

The Exclusive Glory of Jesus Christ

Luke 9:32-36

March 24, 2019

Open your Bibles and turn to Luke 9. We're going to be returning, here, to Luke's account of the transfiguration, Luke 9:28-36. We actually started this account last week and learned about the setting for the transfiguration. We heard about the unveiling of Christ's divine glory, the meeting then, that took place up on the mountain between Jesus, Moses, and Elijah. It's an amazing scene. And today we're going to see how God the Father answered the prayer of Jesus Christ, his Son. And how he answered that prayer for his sake and for his disciples, and how significant and meaningful that that answer proved to be.

Let's start by reading there in Luke 9:28 and following, "Now about eight days after these sayings," those sayings, those are the ones from verse, basically starting back in verse 18 all the way up to verse 27. So that whole scene there, "about eight

Grace Church, 6400 W 20th Street, Greeley, CO 80634

Pastors: Travis Allen, Josh Oedy, Bret Hastings

Page 1 |

GRACE CHURCH

Greeley

days after these sayings he took with him Peter, John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white. And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

“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. 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. As he was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, 'This is my Son, my Chosen One, listen to him!' 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.”

Grace Church, 6400 W 20th Street, Greeley, CO 80634

Pastors: Travis Allen, Josh Oedy, Bret Hastings

Page 2 |

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It's been a joy this year to read together as a church through the daily Bible readings, some from the Old Testament, some from the New, some from the Psalms and the Proverbs. We are now in Deuteronomy, and, as it were, we're in Luke. We're gonna probably read through Luke a lot faster than I'm moving through Luke, but you'll get a preview of what's ahead, so that's good.

But perhaps as you've seen in your Old Testament reading, we've read through the first four books of the Bible now. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers. You may have seen how this transfiguration account is really full of allusions to scenes and themes from Israel's history, even just in what we've covered already, verses 28-31. Jesus took them up on the mountain, and something really spectacular happened up there, verse 28. That, that alludes back to Mount Sinai and Moses on Mount Sinai receiving the law. It also, for Elijah, it refers back to Mount Carmel as the Lord distinguished himself from all the prophets of Baal. False Baal worship was judged at that scene, Mount Carmel.

Grace Church, 6400 W 20th Street, Greeley, CO 80634

Pastors: Travis Allen, Josh Oedy, Bret Hastings

Page 3 |

Moses and Elijah, picturing the Law and the Prophets, there. When they appear, they are looking to Christ, which is exactly the message of the Old Testament, that the Law and the Prophets point to Jesus Christ. We see them, here, as they're having a meeting with Jesus even before the disciples are awake, and they are talking about what? His departure, which is about to be accomplished at Jerusalem. We talked about that word departure, it's actually, the trans, it's a translation of the word exodus. This is his exodus that he's about to accomplish. And here the, the exodus that he's about to accomplish is a greater exodus than even Moses when he took the Israelites out of Egypt. It's a greater exodus than he performed.

But one point of focus, verse 29, when Jesus, when his face changed, the brightness of his glory. That takes us back to something in Moses' time, Exodus chapter 34, when he encountered the glory of God. It says in Exodus 34, that when Moses came down from Mt. Sinai, remember he, he had smashed the former two tablets because of the idolatry of the Israelites dancing around the golden calf, Exodus 32. But he went up to the mountain again after God allowed and accepted his mediation between God and the people. And he comes down after receiving the law again, and he

Grace Church, 6400 W 20th Street, Greeley, CO 80634

Pastors: Travis Allen, Josh Oedy, Bret Hastings

Page 4 |

had the two tablets in his hand again. And as he returned to the people, having been on the mountain forty days and forty nights, "He did not know," it says in Exodus 34, "he did not know that the skin of his face shone because he'd been talking with God."

It was so bright and so blinding that Moses had to put a veil over his face for the sake of the people. It says in Exodus 34:35, "The people of Israel would see the face of Moses. The skin of Moses' face was shining, and Moses would put the veil over his face again until he went back in to speak with God." And then he would remove the veil. The brightness of the glory, it was such that Israel could not handle the brightness of the glory of his face. They couldn't look on even, even a fading glory of Moses' face. So it was for their sake that Moses wore the veil.

Paul, in 2 Corinthians 3, he picks up on that. He sees a change in our ability to handle the presence of the glory of God. The change comes, as Paul says, "in Christ." And it comes because of Christ. And it is clear evidence, as Paul is making the argument there, that the new covenant is superior to the old

covenant. In fact, that's, as we read through Hebrews, that is the continual theme of the writer of Hebrews. The new is superior to the old. The old points to the new; the, the old is fulfilled in the new, and the new is superior to the old.

The old covenant, Moses had to put a veil over his face, but in the New Covenant, 2 Corinthians 3:16, "When one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, "all of us Christians, all of us who have turned to the Lord, "we all with unveiled face beholding the glory of the Lord," we're being put in the place of Moses there, "unveiled face beholding the glory of the Lord, we're being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."

Folks, that is what we are seeing happening. This is a first in the transfiguration account. And this is what we're seeing happening in the transfiguration account. In Christ, there is a greater glory, and it's a transforming glory, it's a sanctifying glory. And rather than look away from it, we are, as

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Christians, as members of a New Covenant, we're not to look away from it. We are to gaze at it. We're to look at that glory. We're to look at it full on, straight on, in the face of Jesus Christ.

