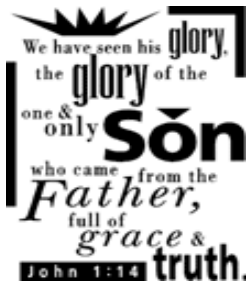


February 18, 2007



What A View

The other day I was watching a show on the Discovery Channel its title was simple enough, Everest Four. It was the fourth in a series about an expedition that was climbing Mount Everest. I really had mixed emotions as I watched that show. There was a part of me that shuddered at the thought of the climb, a climb that comes at the end of several weeks of hiking, porting, climbing setting up camps and ropes and ladders. The day that you actually climb Everest begins at midnight when you set out from Camp Four, which is an elevation over 26,000 feet. The camp, the climb and the summit are all in an area known as, "the death zone". It's called that because a human can't live there for more than 72 hours. So half of me watched and said, "I don't think so, I wouldn't want to try to do that". But oddly enough the other half was saying, "Gosh I'd love to do that". Climbing to the top of a mountain and looking around, it's really is an awe-inspiring feat.

I've hiked to the top of several mountains, now, before you think I'm some mountaineer please understand somebody who climbs Mount Everest would call anything that I've hiked up an ant hill, yet when I get to the top there's just nothing like it. I like to sit down, I like to pray I always recite a little scripture, Psalm 19:1 where King David writes, "the heavens declare the glory of God the sky proclaim the work of His hands". I love to sit and take in the view. It's so peaceful, in fact, we just sang "Sweet Hour of Prayer" it really is at the top of a mountain a sweet hour of prayer. I don't like leaving, I don't like coming down I like the experience at the top.

In our Gospel this morning Jesus takes Peter, James and John up the mountain. It was probably Mount Herman, which is 9,000 feet tall. He took them up there to pray. I'm sure the three disciples were expecting that quiet time, that satisfaction of making it to the top that peace and solitude found at the top and they did. We see in verse 32 that Peter and his companions were very sleepy. You get to the top of the mountain, you're tired sun's shining down, rocks are warm, it's time to lean against one of those rocks and lay back and get a little rest. But then everything changes. Jesus is transfigured. When we look at His transfiguration I think that there are three main lessons that we can extract from this text.

The first goes along with our Epiphany theme. All through Epiphany we've been talking about Christ being made manifest or being made known as the Son of God, the Messiah. Luke chapters 8 and 9 could be called the "Epiphany Chapters". The central theme for these two chapters is "who is Jesus?" In Luke 8:22-28 we see Jesus walking on the water and after He gets in the boat the disciples in fear and amazement ask one another, "Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water and they obey Him." And then in Luke Chapter 9:7-9 Jesus is performing miracles. Herod hears about this and what does Herod say? "I beheaded John who then is this I hear such things about?" Then Luke 9:18-20 Jesus Himself asks His disciples, "Who do the crowds say I am?" Well, the disciples say, "John the Baptist, Elijah, one of the great prophets." So Christ says, "What about you?" Peter gives the answer in verse 20, "The Christ of God." And you know what? In our scripture today Peter gets confirmation of his answer. When the cloud comes over a voice from heaven says, "This is my son whom I have chosen listen to him."

When we look at 2 Peter 1:16-18 this takes away some of the challenges that come from people who are skeptics of the Bible. They'll say, "They didn't actually hear a voice talking there was thunder." But Peter writes in his Epistle, "We did not cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ but we are eye witnesses of His majesty for He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to Him from the majestic glory saying This is my son whom I love with him I am well pleased. We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with Him on the sacred mountain." We see in

our scripture again Jesus is the Son of God He is the promised Messiah.

But the second thing we get is a little bit of preparation. The text tells us of Jesus coming down. Moses the great deliverer of Israel and the lawgiver appeared with Elijah the great prophet who was taken directly into heaven both of them come to Jesus. Why? Verse 31 tells us, "They spoke about His departure, which was about to bring fulfillment in Jerusalem." They spoke about His departure; it is interesting that the Greek word used for departure is *exodos* from which we get the word Exodus. It has the connotations of the first Exodus when Moses brought the children of Israel out of the slavery of Egypt. This Exodus is remembered each year by the killing of a Passover lamb. The new Exodus is the freeing of God's people from the slavery of sin, which will come with Jesus impending death on the cross and His resurrection. But if we look back to God the Father's word's we see another interesting aspect of this death and resurrection of Christ.

God the Father said, "This is my son whom I have chosen listen to Him." Moses and Elijah represent the law and the prophets and I think that its significant that after the God the Father has spoken Moses and Elijah disappear. Jesus alone remains. The Father did not say listen to Jesus, Moses and Elijah, just simply listen to Him. One commentator put it this way, "the and the prophets have served their term and pass away he who is the fulfillment of both alone remains." Going back to the first point, who is this Jesus? He is the one who will replace the old covenant a new era is on the horizon, the old covenant represented by Moses and Elijah is going to pass away and the new covenant is going to come through the death and resurrection of Jesus. That new covenant is this, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.

Kind of neat what you find when you really start digging in isn't it? Departure, Exodus, the Exodus from sin. Listen to Him, not listen to them but listen to Jesus. He is the way, the truth and the life. But what's really neat is the third point. This portion of scripture also gives us a glimpse of Christ's eternal glory. Luke writes in verse 29, "The appearance of His face changed and His clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning." At the transfiguration God the Father gives the disciples clear visual evidence of who Jesus is. He shows them the glory of Christ, the glory of the Son of God, he shows them Jesus transfigured. He makes Jesus manifest. This is the Jesus who

made Himself manifest through His miracles, made Himself manifest when He said He was the Messiah the Son of God, the same Jesus who was made manifest when His enemies even the demons recognized Him as God. That same Jesus who was made manifest when His Father spoke, the same Jesus who was made manifest when His disciples saw Him transfigured into all His heavenly glory.

I guess the question today is, "Who do you say that He is?" If you join with Peter and say, "the Christ of God", I guess the next question is, "what are you going to do about it?" My hope and prayer is that we all will give ourselves heart, soul and mind to Him because He is the Messiah.

In our Savior's name, Amen.