

Today is our AGM and we have gathered together to give thanks to God for all his faithfulness in our lives. Today is also the day we mark as the day when Jesus was transfigured before his disciples. The Transfiguration of Jesus is one of the highpoints in the life of Jesus and the disciples. It is here that the importance of listening to Jesus is confirmed as he sets out to the cross as the way for him and his followers. However, it also shows the glorious outcome of following the way of the cross. A glimpse of glory is given to the disciples as to what it will be after the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus and also of his disciples. It is this awesome event that overwhelms Peter that he wants to build three monuments. The transfiguration transformed the body of Jesus with a radiant, glorious face and his clothes became dazzling white. This morning we give thanks to God for the Transfiguration of Christ into whose likeness we are being transformed by the Spirit.

Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. The three disciples witness divine power and glory which preceded the apparent defeat on the cross. The paradox of the mission of the rejected Messiah is at the heart of the powerful coming of the kingdom. The theological significance is the already and the not yet of the resurrection and the second coming. Christ was going to die very soon and he was anticipating his death. It also signifies that with the coming of Christ the kingdom of God has been established in full earnest.

Moses and Elijah appeared and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. The association of Elijah and Moses demonstrates his messianic role. Moses appears as the representative of the old covenant – the Sinai covenant and the promise of salvation, which was soon to be fulfilled in the death of Christ. Elijah appears as the appointed restorer of all things.

*Lo, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes. He will turn the hearts of parents to their children and the hearts of children to their parents, Mal 4:5-6.*

Elijah and Moses also prefigured in their experience the coming rejection and suffering of the Messiah. Elijah was hunted by Jezebel and Moses found himself repeatedly rejected by his people. This incident summarizes the two expectations which were alive in Judaism: the coming of the prophet of the end time who is like Moses and the appearing of Elijah at the dawning of the end time. It declared to every Jew that the fulfillment of the history of Israel and of every hope for the glorious end time have already begun with the coming of Jesus.

They also hear the voice of God insisting that they must, against all their natural inclinations, listen to Jesus as he insists on suffering as the way to glory, and as he calls on them to give up their own lives to gain them, indeed to take up their own crosses and to follow him. The cloud is a frequent theophanic motive in the OT. Here the echo is more of that of the Sinai experience. The coming of the cloud upon the mountain and the voice of God speaking from the cloud are all similar to that at Sinai. Cloud is both self revelation and his self-veiling

Moses' face glowed as he met with God. Here Christ's face was transfigured. Their eyes were open to 'behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.' A voice from heaven says, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him.' God calls each one of us to respond to Christ's call. Obedience is called for. Christ refers to himself as the Son of Man and says that he will rise from the dead and only then were they to tell others about this experience. This baffled them, because though they believed in the resurrection, their expectations had no room for a suffering and dying messiah.

The transfiguration of Jesus gives us the hope of glory. We may have to face suffering just as Jesus did but we will receive glory if we stand firm. Meanwhile, the Holy Spirit of God continues to work in us to mould us in the likeness of Jesus. May our time spent in worshipping Jesus truly transform us. May we not be satisfied with putting monuments up like what Peter suggested but rather engage in this transforming relationship with Jesus.