Now with just that thought planted in your minds, I want you to think about that and see if you can find that as we move through the text because that's what Paul taught there, in 2 Corinthians 3. That's what this is all about. That's what this transfiguration account is all about. The fullness of God's glory shining in the face of Jesus Christ. And unlike Israel, who had to look away from the glory and told Moses, Put a veil on! We can't look at this! We're instead to look straight at the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. And in fact, as God will descend and say, we're to look nowhere else.

You remember where we left off last week. We left the three disciples, Peter, John, and James and they were fast asleep on the mountainside. They're not gonna be looking at anything if they don't wake up. So that's what we're going to see, that they do wake up by the grace of God. And as we'll see in the rest of

Grace Church, 6400 W 20th Street, Greeley, CO 80634

Pastors: Travis Allen, Josh Oedy, Bret Hastings

Page 7 |

this account, their weaknesses are overcome by divine strength. All of their needs in this account are met with divine grace.

So that brings us to the first point in your outline. Number one, the perfect picture of human need. The disciples here, are the perfect picture of human need. We see ourselves in the disciples. We recognize our need is just like their need. We have needs. First, it's the need to wake up. Verse 32, "Now Peter and those who were with him, they were heavy with sleep." That's a, that's an idiomatic saying. The verb is *bareo*, which means to be burdened, to be weighed down, to be heavy. It can mean that this person, the subject is, is awake but just extremely tired, overcome with fatigue. But here in the context it means, clearly, to be sound asleep, to be unconscious to the world, to be oblivious, fast asleep. So this is literal sleep, and it points to here really a physical limitation on behalf of the disciples, physical limitation.

But there is a spiritual component to this, as well. That's what we need to see here. The Bible often uses sleep as a metaphor, a picture of spiritual dullness. The Gospel writers

show the disciples sleeping at various times in Jesus' ministry at various points to illustrate that very point. That they are spiritually dull and have need of spiritual strengthening.

Jesus confronted their spiritual lethargy, their dullness, and he called upon them from time to time to stop sleeping, to wake up and to stay awake. A repeated theme in his teaching, Luke 12:37, "Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes." "Wake up!" Jesus says, "and stay awake!"

Mark 13:33, it's Peter, John, and James again, and they are with Jesus, and they ask him while he's on the Mount of Olives, ask him about the end times. They want to understand what's coming. They want to understand the signs of the end so they can be ready. Jesus told them here in the Olivet discourse, "Be on guard. Keep awake, for you do not know when the time will come." Again, in verse 35, he says, "Stay awake, for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening or at midnight or when the rooster crows or in the morning, lest he comes suddenly and find you asleep. What I say to you I say to all, stay awake."

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The Apostle Paul picks up on the same theme in his writings. Wakefulness for the purpose of watchfulness, and Paul, metaphors that he uses to describe the whole attitude, really, of the Christian life. Christian life is, is described in terms, in many different terms, but in terms of, of wakefulness, of sobriety, of sober-mindedness, of watchfulness, of paying attention, of being on guard. Paul says, Romans 13:11, "You know the time. The hour has come for you to wake from sleep, for salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed."

He tells the Corinthians, 1 Corinthians 15:34, and these are Corinthians, by the way, who, if you read the whole letter to the Corinthians, they were asleep at the helm. They were sleeping at the wheel, and there was all manner of, of corruption and decay and sin and error and, and rank heresy right in the Corinthian church.

So Paul tells them in 1 Corinthians 15, after they were allowing people in their church denying the very principle of resurrection. Can you imagine that? Us having Sunday school classes taught by people denying the principle of resurrection?

Grace Church, 6400 W 20th Street, Greeley, CO 80634

Pastors: Travis Allen, Josh Oedy, Bret Hastings

Page 10 |

Bodily resurrection, you understand, doesn't exist, it's not real. What in the world? Paul tells them, "Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning." As a Christian, to, to be asleep is to be sinning. It's to allow the influence of false teaching to pervade and to have its way. It's to backslide into sinful error. So "Wake up!" Paul says, "Stop sinning!"

He uses the same language of waking up, staying awake, in the context of the second coming. 1 Thessalonians 5:5 and following. Paul writes this, "You are all children of light, children of the day. We're not of the night or of the darkness, so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. Those who sleep, sleep at night. Those who get drunk are drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation."

Those who sleep, sleep at night, those who get drunk, get drunk at night. Ask any cop, and he'll tell you the crazies come out at night. That's not what the Christian, how the Christian

is to be living, asleep, drunk. We're to be sober-minded, awake, watchful. We're children of the day, children of the light.

So the spiritual dullness of the disciples, here, is certainly on display. It's pictured, here, in their sleeping. Because of their lethargy, these men failed to see the unveiling happen, as it happened. They failed to see the arrival of Moses and Elijah in glory. They fail, failed to hear the conversation that was happening between the most important men who ever lived. Ah, bummer! But, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory, and the two men who stood with him.

What is that if not an indication of the grace of God? God was gracious. He is merciful here, that is, he allowed them to see something they wouldn't have been able to see. But he's also gracious. He has a plan to use this occasion to accomplish his own purposes through the unveiling of Christ's glory in the lives of these disciples. So the grace is empowering them. It's strengthening them. It's edifying them. It's lifting them up.

In fact, keep your finger there in Luke chapter 9, and go over to Ephesians chapter 5. I want to show you something there just briefly. Ephesians 5, very important connection between our context of waking up and seeing Christ's glory, and then what Paul says in Ephesians chapter 5. He's talking about the, the privilege and duty of Christians to walk in love and holiness, and, and then also to walk in light and all the implications of that. In fact, he uses this waking up imagery as a metaphor, here in this context, for salvation itself.

In Ephesians 5:8, start reading in Ephesians 5:8, Paul says, "At one time you were in darkness," or You were darkness. He's just basically saying, you as non-Christians, you were darkness, "but now, now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light, (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says," here's the quote "'Awake, O

sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.' ”

That verse, as I see it, it's a direct allusion back to this scene at the transfiguration. "Awake, O sleeper." Wake up, Peter, John, James, wake up! Arise from the dead! And notice what it says, "Awake and Christ will shine on you." That language comes directly from Isaiah 60 verse 1, where it says, "Arise, shine! For the light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you."

Paul replaced, when he quoted it in Ephesians 5, he replaced the word LORD, that is the divine name Yahweh, he replaced Yahweh with Christ in Ephesians 5:14. The language comes from, from Isaiah 60 verse 1, but as justification for making the change from Yahweh to Christ, that comes from what we see in the transfiguration. The glory of the LORD, the glory of Yahweh, it's the glory of Christ pictured on the mountain.

Go back to Luke 9. So by God's grace, the sleeping disciples woke up. They saw Christ's glory, which is the glory of Yahweh. They saw his glory as well as the two men who are standing there with them, and Peter, once again taking the initiative. He's fully awake now. You've got to admit he's remarkable, remarkably quick-thinking, I really, I love that about Peter. But what he says here, it reveals a second need, which is a crucial need, even after he's awake.

He needed to wake up. Yes, but now he needs, second, we'll call this the need for clarity. The need for clarity, verse 33. As the men are parting from him, so he wakes up, and they're about to go away. So he's like, he, he didn't even get the whole conversation, just, just the tail end, and now they're leaving. So he's like, I gotta to act! As the men are departing from Jesus, "Peter said to Jesus, 'Master, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah, not knowing what he said.'"

That final little note, there, is a note from the author. It's a bit of commentary provided for us, the readers. Luke, the

narrator, has given us some insight. He's helping us to see and interpret what's going on here. Peter spoke, here, not knowing what he said. That editorial comment can either mean that Peter was missing the mark, or it could mean that Peter spoke better than he knew. Perhaps there's a bit of both going on, here, because it's not as though Peter here is entirely wrong. His immediate impulse, in fact, seems to be exactly right.

It reveals a heart for the things of God. It reveals a desire for abiding there and remaining there with these people. He, he sees, Oh! I've got the three most important people on the planet ever in history right here. Let's, don't go anywhere! He's like, he's saying in his thinking, "Hey, if it's good that we are here, it's even better that we stay here. What can I come up with? Right impulse.

It still reveals a, a lack of clarity. That's evident in what follows. We can see several particular points of clarity that he lacked, but we'll boil it down to just two main issues: identity and importance. He lacked clarity about Jesus' identity and Jesus' importance. The disciples, here, they lack clarity

about the identity of Christ, about his true identity. Namely, that he is an exclusively superior person. You see what Peter called him there, how he referred to him, Master? It's not that Peter is wrong in calling Jesus, Master. It's just that he's not right enough.

He failed to bring forward into this moment what he had so brilliantly confessed just a week earlier, verse 20. "You are the Christ of God." The term Peter uses here is *epistata*. It's like, it's like calling Jesus, boss. It's like saying, Hey, boss! Acknowledging him as the leader, he's the one in charge. Jesus is that. I mean, he's at least that. But Jesus is so much more than that, and this gives us again, insight into, into how Peter is thinking at this point. And it's the way he's thought from the very beginning and it keeps kind of revisiting him.

Have you ever had errors that you've sorted out in your life, and you like get clarity on it from Scripture, and then like a month later, you're like making the same error? Okay, it's just me, all right. He, he keeps making the same mistake.

Luke's gospel, whenever Peter and the others refer to Jesus as Master, it's interesting to do a little, little, trace that word *epistata* through Luke's gospel. It's an indication that they're not getting something. It's an indication they have, that there is something, here, that they're not seeing clearly, something that they desperately need to, learn.

They're out fishing in Luke 5:5, this is the first time. Peter called Jesus, *epistata*. Remember, Jesus said, Hey, um, throw your nets on this side of the boat. Right? They've been out all night, caught nothing, and umm Jesus says, Hey, throw them on this side of the boat. Peter, fisherman, lifetime fisherman, grew up on the lake, he knew all the ins and outs of every, every fishing spot, everything, everything about fishing, he knew.

Jesus, what is he? He's in the woodshop. He's a carpenter. Okay, *epistata*. Okay, *epistata*. I'll, I'll submit to you. You're the boss. I'm the disciple, you're the boss. I'll throw my nets on the other side of the boat. Remember what happened? Overwhelming catch of fish. And from then on, Peter saw that he

was dealing with somebody else, he's dealing with someone holy, someone who's far superior to a carpenter. Peter's dealing with someone who's holy, and he immediately, right on the spot, he, he changes his address to Lord, *kurios*.

They're in the sea, in the middle of a terrifying storm, Luke 8:24, and the disciples, they came to Jesus, waking him up, saying, "Master! Master," *Epistata! Epistata!* "We are perishing!" After he rebuked the wind and the waves, restoring calm to the Sea of Galilee, they didn't, they weren't just dealing with a boss. They were dealing with the boss, the boss of the wind, the boss of the water, the boss of the earth.

