

From the Pulpit of the Japanese Baptist Church of North Texas
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Glory of Jesus

Luke 9:28-36

9:28 Now about eight days after these sayings he took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray.

9:29 And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white.

9:30 And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah,

9:31 who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

9:32 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.

9:33 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.

9:34 As he was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud.

9:35 And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!"

9:36 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.

Lent is the period when we remember the path of Lord Jesus to the

Cross. Today's verses describe the very important event that took place on Lord Jesus on the way to Jerusalem where he was supposed to be crucified. When Lord Jesus took Peter, John and James to the mountain to pray, the appearance of Jesus became shining in glory and Moses and Elijah appeared and started to talk about what He was about to accomplish in Jerusalem. Then, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!" This is called "Transfiguration of Lord Jesus".

These scriptures seem far away from our daily life, but since our salvation was accomplished by God through the life of Jesus Christ, this incident actually means a lot to us. What does this event mean and what does it teach us? Let's think about this together.

1. Suffering of Jesus

Transfiguration of Jesus Christ reveals the meaning of the suffering of Lord Jesus.

Today's verse started with "Now about eight days after these sayings....." (Luke 9:18) What "these sayings" are? Before Lord Jesus started for Jerusalem, he went to Caesarea Philippi located at the Northern end of Israel with his disciples and asked them "Who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus then said to them that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. Peter immediately said "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you." The Peter's words were out of his love to Jesus Christ; however, Lord

Jesus scolded him and said that he should not see the suffering of Jesus Christ from the human prospective.

The verses for this morning are about the incident took place one week after this. When Lord Jesus was on the mountain and praying, Moses and Elijah appeared and spoke with him. Why Moses and Elijah. The Old Testament consists of “law” and “prophecy” and Moses represents law and Elijah represents prophecy. What Moses and Elijah talked about was not written in the Bible, but I assume that it was about the accomplishment of God’s salvation through the death and resurrection of the Savior, which was prophesized in the Old Testament. All the contents in the Old Testament were about the prophecies of salvation through the Cross and the Resurrection of Lord Jesus Christ. I can even say that the Old Testament had been written for more than one thousand and several hundred years just for the three-day event of the Cross and the Resurrection of Lord Jesus. The Cross of Lord Jesus did not happen by chance. It is true that there was a plot to kill Jesus Christ. However, the Cross was not accomplished by this plot but accomplished according to God’s plan, which is beyond human understandings. Lord Jesus accepted the God’s plan of salvation and he confirmed that he would obey God’s plan at the mountain of Transfiguration.

The word “departure” in verse 31 is “exodus” in English. This word means that the Israelites were freed from Egypt. In the era of Old Testament, Passover lambs were killed for the rescue of Israelites from Egypt. Israelites were redeemed and became the people of God because of the Passover lambs’ blood, and they left from Egypt to the Promised Land. That was “exodus” in the Old Testament. Lord Jesus

headed to Jerusalem in order to become the “Passover Lamb”. Lord Jesus became the Passover Lamb and shed his blood so that we are redeemed from the slave of sin, become the people of God, and start to walk to heaven. This is the salvation by the Lord Jesus, and it is called “the second exodus”, It was the one that the “exodus” in the Old Testament indicated.

After the resurrection, the Lord Jesus showed himself to two disciples who left from Jerusalem to Emmaus and said, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. (Luke 24:25-27) The disciples noticed the true meaning of Jesus’ words later; however, they needed to know on the mountain of Transfiguration that what Lord Jesus would do in Jerusalem. It was the mission of Lord Jesus given by the Heavenly Father.

We live after the Cross and the Resurrection of the Lord, so we are able to have full knowledge of the Cross by both Old and New Testaments. The discussion among Lord Jesus, Moses, and Elijah was explained in the New Testament. Whether the fact of Jesus Christ’s Cross and the Resurrection is true or not? If it is true, then what does it mean to us? How should we approach to it? We shall think about it carefully. Not with insensitive mind, with your sensitive mind, you need to learn the words of God so that you will understand that Lord Jesus was suffered for our salvation. And when you meditate the grace of the Cross, the joy of forgiveness of sin and the gratitude for the freedom from sin will come from the bottom of your soul. And they

will become the source of power for your everyday living.

2. Glory of Jesus

Next we shall talk about that the Transfiguration expresses the glory of Lord Jesus.

On that mountain, according to Luke 9:29, “And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white.” This shine was His glory as the Son of God. Later on, when Paul met Lord Jesus, the light from above shone on Paul. This was also the shine of Jesus’ glory. Alternatively, Matthew wrote Jesus’ transfiguration in 17:2; “And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light,” and the same expression appears in the Book of Revelation, saying that Lord Jesus’ face was like the sun shining at the brightest. The figure of Lord Jesus the disciples saw was His actual figure of as the Son of God. I would rather say He turned back the true figure, than transfigured. After the resurrection, Lord Jesus, who was raised, would be in this figure I suppose. Peter professed in Matthew 16:16, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God,” and he assured he was right through witnessing the light of Glory of Lord Jesus.

The disciples needed to see the glory of Lord Jesus beforehand. That is, when Jesus foretold about his departure, the disciples totally lost their ears on the part of “and on the third day be raised.” When the female disciples went to the tomb in the early morning of Sunday and cried before the empty inside, saying, “He is not in the tomb,” was because they didn’t believe in His resurrection. Those who remembered this part were rather the leaders of Jewish people. They

came to Pilate and made representation in Matthew 27:62-64, “Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, ‘After three days I will rise.’ Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, ...”

After all, those disciples met the resurrected Lord and witnessed His glory, then proclaimed gospel boldly, and witnessed the resurrection and glory of Lord Jesus. While the early churches were established, persecution occurred at the same time. However they never lose heart because they knew Jesus, the Lord of glory, was with them; and believed that their sufferings will turn to their glory. In the Bible, says in 2 Corinthians 4:16, “So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.” Our circumstances might always disappoint us, but we cannot survive this world if we only see the negatives. When you are surrounded by disappointment, suffering and troubles, we shall foresee the glory over the suffering, to receive the hope to live. We can’t gain anything when focusing on weakness or difficulties. We should know the Lord Jesus promised the glory; the more you admire Lord Jesus, the stronger we are to persist under the sufferings with Jesus Christ.

Lord Jesus himself endured the suffering of the Cross, looking forward to the glory. It is said in Hebrews 12:2, “looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the

right hand of the throne of God.” It must be great power for Lord Jesus that He experienced the glory on the mountain in advance. Also, the voice, “This is my child, I chose Him. Listen to Him” must encouraged Him. Lord Jesus must have convinced that He was the beloved Son of God and to give the love of God to people by heading to the Cross when He heard the same word as He heard when He was baptized.

During this Lent, we wish to remember the glory that Jesus Himself sought and will share with us, as well as the suffering of Lord Jesus. By this, we want to accept rightly and overcome the sufferings and pains experienced in our life of faith, and difficult problems experienced in our life. We would like to pray and ask harder to be able to do these things.

(Prayer)

Heavenly Father, one forth of Lent has passed. Lent is the time to remember the suffering of the Lord and time to look up the glory of the Lord. Like the Lord himself kept going looking at the glory, please let us follow the Lord Jesus even at the time of difficulties and ordeals thinking of the glory given to us. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory.