

SERMON FOR FEBRUARY 27, 2022

TEXT: LUKE 9:28-36

THEME: ONLY JESUS

28 Now about eight days after these sayings he took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. **29** And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white. **30** And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, **31** who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. **32** 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. **33** 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. **34** As he was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. **35** And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!” **36** 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.

In the name of Jesus:

As I grow older I find myself going to the doctor more and more. When I reached the age of 40, I gave myself the gift of going to my family doctor to get a checkup. Now, it's not just an annual physical checkup that puts me in the doctor's office, it is also trips to the dentist, the audiologist, and the optometrist.

When you are at the optometrist, you will go through a battery of tests in order to ascertain the health of your eyes. Drops will be put into your eyes

so that the pupils will widen and the doctor can better see into your eye. If you need glasses, the eye doctor will have you sit in the chair while a variety of lenses will be placed before you to see through, all in an effort to give you better eyesight. Some lenses will allow you to have a better focus than others. In the end, only one lens or set of lenses will be prescribed for you, all so that you can see clearly and be able to focus on what is in front of you.

In our text for today Jesus ascends the mount along with Peter, James and John. While on the mount, Jesus is changed, He is transfigured, and He stands alongside two great men of the Old Testament, Moses and Elijah. All three are glorified, so upon whom does one focus?

First there is Moses, one of the greatest figures in the Old Testament. Called by the Lord through the burning bush, Moses was used by God to defeat Pharaoh and all of the gods of Egypt, leading God's people from Egypt to the brink of the Promised Land. To Moses was given the Ten Commandments and to Moses was given the honor of being called a friend of God, one whom God would speak to and speak through to the people of Israel.

On the other flank is Elijah, the great prophet. He is the prophet known for preaching the truth about the lies of Baal, he is the one who exposed the emptiness of Baal worship and called the people of God to repentance. He is

the only prophet who did not die but was carried up into heaven by a fiery chariot.

To whom should our attention be drawn to? To the lawgiver? The prophet and great teacher? Certainly both were great men, used by the Lord, both were and are held in high esteem. And certainly we want to pay attention to both men! But these men pointed to Someone who was greater than them, they did the bidding of the One who was with them on the mount. That is why the Father proclaims that we are to listen to Jesus, to have our attention focused on Jesus and ONLY JESUS.

There are a great many opinions offered by many today as to Jesus and what He means to people today. Some today believe that Jesus came to give us a new law or new laws to follow, and they reduce Christianity into just another religion that focuses on laws, rules, and regulations to follow. They believe, falsely, that being a Christian means that you must do certain things in order to appease an angry God, or at least, live a moral type of life in order to receive God's love and blessings. It is kind of a quid pro quo type of religion, in that, if you do good, God will be good to you, and if not, well, too bad.

Then there are others who reduce Jesus into being a good teacher. They believe that Jesus gave us some practical advice to follow, such as loving one another and doing good to others, and that is just about it. Jesus is a good

teacher, just like Plato, Aristotle, Confucius, and others. Jesus has some good things to say, so you need to try to apply His teachings into your life.

But all of these ideas miss the boat. Our Heavenly Father would not have us focus on Moses, or the Law, or Elijah and the other people who followed and served the Lord. The Heavenly Father would have us focus on Jesus and Jesus alone.

Listen to the Word of the Lord, as the Lord Himself speaks of His beloved Son, "This is my Son, listen to Him." There is no misinterpretation possible in the Father's words. There is no mistaken identity. We are to listen to Jesus, and only Jesus, for in Jesus we have God's revelation of Himself and of His will.

The writer to the Hebrews reiterates this point as he writes in the opening chapter of Hebrews 1: " Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, **2** but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. **3** He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,". Certainly God used Moses, Elijah, and many others in the Old Testament to proclaim His Word to His people, as did the Apostles and others who have followed Jesus. But all of these followers pointed not to

themselves, they pointed to Jesus. John the Baptist, the last great prophet of the Old Testament said that Jesus must increase, and that he must decrease. The Apostle Paul later said that Christ was all in all, and that in Him we live, move and have our being.

All of the prophets and teachers in the Old Testament looked forward to the day when God would send His Son into the world, not to condemn the world but to save the world through Him. And this is what Moses and Elijah were speaking to Jesus about on the mountain, how all of the Old Testament pointed to this time when the Son of God would take on human flesh, to live, die, and rise again for the eternal salvation of all who believe in Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

To magnify and to focus on this, immediately after the Father proclaims that Jesus is His Son and that all should listen to Jesus, Jesus is left all alone. No one else is with Jesus on the mount, no Moses, no Elijah, only Jesus, God's Son in human flesh, moments before in glory, now no longer in glory. For Jesus did not come to be glorified, but to serve sinners, to live, die, and rise again so that He would provide and be the perfect payment for all sin for all time.

And so as we leave the seasons of Christmas and Epiphany, focusing on the birth and life of Jesus, now we draw our attention to the reason why Jesus

came down from heaven, Jesus came to save sinners. He came to save you and me. That is why the Father's words remind us to listen to His Son, Jesus, and to focus our attention upon Him. For Jesus alone has the words of eternal life.

Amen