

Listen to Him!

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Date: 25 January 2026

Preacher: Shawn Woo

[0:00] Good morning, everyone. It's great to gather with you to worship. Please turn with me in your Bibles to Matthew chapter 17. If you're visiting, my name is Sean. I'm one of the pastors of Trinity! Cambridge Church. It's my great joy and honor to preach God's Word to you this morning. If you don't have a Bible, you can raise your hand. We'll give you a copy that you can have. We need one over here.

David, thank you for getting that. I was texting with Pastor Kyle Huber, who preached at one of our retreats a couple years ago. He told me that I think they're not meeting because they're in New Jersey. They're snowed out and they canceled. He said, you're probably the only Sovereign Grace Church that's having service this morning east of New Mexico and north of Florida.

But hey, they canceled our rental permit, but we didn't know. We showed up this morning. The custodian wasn't there. And we called him and he came and opened the door for us. He didn't know that it was canceled either. So praise God. So he's letting us meet. They changed at last minute because the first email was saying that only after 1 p.m. permits are canceled, but now everything is canceled. But here we are. So they're letting us meet graciously. I'm so grateful to God for that.

Let me pray for the reading and preaching of God's word. Heavenly Father, we are here because you have the words of eternal life and there is no one else to whom we can turn.

Lord, we are here because salvation is found in Christ, in Jesus alone. And we are here to behold him. So Lord, exalt your name and exalt your son. Fix our eyes on him as we pay attention and listen to your word. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Please stand if you are able to honor God as I read from Matthew 17, 1 through 13.

[2:31] And after six days, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them. And his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light. And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah talking with him. And Peter said to Jesus, Lord, it is good that we are here.

If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah. He was still speaking when behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them and a voice from the cloud said, this is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased. Listen to him.

When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. But 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. And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, tell no one the vision until the son of man is raised from the dead. And the disciples asked him, then why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come? He answered, Elijah does come and he will restore all things. But I tell you that Elijah has already come and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they pleased. So also the son of man will certainly suffer at their hands.

Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist. This is God's holy and authoritative word. Please be seated. There's a popular class of YouTube videos that often go viral.

And it's the kind where someone who is very famous and talented in something goes undercover to surprise people. Do you know the, I mean, sure you know the kind of videos I'm talking about. The all NBA, all-star point guard, you know, gets professional makeup done to look like an 80-year-old grandpa.

[4 : 53] And then he goes to some basketball court in Chicago and then jukes and dunks on all the street ballers, you know. And a Grammy-winning singer disguises herself as a homey accountant.

And then she goes into a karaoke bar and starts singing all of her own songs to the amazement of all the people at the bar, you know. Or an elite power lifter who, I was talking about with this Aubrey the other day, an elite power lifter who goes undercover as a janitor at a gym.

And then, and then proceeds to outlift every hulking gym bro in the gym. And at the end, there's a great reveal and cheers all around as people stand in awe and get autographs and take selfies with these people. I think this kind of video appeals to people for a number of reasons, but a main one certainly is that, that element of surprise and satisfaction that you get when a celebrity's true talent and identity is recognized in a genuine unscripted encounter.

There's a sense of validation and vindication. The transfiguration of Jesus we see in Matthew 17 is kind of like that.

Jesus walked this earth as a son of man. Isaiah 53 said that there is no beauty or majesty to attract us to him in his earthly appearance.

[6 : 31] And that wasn't a disguise, of course. Jesus really took on human flesh. But nonetheless, by emptying himself and taking the form of a servant, being found in human form, as it says in Philippians 2, Jesus' divine glory was veiled from those around him.

This is why shortly before his death, resurrection, and ascension, Jesus prays in John 17, verse 5, Now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

That eternal glory of the Son of God was veiled during his life and ministry here on earth. And that's partly why so many people did not recognize him.

He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.

John 1, 10. In the preceding passage, Jesus declared to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and the chief priests and scribes and be killed, and on the third day be raised.

[7 : 46] And that prediction flew in the face of all Jewish first century messianic expectations. The Messiah was supposed to come and conquer. He was supposed to come and judge.

He was supposed to come and rule. He was supposed to overthrow the Roman oppressors and restore Israel to its dynastic glory. Trying to get Jesus' disciples to understand this aspect of Christ's mission was like trying to fit a square peg into a round hole.

They couldn't wrap their minds right. So much so, as we saw in last week's passage that Ed preached on, Peter even rebuked Jesus.

