the Son of God. This is the Messiah, and there He was in His glory. We should follow Jesus Christ because He is the glorious One, and we see Him shining with the light of who He is.

Let me tell you something about how you have been created by God. You have been created by God for worship. That means that you are designed in such a way that you are made to get thrilled, to be dazzled, to get excited when you see something that is so awesome and feel the need to tell somebody about it. You are designed for worship.

This world is filled with so many sights that stir our hearts and they all must point back to the One who made them all. When I go up to King's Canyon in the Sierra Nevada and see the massive trees—the General Grant Tree—where my breath is taken away, I need

to say that there is a God who made that, and He is awesome. Not only is the tree awesome, but, even more, the One who made it is awesome.

Someday, brothers and sisters in Christ, you are going to be brought into the glory of Heaven and you are going to see the Messiah, high and lifted and seated on the throne. He is going to be radiating out with His power and His majesty and His glory. It is going to be a heart-pounding experience of worship, and you will be saying awesome!

Like in the song *I Can Only Imagine*, will you be able to speak at all? We need to follow Jesus because He is the glorious One and He just gave us a glimpse of His glory on that mountainside.

Brothers and sisters, it is as we look to Him and as we worship Him and as we are in tune with His Word and as we call upon the Lord in prayer, that Heaven comes down and glory fills the soul even here and now. That is what worship is.

Did you notice that this transfiguration occurred while Jesus was praying? As He was praying, His face was altered, and the glory of the Messiah began shining through. I read that, and I am reminded that I need to be calling upon the Lord, asking that my own soul would be transfigured, that I would be perceiving who God is.

I understand that a lot of the time my heart gets so heavy and I ask the Lord for help with situations because it gets hard, and my heart feels the weight of it. But what about prayers like: Lord, You are an awesome God and I pray that You would fill my heart with the true knowledge of Your ways and Your nature. Open my eyes to see all that You have done, and who You are that my soul might worship.

He is the glorious One, we are designed for worship, and this is a glimpse of eternity right here. Why follow Jesus Christ? He is the glorious One and here is a picture of it for you to see and take in and receive.

Here is a second reason as to why we should follow Christ:

## **2. He is the Long Expected One (30-31)**

Jesus is the long-expected King who came from heaven to earth just as we sang about. All of history finds its fulfillment in Jesus. He is the centerpiece of God's plan in the world.

I think there is picture of this when we look at Verses 30 and 31. Jesus was there in His glory, then Verse 30 and 31 say:

**<sup>30</sup>And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, <sup>31</sup>who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.**

What we have here in the transfiguration is the culmination of the early Galilean ministry of Jesus. He had been revealing who He is by His miracles and teaching, now He put this awesome picture on display.

It says here that He was then about to go toward Jerusalem. As we continue in the Gospel of Luke in the latter portion of Chapter 9, we hit a major new section in the text where Jesus sets His face toward Jerusalem where He would accomplish what He came to do before His departure.

That is interesting language to use of the departure—His exodus, His movement from this world back to the glory of Heaven. It is spoken of as something that He accomplished. He went to Jerusalem to finish the work that He came into the world to do, namely, the work of our redemption, dying as an atoning Sacrifice for our sin and being resurrected on the third day. Then, finally, a little after that being taken back into the glory of Heaven. That is what He accomplished.

There you have Moses and Elijah talking with Him about these very things. There is a sighting of the saints, and that is amazing. There you have Elijah the Tishbite who had got taken up in the presence of the Lord 848 years prior to this. He is often recognized as the first and greatest prophet of Israel's history.

There you have Moses. Do you remember him in that little basket floating in the river Nile? He grew up and God used him to pluck Israel from Egypt and he became the great Law giver to the people of Israel.

Here you have the great prophet and the great Law giver, and this is an emblem of the fact that the Law and Prophets of God in sacred Scripture were looking forward to Christ. So, Jesus did not come on to the scene out of nowhere, He came from eternity past to come and accomplish our salvation by His grace by going to the cross.

