

You may be seated. So this Sunday, the collection of readings are very pretty straightforward. They connect together in very obvious ways as opposed to last week when we were really struggling to see how they were connected. This week it's all about the presence of God on the mountain. And we have, first off, Moses going up and with his elders with 70 other men. Did you know that they went up as well into the mountain? Then they went down. Moses talked to them for a while, and then he went further in to the presence of God through the cloud and the veil, and he was there for 40 days and 40 nights. Now again, 40 days, 40 nights is somewhat familiar. We hear it very often throughout scripture. And the reason 40 is seems to be the four is sort of the number of the earth, the four cardinal directions or the four corners of the earth that we talk about, and 10 being the Word of God or the Law of God come to the people, the 10 Commandments being the most prominent example of that.

So when we hear 40, it's God's will or word being acted in this world in some way, shape or form. The flood, this, Elijah, Jesus in the wilderness, the Israelites going into the promised land, something of God's will. And his plan is being enacted in a very special and unique way. And so we hear the number 40. So Moses is up for 40 days and 40 nights. But if you go back to the very beginning of it, you notice that the elders and Moses saw the God of Israel and he didn't strike them dead, which is a miracle in and of itself. But didn't Jesus say, "No one has seen the Father except through me?" Well, what's going on here? Did Jesus not know what he was talking about? Obviously that's not the case. So how in the world could they see God and not be struck dead? And where is Christ in all of this? Because He Himself said, "No one has seen the Father except through me."

Well, it comes from the very first sentence that we read and Moses took the blood and threw it on the people, which kind of gives me an idea. No, seriously, I'm not... I promise that's not going to happen to you. But actually it has already happened to you. You have been covered by the blood of Christ in your baptism. Water was poured on you, but that connected you to Christ's blood and His sacrifice on the cross. So it might not have been a literal bunch of blood being thrown on you, but you have indeed been covered by the blood. This is as a result of after hearing the 10 Commandments and the Covenant of God, they made sacrifice before God and they saved the blood, they took half of the blood and they threw it on the altar, and then they took the other half of the blood and they threw it on the people.

And just like Christ sanctified all of the waters through His own baptism and connected us with His own baptism where He took the sins of humanity upon Himself. So also this blood is sanctified by the blood of Christ, the blood of Christ on the cross, which redeemed us, which saved us from our sins. And all of the sacrifices of the Old Testament are a connection to the blood that was shed by

Christ. Because let's face it, the blood of an animal means absolutely nothing as far as you're concerned and your salvation. It doesn't do you any good except and unless God in His grace says, "I'll give you the blood of animals as a place setting until My son comes and he will shed human blood. And that human blood will be for the salvation of all people." And so the blood that is thrown on the people is a sanctified through the blood of Christ who will appear.

They didn't know it was the blood of Christ at the time, it was a standing point waiting for Christ to come. But in His blood and His sacrifice on the cross, He sanctified everything. And so they were able to see God through the blood of Christ, through Christ Himself. And that is why they could survive. That is why they were able to see God, is through the blood. And then you get to Jesus and he's being transfigured. And transfiguration, it's such a strange word when we say transfigured, it almost sounds like we're saying, "He changed," but that's not what's going on. A better word might be a theophany or a presence of God coming to the people where God shows up is a theophany. And God is showing up here, the Father of course, but also the Son. And when the son is there and He's glorified, it's not like the Father just adopted Him at that moment and glorified Him.

That glory that Christ demonstrated on the mountain was there at conception, was there at his birth, was there at His childhood, was there as he's doing ministry with the 12 disciples as he's calling them, the glory of God was there. It was just as we say, "Humiliated or humbled or hidden in the man, in the human form that Jesus Christ was living." It was there and it does shine forth every once in a while. This time almost fully and completely miraculously the glory of God shone through. But it also comes through as He walks on water, as He calms the storm, as He heals the sick, as He raises the dead. That's the glory of God present as well, bursting forth from the man, showing us that Jesus Christ is divine and human. This is just the last exposure or demonstration of that glory. And so we have here a revelation, the ending of the epiphany, the discovery of who God is on this Transfiguration Sunday, that He is God and man come to redeem the people.