Luke 8:45, the woman suffering with a flow of blood. She touched Jesus. Jesus knew it. He's, he's surrounded by crowds of people. Jesus knew it. He started looking for her, asks who's the one who had touched him. Peter sort of steps in, corrects Jesus. Um, Master, like Hey, boss, don't, don't worry about it. Crowds surround you. They're pressing in on you.

Later in our chapter, Luke 9:49, there it's John who says *epistata*. He says, Master, *epistata*, boss. Hey, "we saw someone casting out demons in your name. We tried to stop him because he doesn't follow with us." He believes his master, his boss, approves of that partisan spirit. So by calling Jesus Master here, boss, *epistata*, in view of his actual identity, I mean, look, in view of his shining, brilliant glory, dazzling through his clothing, it reveals a view of Christ Peter had of Jesus' nature and his identity, that even in the face of evidence, right there, it's insufficient. He needed clarity on this point.

Leads to another point of clarity, not just about his identity, but also about Jesus' importance. His importance. The disciples lacked clarity about the importance of Christ, that namely, that he is exclusively superior. He is more important than anybody, more important than Moses and Elijah or anybody. He has the highest priority. And in terms of glory, he is absolutely unparalleled.

Again, notice what Peter said, verse 33, "Master, it is good that we are here." He may mean good in the sense of

pleasant, satisfying, but considering what follows and his suggestion probably good means, Hey, it's advantageous that we're here; as in, hey good thing we're here, Master, because we're so useful to you. We're beneficial. Why is that? Because Pe, Peter, James, and John, they're, they're able to build tents. How lucky! How handy to have these guys with some skills here up on the mountain so close at hand! Build tents for them. It's good that we're here. It's beneficial to you that we're here. So he proposes an idea, "Let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

What's this about? Does he want more fellowship? Is that what this is about? Is he just wanting more fellowship? Or is there something else, here? The something else that may be here, some commentators see, that Peter is suggesting that they celebrate the Feast of Booths together. If this scene is taking place in the summer, and it's very likely it was, considering the fact that they were able to ascend Mt. Hermon. Something that they could only do in the summer months because most of the months of the year Mt. Hermon was covered with snow.

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Israel's Feast of Booths, which is happened around September, October, that wouldn't be too far away on the calendar. It would be coming up. Peter may be thinking about that. It may have prompted his suggestion. I'm personally not sure if that's what's happening, here, but let's go with that for a moment. The Feast of Booths, it was called the Feast of Tabernacles. Fancy way of saying, Feast of Tents. Three tents, let's have tents. Feast of In-Gathering, it was also called. You can read about this feast in Exodus 23, 34, Leviticus 23, Numbers 29, Deuteronomy 16. This is one of three annual feasts for all Jewish males to come to Jerusalem, and they're commanded to attend. They reaped bountiful harvests of the Promised Land, and as they did that, God wanted them to remember the lean years, the desert years, the times of want in the wilderness wanderings.

And so God told them, Leviticus 23:42 and 43, "You shall at this feast dwell in booths for seven days." That is, come out of your houses, your brick and your paneled houses, come out of those houses and get in tents. Go camping. A lot of men are saying, Amen! Hey, how about a command for our church? Let's go camping! "You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All native

Grace Church, 6400 W 20th Street, Greeley, CO 80634

Pastors: Travis Allen, Josh Oedy, Bret Hastings

Page 22 |

Israelites shall dwell in booths that your generations may know that I made the people of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land Egypt.”

So the booths commemorated the tents Israel dwelled in, the encampment of the hosts of Israel as they moved from place to place. Perhaps some of you have looked at, maybe diagrams of how the camp was to be set up. The camp was to be arranged by tribe. The tabernacle is in the center, and then the tribes extended outwards in the four cardinal directions, three tribes in tents, they extended to the north, three to the south, three to the east, and three to the west.

Levites, they were in the inner circle of the camp but also arranged north, south, east, and west. Merorites were to the north, Kohathites to the south, Moses and the house of Aaron, they were to the east, and then the Gershonites to the west. But the tabernacle, that was set up at the heart and center of Israel's camp. And every time they pitched camp, every time, it was a picture that Yahweh, the God of Israel, is dwelling in the midst of his people. At the very center of his people, with the

tabernacle and the Holy of Holies at the center of the Israelite encampment.

So if Peter is thinking here, about the Feast of Booths, if he's kind of wanting to enter into a, an early celebration, like in view of this special visitation. It's certainly appropriate for Moses and Elijah to dwell in booths. I've always wondered, three booths, I guess he's thinking, "One for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah." Like what are Peter, James, and John going to do? Like bunk up? Or join them?

But it would be fitting for Moses and Elijah. Be fitting for Peter, James, and John, right? What about for Jesus? Does he join Moses and Elijah in booths? Really is, when you think about it, considering who Jesus is, considering his importance, it's utterly unfitting, completely inappropriate for Christ to take his place along with Moses and Elijah, circling the center of the camp.

Why? Because his place is in the tabernacle. His place is in the very center. He, in fact, is the one who passed through the veil into the Holy of Holies. Moses, Elijah, these apostles, everyone else are around him, as he is in the center. He is the object of worship. He is the way to God.

Having said that, let's back up and suppose that Peter is not thinking, here, about the Feast of Booths. I only mention it, even though I don't necessarily think that's what Peter is thinking, but I mention it because I think here Peter spoke better than he knew. I think he mentioned this and talked about it, and it brings into this text the imagery that we just talked about.