Therefore, we need to keep our eyes on Jesus and follow Him, because He is the long-expected Savior that this world had been waiting for, and, brothers and sisters, He is coming back.

I was thinking about how there was an expectancy about the First Coming of Jesus, and now we have this expectancy of His return. There is a sense in which we need to be like chameleons. I know that chameleons can be thought of in a negative sense.

We don't just compromise and blend in to whatever environment we find ourselves in to the point that we forsake the principles of God and who we are in Christ. That is not how I am talking about being a chameleon.

This illustration might seem kind of strange, but it always helps me. When you think about that little reptile chameleon, you think about those eyes that can move and look all over. One eye can look forward, with one eye looking backward. We need to be those who are looking back to the First Coming of Jesus where He came to die for our sins.

We also need to be looking forward to the Second Coming of Jesus. He is coming back in glory, but at the same time He is fully present in our current situation. We need to see how God is at work in our midst even now.

Jesus is the Long-Expected One. Moses and Elijah were there and were interested in what He was here to do, and we need to stay awake and alert as to what He came into the world to do as well.

He is the Long-Expected One. We will finish with this. Why follow Jesus Christ?

### **3. He is the Authoritative One (32-34)**

He reveals the will of the Lord and He commands the will of God like no other, because He Himself is God. He is the Son of God. He is the very nature of the Father, so He is the Authoritative One.

This is laid out before us with serious drama added to this story. Look at how this unfolds in Verses 32 through 38 where we see the unique authority of Jesus.

**<sup>32</sup>Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep, but when they became fully awake they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. <sup>33</sup>And as the men were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah”—not knowing what he said.**

You got to love that. That is Luke’s very polite way of saying: Oh, Peter was way out of line in what he said right there. Be careful! I’m going to tell you what he said, but he didn’t know what he was saying when he said that.

Peter was in error. That is how we can understand that. He didn’t know what he said. I think that Peter’s error might have gone in two directions here. First, here we have Peter once again issuing imperatives to Jesus, giving commands to Christ.

The conversation was done and what needed to be said was said that Moses and Elijah were going back. There was great mystery to what was discussed, and they were leaving, but Peter was having none of that and said: Wait! It is good for us to be here. We are staying here. Peter was taking charge.

When we were talking about the feeding of the five thousand we talked about how in the language of good old Dr. J. Vernon McGee, he said: They (the disciples) appointed themselves the Board of Directors to tell the Lord Jesus Christ what to do. They were always giving Him imperatives. If there was such a Board, we might recognize Peter as the Chairman of the Board. Peter was asserting himself and telling Jesus what needed to be done.



There is the sense where we humbly go before the Lord in prayer and say: Lord, I need help. Can you help with this? But then we say in Your Name. Let Your will be done. Here is what I'm asking for, but I submit this to You. However, there was something resistant in Peter where he did not want them to leave, so he told them they were staying. He was trying to direct the affairs.

Secondly, Peter was in error when he wanted to set up and establish three tents, three dwelling places. He wanted to do so in a way that placed Moses, Elijah, and Jesus side by side on equal footing, with equal status.

Bible teachers recognize that Peter did not understand the vast authority that Jesus had over Moses and Elijah, so that they don't get to sit side-by-side with Jesus in some kind of trinity of leadership. No!

To help Peter, James and John recognize Jesus as the uniquely Authoritative One, guess who spoke up? The Father! As we continue, we will see how God the Father set the three disciples straight. Verse 34:

**<sup>34</sup>As he was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud.**

They ought to be afraid! Take a good look at that cloud. Understand the nature of that cloud. I studied clouds when I was a geography student back in college. This is was not like one of those high and wispy cirrus clouds way up in the sky.

This was not like one of those stratus clouds that lay over the atmosphere like a blanket. This was not even one of those billowy cumulus clouds that look like giants pillows. This was not even a threatening cumulonimbus cloud that was filled with all kinds of fearsome power and electricity that causes thunderstorms.