Jesus, stop with this nonsense. Far be from you. This will never happen to you. What are you talking about? You're the Christ. You just told me I was right.

You're the Christ, the son of the living God. How can you go suffer at the hands of the chief priests and the scribes? And how can you die? Remember what you told me?

[8 : 49] On this rock, I will build my church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. You and me, that's us. We're going all the way. Nothing can stop us.

And then Jesus splashes cold water in Peter's face, proverbially speaking, to wake him up from his Satan-inspired delusions.

Get behind me, Satan. You are a hindrance to me, for you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man. This would have caused much confusion and consternation.

How can the glorious son of God suffer and die? It's impossible. It's not supposed to happen. A suffering son of man cannot be the glorious son of God.

Or can he? As doubt and insecurity creep into the minds of the disciples, God peels back the veil and reveals the radiance of Christ's divine glory.

[10:00] And as Christ is transfigured before the eyes of Peter, James, and John, he is validated and he is vindicated as the son of God. This is who he is, no matter what happens to him in the coming days.

And that's the main point of this passage. The suffering son of man is the glorious son of God to whom we should listen. I'm going to first talk about the glorious son of God in verses 1 to 8.

And then secondly, I'll talk about the suffering son of man in verses 9 to 13. But I'm going to give most of my time to that first eight verses. Verse 1 begins, As Ed noted last week, in all three of the synoptic gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the transfiguration of Jesus occurs right on the heels of Peter's confession and Jesus' prediction of his suffering and death and resurrection.

So the phrase, after six days, intentionally ties the transfiguration back to that pronouncement by Jesus. The transfiguration in this way serves as a foretaste of, foretaste of the fulfillment of the coming of the kingdom of God in power after Jesus' death and resurrection and ascension.

In Luke 19, 12, Jesus tells a parable that's meant to be a corrective to people who suppose that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately. Jesus says to them, A noble man went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return.

[11:50] Jesus speaking of himself. He's going to go into a far country. He's going to die. He's going to be raised. He's going to ascend to the right hand of the Father. And he's going to be that son of man in Daniel 7, 13, 14, approach to God, the ancient of days, and receive from him eternal dominion and authority and a kingdom.

That's when the son of man comes into his kingdom and the kingdom comes in power. And this is why immediately before he is crucified, Jesus says this in Matthew 26, 64, from now on you will see the son of man seated at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven.

So that's the fulfillment, but the transfiguration is a foretaste and a preview of that coming reality. It's like a movie trailer. It's not the full thing, but it's made up of the real thing.

It's a glimpse of the real thing. Verse 1 continues, And after six days, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves.

Jesus usually travels everywhere with his 12 apostles, but there are especially intimate occasions when he takes only his inner circle of Peter, James, and John.

[13:05] For example, three occasions are noted in the Synoptic Gospels when he is raising up Jairus' daughter from the dead. He only has with him Peter, James, and John. When he goes into the Garden of Gethsemane and leaves the rest of the apostles there to go in further to pray and agonize before God, he only takes with him Peter, James, and John.

And so likewise, here at the transfiguration, it's only Peter, James, and John who get to behold this vision. And why these three in particular? It doesn't say, but they are each crucial foundational building blocks of the church of Christ.

Peter, as we talked about a few weeks ago, is the leader among the apostles. He's the tip of the spear. He's the one, he's the rock on whom Jesus said, I will build my church.

James is the first of the 12 apostles to be martyred in Acts chapter 12, verse 1. And John is the beloved disciple who wrote the last gospel, the gospel of John, and the last book of the Bible, the Revelation.

He is known as the apostle of love and light because those themes of love and light dominate his letters and all of his writings. And they're prominent themes, more prominent in John's writings than any other New Testament authors.

[14:24] It's these three that go along with Jesus up a high mountain by themselves. And I think having three of them is no accident because according to biblical Old Testament criteria, a charge may be established only on the testimony of two or three witnesses, Deuteronomy 17, 6.

So three is in one sense the minimal number of witnesses that is required to give credible testimony regarding the transfiguration of Jesus and his identity as the son of God.

So recounting this event later in 2 Peter 1, 16 to 18, Peter writes, For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For when he received honor and glory from God the Father and the voice was born to him by the majestic glory, this is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased.

We ourselves heard this very voice born from heaven for we were with him on the holy mountain. So there needed to be three to bear witness to who Jesus is, his identity.

[15:35] And what is this holy mountain where the transfiguration takes place? Mountains are often the place of divine revelation, divine encounter in scripture. The high mountains function in some ways as a halfway point, a bridge between heaven and earth.

In fact, you could write and trace almost the entire redemptive history from just looking at what happens on mountains in scripture. The first creation, the Garden of Eden, was on a mountain.

Genesis doesn't tell us that, but Ezekiel 28, 13 to 14 does. It says that Eden, the Garden of God, was on the holy mountain of God. And then after humanity's fall and after their utter depravity, God judges the earth with a flood covering it.

And after the floodwaters subside and new creation is born, and where is that new creation born? On the mountain, mountain of Ararat. And of course, one of the most famous mountains, Mount Horeb, which is frequently called the Mountain of God and known, better known as Mount Sinai, the two probably just refer to the same.

Sinai might refer to the region because there is also called Wilderness of Sinai. And maybe Horeb is the peak in a similar way. Mount Everest is the peak within the Himalayas.

[17:02] It was at Horeb that God appeared to Moses in the burning bush in Exodus 3. It was in Horeb that God, that descended in the cloud of smoke and fire and thunder and lightning and earthquake in Exodus 19 to 24 to give to Israelites the Ten Commandments.

It was at Horeb that Moses, Aaron, and Nadab, and Abihu, and the 70 elders of Israel ascended at least partway up Mount Horeb in Exodus to behold God and to eat with Him.

It was from Horeb that God declared His name and passed before Moses claiming the Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

Exodus 34. Similarly, it was at Horeb in 1 Kings 19 when after confronting the prophets of Baal and defeating them in a spectacular showdown, Elijah flees Jezebel, who is trying to kill him.

He ends up at Mount Horeb where the Lord God meets with Elijah and speaks to him. And similar to how Moses took up Aaron, and Nadab, and Abihu up Mount Horeb to see God, here Jesus takes Peter, James, and John up a high mountain to behold the divine glory of the Son.

[18:23] And it says in verse 2 that Jesus was transfigured before them and His face shone like the sun and His clothes became white as light. Only heavenly beings are described in such a manner.

Only those who are in the presence of God Himself in His throne room. At Jesus' resurrection and ascension, angelic beings appear and they are described in Matthew 28 verse 3 as having an appearance like lightning and His clothing white as snow.

This is the glory that prophet Daniel saw in his vision of the Son of Man. In Daniel chapter 10 verse 5 to 6, This man was clothed in linen. His body was like beryl.

His face like the appearance of lightning. His eyes like flaming torches. Try to imagine that for a moment. Jesus is transfigured before your very eyes.

His face shines like the sun. Imagine that brilliance. People say that a tiny piece of the sun the size of a thumbnail is brighter, is as bright as a million candles shining at once.

[19:36] We can't even stare at the sun without its brilliant light burning our retina. The sun is the brightest thing people see day after day. The only thing brighter than the sun is lightning.

The face of Jesus when it shines with divine glory is compared to both the sun and the lightning in the scriptures because they're the brightest things known to human experience.

And what is this supposed to reveal about Jesus? What Peter declared earlier on? That he is the Christ, the Son of God.

Because God is described in Psalm 104 verse 2 as covering himself with light, as with a garment. Because as 1 Timothy 6.16 says, God dwells in unapproachable light.

1 John 1.5, God is light and in him is no darkness at all. These descriptions capture the perfect holiness and radiance of God.

[20:43] In God there is no imperfection, no blemish, no evil, no sin. Even in the brightest and sunniest places on earth in the world there are lurking shadows.

There are dark, there's darkness everywhere we go but in God there is no such thing. He is the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

Can you imagine such perfection? Can you imagine such beauty? All that is good and beautiful in this world are but dim reflections of the glory of God.

Even the most transcendent of arts and music do not attain perfection. Perfection eludes all of our human endeavors. But God is perfection.

What is it like to behold such beauty? Jonathan Edwards reflecting on God's glory and beauty wrote this. For as God is infinitely the greatest being so he is allowed to be infinitely the most beautiful and excellent.

[22:01] And all the beauty to be found throughout the whole creation is but the reflection of the diffused beams of that being who hath an infinite fullness of brightness and glory.

God is the foundation and fountain of all being and all beauty. Isn't this our dearest hope?

Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God. Now it says in 1 Corinthians 13 we see in a mirror dimly but then face to face now I know in part but then I shall know fully even as I have been fully known.

Imagine that. Knowing God fully as you have been fully known by God himself. One day we shall be like him because we shall see him as he is.

It says in 1 John 3:2. Isn't that our dearest hope? Isn't the dearest hope of the beloved to behold the lover? One thing have I asked of the Lord and this I will seek after to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life and to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple.