But if commemorating the annual feast is not the first thing that came up on Peter's mind, what was he after? What does he want? I think it's more basic, and it's really what the Feast of Booths is meant to commemorate, it's meant to show. I believe Peter wanted what every believing heart wants, going all the way back to Moses himself, who pleaded with the Lord God. Exodus 33:13, "If I have found favor in your sight, please show me your

ways, that I may know you in order to find out how to have find favor in your sight." God responded to the cry of the believing heart of Moses, saying, verse 14, "My presence will go with you. I will give you rest." Moses said, "If your presence will not go with me, don't bring us up from here. I so long for you, O God."

Moses, then, and Peter, now or here, they long for the glory to abide. They long for the glory to remain, to stay with them. They want the glory of God to tabernacle with them. As Peter woke up to witness the glory of Christ and to see Moses and Elijah, he didn't, he didn't want that to end. He wanted this whole thing to remain. He wanted them to stay. He didn't want this experience to end and can you blame him? No!

That's why this scene is the perfect picture here, of human need. There's not only the weakness and frailty of our physical frame, overwhelmed and weighed down by sleep and weariness. There's also the spiritual lethargy, the spiritual dullness that besets us because of sin. We feel the weakness all the time, don't we, of our condition? Worse, we feel the effects of our sin nature. We feel the weight of our guilt. We feel the

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distraction that comes from enticements to sin. Some of those temptations are external to us. They have hooks inside of us that relate to our past and habits of thinking, habits of wanting, habits of desiring, things that as a Christian are really no longer truly true of us.

At the same time, while we struggle with the frailty, we struggle with the sense of sin and distraction and all the rest, we have this internal sense of longing for spiritual reality, for divine glory. We're made for higher things. God created us to worship. God created us to gaze on divine glory. Solomon said, "God has set eternity in the heart of man." That means we're frustrated by that which is temporal. We're dissatisfied by that which is passing. We long for the, the God who created us, who loves us, who sustains us. That's why we all understand Augustine, who said, "Thou has made us for thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in thee."

Just like Peter on this occasion, when we finally do wake up, when we finally do look to Christ, we find ourselves in such a desperate need for clarity all the time. We need continued

Grace Church, 6400 W 20th Street, Greeley, CO 80634

Pastors: Travis Allen, Josh Oedy, Bret Hastings

Page 27 |

GRACE CHURCH

Grace

teaching and instruction to know him for who he really is, to understand how precious he is to us. That continual reminder, which is, beloved, why we are here every single week and during the week as well. We need the reminder to know how wonderful he is and especially in comparison with the paltry offerings of the world.

We need to see all the time, be reminded all the time, "as long as it is called today," to remind one another, to provoke one another, even. How completely sufficient he is, and how there is nothing else besides him. We need to understand, we need to understand deeply, with unshakeable conviction, we need to come to know the identity of Christ, the nature of Christ, how important he is.

And all this, this is why this has become such an issue, of the exclusivity of Christ. The exclusivity of his unique identity, of his glorious importance, his unparalleled importance, his superior nature. That's what we're seeing in this account really, the revelation of his true glory. It's unparalleled. That's why it's exclusively about Christ. Peter,

Grace Church, 6400 W 20th Street, Greeley, CO 80634

Pastors: Travis Allen, Josh Oedy, Bret Hastings

Page 28 |

here, speaking for the others in what he says, he provides us with a perfect picture of human need. It's Peter, right? All he has to do is open his mouth, and it all comes out. We see the perfect picture of human need.

And that sets us up for our second point. The perfect picture of divine grace. Aren't we grateful that we're not just left with the need? We see the grace of God visiting. This is God's intention all along. This was Jesus' intention as he prayed to the father for these three disciples, for their strength and for their confidence. And God descends to answer the prayer of his beloved Son. Look at verse 34, God descends, "as Peter was saying these things." I love that!

The words are barely out of his mouth, and God is descending. He is answering. He's visiting Peter and the others with his presence and his grace. It's Matthew 6:8, right "Your Father knows what you need before you ask him." Peter's starting to ask, he hasn't even finished his sentence. There's no period or punctuation on it, and God's there. "As Peter was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were

afraid as they entered the cloud.” Notice the repetition, there. It’s the word, cloud, cloud. Again, in verse 35, the cloud. The cloud came and overshadowed. They entered the cloud. A voice came out of the cloud. This verse here, this scene, it’s about the cloud.

Just briefly, if you would, turn back to Exodus chapter 40. Exodus chapter 40. And I want to show you, here, this, this same cloud in Exodus chapter 40, which came to Moses and overshadowed him about fourteen hundred years earlier. The Lord went with Israel. He’d led them along through the wilderness wanderings by day in a pillar of cloud and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light. So the cloud was an indication of the abiding presence of God. God, who led them, who gave them direction. God who protected them from their enemies. God, who sustained them with his mercy and compassion. God, who provided for their needs. The cloud is a visible symbol of the divine presence, the divine favor even, a reminder of the favor and the grace of God.

At the end of Exodus, after Israel constructed the tabernacle and its implements of worship, the veil, the ark, the

table for the showbread, the lamp stand, the ark, altar of incense, the altar for burnt offering, all the rest. After that God commanded Moses to not only built it but to set it up, to erect the temple, to put it in place. They prepared everything. They consecrated Aaron, his sons.