This was an entirely different kind of cloud. For what we find through the testimony of Scripture is that throughout the pages of the Old Testament when God chose to manifest His presence, He would do so with the presence of this thick and imposing cloud that we recognize as a Shakina Cloud, filled with the Shakina glory and presence of the Lord.

It was the same cloud that was atop Mt. Sinai when the Law was given. It was the same cloud that would rest upon the Tabernacle in the wonderings of the Exodus. It was the same cloud that so powerfully filled Solomon's Temple when it was being dedicated to the point where the people were in fear.

I would understand that that very cloud overshadowed all of them. It began by coming down with force, hovering over them. Then it descended upon them so that they were entering in to the cloud. Verse 35:

**<sup>35</sup>And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!"**

Listen to Him! Listen to Him! What is the little piece of punctuation at the end of that sentence? It is an exclamation mark. This was something being spoken emphatically. Listen to My Son! Moses and Elijah must listen to My Son as well. They are not on equal footing as My Son. Listen to My Son.

The same nature that the Father has, the Son has. He is divine, and God the Father said to listen to Him. Verse 36:

**<sup>36</sup>And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen.**

The Law and the Prophet kind of faded away and Jesus was found alone. We understand the Law and the Prophet through Jesus and Jesus alone. Then His disciples kept silent and told no one in those days anything of what happened. That shut them up!

Jesus commanded them not to say anything about this until after He was raised, and they were given the Spirit, so they would give full understanding of the mission of the Messiah and how all things would get sorted out.

Here is what is amazing: We need to follow Jesus because He is the Authoritative One. He is the One who is one the throne, and we are the ones who have the pleasure and the joy of serving the King Most High.

What amazes me about this text is that for all the language that it has about the appearance of His glory, God the Father did not say here to look at Him. Rather, God the Father said to listen to Him. Listen to Him!

Brothers and sisters, there is a time when we are going to see the glory of the Lord. One time, Jesus gave His prayer request when He said in John 17:24:

**<sup>24</sup>Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.**

The Lord's prayer request for each one of us in Christ is that we be with Him and see His glory. We are going to see His glory! We still see reflections of His glory in His working all around us, but the command of the Father to us here and now is to listen to Jesus. Listen to Him!

Not only were you designed by God to worship and to get stoked with fire and to praise the Lord, but you were also designed by God as a creature that is under authority. You are designed to live according to the commands of the Lord. That is where life and health and joy will be found.

I love the fact that when we read in Genesis Chapters 1 through 3, from the very beginning of creation God was giving commands to Adam and Eve. He created them and then He blessed them and then He instructed them to be fruitful and multiply.

God was commanding His creation before we ever fell into sin. Sin did not happen until Genesis Chapter 3. God was speaking to those He made, declaring to them His will before sin. So, your need to hear and receive the Word of God did not come because of your fallenness. It is how you are. You are designed to live by the Word of the Lord.

Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. You are designed to flourish as you listen to the Word of the Lord. God the Father is telling you to listen to His Son. This is my glorious Son. This is my chosen One, listen to Him.

That's the environment that you were designed to live and to thrive in. Birds were designed to fly through the air. Fish were designed to swim through the sea. You are designed to live according the Word of God. You are to live in the presence of God, taking in His Word and doing what it says. That's where the blessing is to be found.

There was Jesus in all His glory. We are going to see Jesus in His glory too. Do you want to know what is so amazing to me as we think about Christ as He is depicted in His resurrected form? He still has nail prints in His hands, in His feet, and in His side, which are the marks of His redeeming grace and the picture of how much He loves us, because He would die for our sins.

We know that the Word is coming from someone who has our best interests in mind. So, open your ears to Jesus and follow Him when he says to deny yourself daily. Take up your cross and follow me, because that is where you are going find your life.

Let's close in a word of prayer, asking that we would be awake to the things of the Lord and follow Christ in the path that He has for us to walk in.