

February 26, 2017  
Transfiguration Sunday

“Don’t Interrupt; Hear Him”

Matthew 17:1-9

There’s a fella down at the local craft beer tavern here in town who kind of drives me up a wall. I like to stop in from time to time to taste the latest IPA, stout or porter they have on tap and enjoy some friendly conversation. This fella is friendly enough, but he won’t shut up. He’ll go on and on about sports or politics or whatever. If I try to get a comment in, he’ll cut me off mid-sentence and start spouting his opinion in detail and at length. Now if I see him when I walk in I’ll choose a stool at the other end of the bar, just so I might converse with somebody who listen at least a little.

St. Peter has some of this going on at the transfiguration of Jesus. Peter, James and John are chosen to witness Jesus transformed to reveal some of His unfathomable divine glory as is never shown to anyone else, even after His resurrection! What’s more, they are made privy to a conversation happening between this magnified Christ and two heroes of the faith—Moses and Elijah, the guys that represent the Law and the Prophets of the Old Testament. So in this moment of Moses, Elijah, and the glorified Christ having a conversation which is no doubt of divine significance, what does Peter do? He starts babbling his opinion on things! What a doofus!

Think about it. These two giants of the Old Testament and the glorified Jesus are talking. Luke’s Gospel tells us they are talking about Jesus’ “departure”—what He is going to do in the crucifixion and resurrection in Jerusalem. They are talking about God’s plan of salvation coming to fruition; the sins of mankind being paid for by Christ’s work and finally peace between fallen humanity and holy God being restored! And what does Peter come up with? “Let’s build tents here and play house! Derp!” It is absolutely comical.

And it’s no wonder that God Almighty shuts him down in a big way.

*“He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, ‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.’ When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. But Jesus came and touched them saying, ‘Rise, and have no fear.’ And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.”*

This is surely the most awesome “Shut your mouth!” in all of human history. And Peter really deserves it. I mean, it’s a glorious and divine conversation, and he interrupts!

Take a moment and realize how messed up that is, that in the face of the most glorified moment in all Jesus earthly ministry leading up to His cross, and as the very plan and promise of God Almighty for the salvation of the world is being discussed; Peter chooses to pipe up with a different plan, a bigger priority. I guess we can cut him some slack because he’s scared out of his wits, but still, what a doofus.

But hold on there folks; at least Peter is babbling out of fear and confusion. What’s your excuse? When you think about it, we do the same thing as Peter all the time.

God’s Word speaks to us. It is the conversation of God declaring His promises, His plan, His work of salvation fulfilled in history through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. The glory of Christ may not be blinding our eyes with its brightness but that glory is crystal clear in that even while we were still sinners, God lived and died that we would be saved from this world of sin into His kingdom forever. That God is our Creator and redeemer who has already brought us through this world of sin and death by virtue of Holy Baptism stands as truth; His

authoritative, declared truth. It is what He is saying and proclaiming by the presence of the Holy Spirit working faith in our hearts and lives.

But we interrupt! Just like Peter ignored the glorious plan of salvation being discussed and focused on his hear-and-now desire to build a pup tent and hang out, we put a hold on the truth of salvation and butt in making here-and-now things of a fallen world the priority.

“Yeah, yeah, yeah, I know about all the forgiveness and life everlasting God, but what about my cancer...or Parkinson’s...or COPD...my aging and dying. What about my empty wallet...my failing career...my addiction...my popularity...WHAT ABOUT WHAT I WANT??!?”

Not to say being concerned about important things in this life is bad. Don’t get me wrong here. God cares about you and your life. He wants you to pray, come before Him with your troubles, wants and needs. He gives good gifts and we should ask for them.

But your voice centered in the here and now should never overshadow and drown out the voice of God—His Gospel proclamation. *“This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.”* Christ crucified and risen from the dead is the good news to which the Holy Spirit always points. His glory has never been in this fallen life we live. His glory is in dying to give us the new life to which He rises! If our worry and whining and wanting in our trials and afflictions is drowning out His Gospel promise, we’re just being a doofus. We’re being Peter, seeking a great hear and now playing house on fallen earth when God’s promise and plan for us is infinitely more.

And in writing this sermon it suddenly struck me that my metaphor had turned against me. You see, that guy at the bar who keeps talking, who is so annoying, he was supposed to be the doofus whom I go down to the other end to avoid. But a reality struck me in how things really play out. I’m the doofus.

That guy who keeps talking...that’s the Holy Spirit. That’s a loving, merciful God who keeps speaking the Word of Jesus, that I would hear, turn and be healed.

But we find that voice annoying because it calls us to humility and repentance. Us sinners so want to be the one talking, the one setting the terms, using our fallen human reason to tell God what we think is good for us, and what we think is good is the world. We walk away into the thinking of the world that wants sin to be acceptable and our voice to be the authority over our own selves.

Thankfully, God doesn’t shut His mouth. He keeps talking. His Law is written on our hearts so we always know our sin is sin. And the reality of our Baptism into Christ is always there, that it puts us on the cross and through the tomb with Jesus, we need just hear and believe His voice in faith.

Maybe that’s one of the reason’s God gave us the Lord’s Supper. It gives us the opportunity to keep quiet and simply taste that the Lord is good. At the rail we have nothing to say, nothing to add, nothing to seek, other than what God promises we receive: the body and blood of the Savior for forgiveness, life and salvation.

People of God, don’t be a doofus. *‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.’* Listen to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In your struggles take comfort that His promise stands true and accomplished by the cross. Hear His Word and know it is sweeter than anything you can say and His plans for you are better than any you can conceive. Take comfort and joy and see that Christ stands alone before you saying “Rise and have no fear.” Know that His Word is forever your greatest good.

Amen.