And that same cloud, the one that led them all along the way, that glory, that cloud now settled on that tent. Exodus 40:34 and 35, "The cloud, then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, the glory of the Lord filled the temple. And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle."

Now I want to just point out a few parallels between those verses, there, and then what Luke recorded in Luke 9:34, several parallels as well as one significant contrast. First, when Luke writes, a cloud came, that's a summary and parallel statement with what Moses had written. "The cloud covered the tent of meeting, the glory filled the tabernacle." That is what Peter and John and James witnessed, the coming, covering, filling glory of that same cloud.

Second, when Luke writes about how the cloud, overshadowed them, Moses had written, "The cloud settled on the tabernacle." Now in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, one with which the disciples and Jesus himself was familiar, the word settled is the Greek word, *episkiazo*, and that is the same word that Luke uses, which is translated into our text as overshadowed. The cloud that Moses watched as it settled upon the tabernacle, the disciples watched that same cloud settle, *episkiazo*, upon them.

Third, the Hebrew word, which is translated by the Greek word, *episkiazo*, overshadowed or settled. That word, *episkiazo*, translates the Hebrew verb *šākan*. *Sakan* means to settle upon. It means to rest upon. It means to, to dwell upon. *Sakan* is the word from which we get, *shekinah*, as in the *shekinah* glory of God. So, yes, we should think of *shekinah* as shining and bright and everything else, but that's not its meaning.

It's meaning is, the dwelling glory of God, the settling, dwelling, abiding glory of God. Luke wants us to see the

Grace Church, 6400 W 20th Street, Greeley, CO 80634

Pastors: Travis Allen, Josh Oedy, Bret Hastings

Page 32 |

connection to Exodus 40 so that we see clearly that the same abiding, dwelling, and remaining presence of God that settled upon the tabernacle in Exodus 40, it is the same cloud of glory that settled upon these disciples. It's the dwelling, it's the abiding, it's the remaining glory of God.

Now before I show you the one contrast here, between Exodus 40 and the Transfiguration scene in Luke 9. You can turn back to Luke 9, by the way. Let's stop and consider the amazing grace of God, here. Peter had wanted to build three tents, three tabernacles, in hopes of abiding here, remaining here, basking as it were in this display of glory. And God said, Nah. That's not what I've got in mind. Let's take it up a notch.

Instead of Peter doing anything to keep the glory there, God did something. God did something. Peter, you can't accomplish this. You can't make this happen. I can. So God visited the scene. He came down. He abided. He dwelt. He settled his glory. His shekinah glory came and settled. He is the one who is going to do this. He's the one who takes the initiative.

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He is the one who has the power to make this happen, not Peter. Beloved, we don't have the power to make this happen. God does.

Consider the contrast, now, with Exodus 40. When the cloud came, when the cloud settled upon the covered, and covered the tent of meeting, when the glory filled the tabernacle, notice that Moses there in Exodus 40, he was not able to enter the tent of meeting. The glory there overwhelmed him. Same thing happened, by the way, at the dedication of Solomon's temple. David had lamented that while he was living in a permanent house in Jerusalem, he saw the ark still dwelling in the tabernacle, in a tent, and he, he felt ashamed. So David's last great act was to provision his son Solomon with all that he needed and commanded him, then, to build a temple, not a tabernacle, but a permanent, fixed place, a temple for the Lord in Jerusalem.

Solomon did that. He was faithful. He conducted everything according to what David had commanded. 1 Kings 8:10-11 says, "When the priests came out of the Holy Place, a cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, because the glory of the Lord

Grace Church, 6400 W 20th Street, Greeley, CO 80634

Pastors: Travis Allen, Josh Oedy, Bret Hastings

Page 34 |

filled the house of the Lord." What's different in Luke 9:34? The divine glory comes. The divine glory overshadows them. Yes, they were afraid, but they were afraid "as they entered the cloud." They weren't pushed away. They were drawn in. Same verbs used in the Septuagint translation of Exodus 40:35, Luke 9:34, it's the verb, *eiserchomai*. Moses was unable, it's a negation of the word *dunomai*. So he's not able to enter, *eiserchomai*. Peter, John, and James, they *eiserchomai*-ed. They entered into the cloud.

What made the difference between Moses and these three disciples? Were they any better than Moses? No. The difference is that Jesus Christ is standing there with them. Now Moses, along with Elijah. Now Peter, along with James and John, because Jesus is standing there with all of them, they are now able to enter into the cloud of God's shekinah glory. Why is that? Because John 1:14, Jesus Christ is the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us. Dwelt, there, is the word, *skenoo*. It's the word tent. It's the word tabernacle. "The Word became flesh and he tabernacled among us." He is literally God with us.

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Grace

It isn't Peter who needed to build a tent, a tabernacle for Jesus or for anyone else. What he needed, what we need, is for God to make the tent, for him to tabernacle with us, that he might dwell among us in the person of Jesus Christ. So John says, the apostle John, as one of those who stood there on this occasion with Peter. He who was descended upon by the cloud, he who was overshadowed by the presence of God, he who was enveloped into the glory of God, John wrote, "We have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth." "No man can see my glory and live," God said. And yet, "We have seen his glory."

We're not done, yet. There's still more to see in this perfect picture of divine grace. Verses 35 and 36, "A voice came out of the cloud, saying, 'This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!' And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone." God provided Peter, John, and James the cloud so they could see, so they could see the glory of God in relation to Jesus Christ. That Jesus Christ is the glory of God. Now God provides the voice so that they can hear the glory of God also in relation to Jesus Christ.