Now you notice the people in Israel's day when they reacted to the presence of God in the cloud and the thunder, they were very afraid. They told Moses, "Moses, you go talk to Him. We'll stay over here." And you notice what are Peter, James and John's response when they hear the Word of God, when they hear the voice from heaven, they are bowing down and abject fear because the presence of God, the Word of God coming to us, the Word without Christ, the Word of God is judgment, is holiness, is justice, and we are anything but holy and just and sinless. And so when the Word of God comes without the filter of Christ, we are very afraid. Peter, James and John would've still been groveling in the dirt if it had not

been for the presence of Christ. Because Christ Himself brings a word of comfort to the Word of God, directly to the Father is nothing but fear.

But through Christ, the Word of God brings comfort and peace and forgiveness and joy and hope. Without Christ judgment and glory and holiness and righteousness. With Christ, forgiveness and peace and grace. And so the disciples, they're in fear because the Word of God has come to them until Christ comes and touches them, and then they can raise their eyes. Then they can have peace because of Christ. And so we read the Word of God and we see Christ manifested in His glory and His grace and His mercy in the Word of God. When we were baptized, we were brought into the family of God. And as our prayer said, this transfiguration was a foreshadowing of our adoption as sons because the voice from heaven said, "behold, this is my beloved son with whom I'm well pleased. Listen to Him." And Christ Himself said, "if you listen to me, you are children of God, you'll be brought into and grafted into the family."

And so the glory of God showing up and the Word of God coming to these three disciples, foreshadowed our own homecoming and coming to the Father, see the Father desires us to consider Him. When we say our Father in the Lord's prayer, Luther explains that God tenderly invites us to call upon Him and to see Him as our dear father and we his dear children, but we can't do that without Christ. Without Christ He is the vengeful God who punishes sin. With Christ He is the God who punished His son in our place and gave His blood as our redemption. And so the same blood that enabled the elders to eat and dine with God. So also that same blood given to us in baptism, and then again through the Lord's Supper of His body and His blood, allows us to hear the Word of God who brings grace and peace.

I was interesting when we hear Peter's recollection of this moment in 2 Peter, he says, "Look, we're not making this stuff up. We were there. We saw the majesty and the glory of God. We heard the voice." And then he says, "And then we have something more sure." What's more sure than God showing up and a voice directly from heaven? How is that not more sure what's more sure than that? But He says, what's more sure is the prophetic word, the Word of God, the themselves. Because all they saw was the glory. What we see in the word is the redemption. We see the sacrifice. We see the forgiveness. We see the grace. We see the mercy. We see the hope. That's why the prophetic word, the Word of God that is written is greater even than the appearance in the transfiguration. And Jesus made that clear when he told them, "Look, do not say a word about what was going on until the son of man is resurrected."

And that sentence made absolutely no sense to the disciples, none of it. First off, why in the world would we not share this? This is amazing. This is incredible. The

glory of God shows up. Why wouldn't we tell people? Well, if you tell people before the resurrection, they get the wrong ideas about why the glory is showing up. It would sidetrack the mission of Christ to die on the cross, to forgive their sins. It would have people drawing them, trying to make Him king or leader, or kick out the Romans or do something great and glorious here and now in this world. But Jesus had a better plan, a greater plan, not a temporary salvation of Israel, but an eternal salvation of all of humanity. And he did not want it to get derailed by people's false understanding. So He said, "Don't say anything until the son of man is resurrected."

And then that last part also made no sense to them either. "What are you talking about, the son of man being resurrected? You're not going to die." I mean, it made no sense to them until the Holy Spirit came to them in Pentecost and they fully understood what in the world was going on. They understood that the blood that was sacrificed over and over and over again in the Old Testament was finally fulfilled in Christ and His blood sanctified all of that and sanctified all of us. And He gave that to us as a gift, adopting us as His children and making us His own, sealing us in baptism, feeding us and nourishing us with His body and blood so that we might be confident of the sure and certain prophetic Word of God that brings life and salvation to all. So we too can look forward to the presence of God in our lives because we have the redemption of Christ, we have the blood upon us, and that blood redeems us, sanctifies us, and keeps us in the one true faith.

And so when we go forth and we share, we do share the majesty and glory of God. But where do people connect with Christ? In His sacrifice, in His demonstration of His love, so that all might know, as we know, our dear father wants us to consider Him loving and caring, and he wants us to be His dear children. So let us rejoice in His presence, in his coming to us, not in just majesty and might, and power and glory, but in grace and mercy and peace and forgiveness. Now, may that grace and mercy and peace be and abide with you always now and forever more until life everlasting. Amen.