Grace Church, 6400 W 20th Street, Greeley, CO 80634

Pastors: Travis Allen, Josh Oedy, Bret Hastings

Page 36 |

Again, echoes of the Old Testament on hearing the word of God, Mark read it this morning. "Shema, O Israel." *Shema* is a verb that means to hear, to listen, to heed. Old Testament echoes on hearing the Word of God, always with a view to obey it. Moses wrote, Deuteronomy 6:4, "Hear, O Israel. The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently. You shall talk of them when you sit and walk and lie down and rise. You shall bind them before your eyes, and you shall write them." Hear! Hear these words! Teach them, talk about them, bind them, and write them. A lot about the Word, the Word, the Word, the Word. Listen. Hear. Heed. Obey. God spoke from the cloud. He spoke to them.

Back in Luke 3:22, you remember, Jesus emerged from the waters of baptism there. John's baptism, "A voice came from heaven," saying something very similar, he said, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." The voice of God, there, the father, coming out of heaven, when he spoke, he spoke

GRACE CHURCH

Grace

directly to his son. Here, the voice comes out of the cloud, the voice of God the Father, and coming out of the cloud, it speaks not to the Son. It speaks to the disciples. And these words that he speaks from heaven, from the cloud, this time it's for them. "This is my Son, my chosen one. Listen to him."

What's that a reference to? It goes back to the prophecy of Moses. I'll ask you to turn back one more time to Deuteronomy 18, Deuteronomy 18 and verse 15. This is all about, all about the prophecy of Moses, about hearing and heeding the words of God. Hearing and heeding the words of, of God spoken through the end times prophet, the one. It's not any prophet, but is the prophet, the one for whom Israel had been waiting and watching and looking for, anticipating.

Look at what Moses said in Deuteronomy 18:15-19, "The Lord your God will raise up a prophet for you, a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers, it's to him you shall listen." God is repeating himself in Luke 9, "It's to him you shall listen, just as you desired of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, 'Let me not hear again the

Grace Church, 6400 W 20th Street, Greeley, CO 80634

Pastors: Travis Allen, Josh Oedy, Bret Hastings

Page 38 |

GRACE CHURCH

voice of the Lord my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.' The Lord said to me, 'They are right in what they have spoken. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, he shall speak to them all that I command him. And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him.'

God has spoken, hasn't he? He's placed his stamp of approval, here, upon his Son, upon his chosen one. Interesting expression, there, it comes from the verb for divine election. *Eklego*, to choose, to select, to elect. Jesus is God's chosen elect Savior. We are God's chosen elect people, both of us selected and chosen by God. I can't help but say it, but God didn't look down the corridors of time and see, Oh, there's Jesus. He looks good. Let me, let me elect him. That's not what happened. He chose him "from before the foundation of the world," and chose the people that he would give to his Son also from before the foundation of the world.

GRACE CHURCH

Greeley

As if to put a punctuation of silence upon the point back in Luke chapter 9 again, Luke 9:36, "When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone." Boy, that makes the emphasis, doesn't it? Don't look around for Moses. His purpose has been fulfilled. Don't look around for Elijah. His ministry has been completed. They've done what they were designed by me to do, God says. They have pointed to Jesus Christ. Look no further. Listen to no one else.

Luke doesn't tell us, but Matthew does, that Jesus had to help these men to recover from all this. Matthew 17, "When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and they were terrified." I mean, if you just spoke as Peter spoke, hey, let me, let me treat Jesus, Moses, and Elijah as parallel and make them each a tent.

And then God said this. Like I'd be on my face, too. "They fell on their faces, they're terrified. But Jesus," I love this tenderness, "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." Such tenderness in the gentle touch of

Grace Church, 6400 W 20th Street, Greeley, CO 80634

Pastors: Travis Allen, Josh Oedy, Bret Hastings

Page 40 |

Jesus. Knowing our weaknesses, knowing our lack of clarity, knowing our ignorance, knowing our mistakes, our errors, our, knowing our sins. He's tender helps these men recover.

In their mortal condition, these men could not have survived apart from the presence of Christ. In their mortal condition, they could not in their unglorified state, they could not have survived except Jesus is standing with them. He's enabling them, here, to survive the cloud of God's shekinah glory. They had, they had actually done what Moses could not do. They entered the cloud where no mortal had ever entered before, not even Moses.

So like Moses, they descended the mountain. Moses descended with the Law of God in his hands, a law that while revealing the righteousness of God, it was a law that condemns. But they descend the mountain, and they were accompanied by the one who fulfilled the Law and the Prophets. They were accompanied by the very embodiment of God's grace and God's truth, "For the law was given through Moses," John 1:17, "grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."

So verse 36 says, "They kept silent and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen." Why not? Because apart from the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, this spectacular display of glory would be nothing more than a spectacle. This dramatic scene would be nothing more than drama apart from the interpretation provided by the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. The real meaning would be lost on people in a pre-resurrection time, so they waited. They waited until Jesus accomplished his exodus, which he would do in short order in Jerusalem.

Let's not forget that this whole scene is an answer to Jesus' prayer for his disciples. We've noted this before. That the disciples, prior to this, a week earlier, they'd heard some difficult sayings from Jesus. They'd heard some perplexing teaching from him about his resurrection, which meant his prior death, which meant his prior rejection. That, that didn't factor in for them. They heard about cross-bearing as the mark of discipleship, like the, the scorned cross. They were to carry one of those and follow him?

So Jesus asked the father to strengthen the faith of his disciples, to secure their confidence in him. And the father answered like this. He strengthened their faith by revealing the glory of Christ. He strengthened their faith by putting his stamp of approval on their, on his Son. He put his, his mark of approval, his imprimatur, on all that his Son was teaching them, saying, listen to him. So it's gone away from the look at him and now, listen to him, listen. He strengthened their faith by making this exclusive, helping them see that Moses and Elijah, they're serving a larger purpose, to point to Christ. Having done that, they've served their purpose. They've served their purpose.

That's no diminishment to Moses and Elijah. Them serving that purpose, it's the most glorious purpose any of us can serve, to point to Jesus Christ. And if we point to Jesus Christ, you know who we stand should to should with? Moses. Elijah. Peter. James. John. How about we spend our lives that way? Is that worth it? Have you ever wondered how Peter knew that the two men standing with Jesus were Moses and Elijah? Maybe he overheard something. Um, but according to how the account is written, there really isn't much time between their

Grace Church, 6400 W 20th Street, Greeley, CO 80634

Pastors: Travis Allen, Josh Oedy, Bret Hastings

Page 43 |

sleep time and the time when the alarm went off and they woke up, and they're, the men are walking away. You don't really see any introductions. Now perhaps that happened, it's just not recorded. But to me this is the indication that Peter knew the identity of Moses and Elijah, he knew it supernaturally. That it came to him because of the Spirit of the Lord.

It's not so hard to believe, is it? I mean, Peter, John, James, they survived the overshadowing power of God's glory in the cloud of God's glory without veiling their faces, and they did so in their mortal bodies. Moses and Elijah are standing them in their, standing there in their glorified bodies able to be. Peter, James, and John, they're standing there, they're able to survive. Why? Because Jesus is standing there with them. That's supernatural, isn't it? He enabled them in their unglorified state to survive the presence of God, and that happened supernaturally as well.

Think about what that might mean for us in the reality of heaven. No need for introductions. No need to guess. No need to have a picture, a few pictures, you know, to look at and say,

Grace Church, 6400 W 20th Street, Greeley, CO 80634

Pastors: Travis Allen, Josh Oedy, Bret Hastings

Page 44 |

GRACE CHURCH

Grace

Oh, oh there he is! We'll know each other's identities. We'll know that supernaturally. Just as we are fully known, we'll know. But also notice that while Peter in his unglorified state, he's interested in spending time with Moses and Elijah, he lacks clarity. We already talked about that, but notice by contrast how Moses and Elijah, in their glorified state, they're not so interested in knowing Peter and the disciples. When they come and visit, they want to talk with Jesus. They're centered on him. They're not saying, hey, Jesus, it would be really great if you'd make some introductions. You know, these apostles, they're going to have names on the foundations of the city! Moses and Elijah are, like, eh, let 'em sleep. They went straight to Jesus, talked to him, visited with him. Again, that's not an insult to Peter and the others. It's just a reality of Christ's superior glory.

When we're glorified, beloved, when, when everything is, when we see clearly. It's, going to heaven is not about seeing Grandpa again, as much as we love our grandparents. It's not about seeing other people that we miss. I mean, that will be there, we'll know them. We'll see them. Being in our glorified state, apart from sin, forever in the presence of God, it's

Grace Church, 6400 W 20th Street, Greeley, CO 80634

Pastors: Travis Allen, Josh Oedy, Bret Hastings

Page 45 |

GRACE CHURCH

Greeley

about God. It's about Christ. It's just another indication, here, that Christ is all we need. At the end of the day, no offense to one another, he's all we want.

We're not like Moses, who had put a veil over his face. Whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. The Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom. We all with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. This comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

So beloved, listen, if you want to look full on at the glory of Jesus Christ, go ahead and look. Go ahead and stare. It's not impolite. Gaze at him. He invites you to do so. The Father commands you to do so. The longer you look at him, the more you study him, the deeper you reflect upon him, the more you worship him, the more you will be "transformed into the same image, from one degree of glory to another. This comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit." Let's pray.

Grace Church, 6400 W 20th Street, Greeley, CO 80634

Pastors: Travis Allen, Josh Oedy, Bret Hastings

Page 46 |

GRACE CHURCH

Grace

Our Father, what glorious things of thee are spoken. What glorious things here you have revealed to us. In some ways, there's such simplicity that is account for so many questions we have that are, that remained unanswered. We don't understand how all this worked together, how, just even in the ontology of it. It really does baffle our minds. But Father, what you've taught us here, is quite simple. Look upon Christ. Listen to Christ. Hear him. The Lord Jesus Christ is one with you, Father, sharing all your full, divine glory and one with the Spirit. And the Spirit is the one who authored the entirety of Scripture.

So when you say to us, Father, "Listen to him," we're to listen to the Word. We're to see in Christ the Word incarnate, the very glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. We're to hear in Jesus Christ your Word. Help us to listen well, to heed, to study, to understand and obey. Help us to find great delight in knowing him and knowing you through him. We thank you that by faith, because of your grace, we are found in him. We don't have a righteousness of our own, but a righteousness of God on the basis of faith. We thank you that you've loved us and sent your Son to die for us to bring us to you. It's in Jesus' name that we pray. Amen.

Grace Church, 6400 W 20th Street, Greeley, CO 80634

Pastors: Travis Allen, Josh Oedy, Bret Hastings

Page 47 |