[23:33] Peter, James, and John have the privilege of beholding Jesus face to face in his divine glory. But as they behold Jesus they are distracted by the presence of two prominent individuals from the Old Testament.

Moses and Elijah who are talking with Jesus. I think there are several reasons why Moses and Elijah in particular show up here. Many people have said Moses represents the law.

Elijah represents the prophets and that together the law and the prophets and therefore their coming down now is a visual representation of what Jesus taught in Matthew 5:17 that he is the one who fulfills the law and the prophets.

That's certainly possible. I think there's maybe even more immediate reasons contextually. First, both Moses and Elijah were closely associated with Jewish messianic expectations.

We already know from Matthew 16:14 that the crowds were speculating that Jesus might be Elijah or he might be one of the prophets. Since Malachi 4:5 prophesied that Elijah would come before the coming of God, they expected, they waited for an Elijah.

[24:56] Similarly, Deuteronomy 18:15 prophesied that God would raise up for his people a prophet like Moses. So again, they were expecting someone like Moses to come again.

And the fact that both Moses and Elijah met supernatural ends fueled this messianic fervor because Elijah, as you remember, did not die. He was carried up to heaven in a whirlwind in chariots of fire, 2 Kings 2:11.

And Moses, likewise, even though he did die, it says in Deuteronomy 34:6, it says that God himself buried him so that no man knows where he was buried. So it is no coincidence that these two figures in particular appear in light of these messianic expectations.

And secondly, both Moses and Elijah are individuals in the Old Testament who came tantalizingly close to seeing God in the Old Testament. They are the only two individuals of whom it is said in the Old Testament that the Lord God personally passed by in front of them to reveal himself.

In Exodus 33-34 at Mount Horeb, God put Moses in the cleft of a rock and then covered him so that he cannot see his face lest he die. And then he passed before him so that Moses could see his back.

[26:19] And then when Moses saw God's back, he fell face down on the ground and worshipped him. Similarly, in 1 Kings 19, again, at Mount Horeb, God told Elijah to stand on the mount before the Lord and then God proceeded to pass by him.

But he says repeatedly that Elijah did not see God. He only heard his voice. And when he hears God's voice, Elijah's response is similar to Moses.

He wraps his face with his cloak so as not to see God. God. And God, in his grace, reveals to Moses and Elijah in this instance at the transfiguration what they did not get to behold during their life on earth.

Again, on a holy mountain, they get to behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Christ. But Peter, as he has a tendency to do, puts his foot in his mouth.

Verse 4, Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah. In their accounts of the transfiguration, Mark and Luke explicitly comment that Peter did not know what he was saying.

[27 : 42] He's confused. He says in Mark 9, 6, he did not know what to say for they were terrified. Awestruck, flat-footed, Peter awkwardly tries to make himself useful.

It's a simple, hospitable gesture to extend the stay of the guests. Whoa, some really important people are here. How can we extend this a little longer? It's good for us to be here.

Let's linger a little while. Let's make some tents. I could do that. I'm a fisherman, but I know how to do that. The import of what he's saying escapes him because the word tent is the same word that is translated in the Greek translation of the Old Testament as tabernacle.

So Peter, Peter's offer, he recalls the feast of the tabernacle, which recalls how God's people dwelled in tents during their time in the wilderness and how they built for God himself a tabernacle to dwell in, the tent of meeting where they met with God.

So Peter is trying to honor these esteemed guests by making three tents. However, this well-meaning gesture is very misguided. It's so misguided that while Peter is still talking, he says, in verse five, God interrupts him.

[29 : 04] Hold it. when behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them and a voice from the cloud said, this is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased.

Listen to him. While Peter is entertaining the thought of honoring the three esteemed men with tents, God the Father stops him right in his tracks and then with his voice puts a bright neon sign arrow pointing to Jesus only and says, this is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased.

Listen to him. This is reminiscent of Jesus' baptism when he was baptized in chapter three. The spirit of God descends upon him like a dove and the father cries out from heaven saying, this is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased.

We saw all three persons of the Trinity there at Jesus' baptism and we see the same thing in our passage this morning. God the Father speaks from the cloud of glory, his delight over his son.

God the son is transfigured to reveal his divine glory and God the spirit appears in the form of this numinous cloud. Look at how this cloud is described in verse six.

[30 : 20] Behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them. That's a rare word in the New Testament, overshadow. It's used in the gospels to describe the transfiguration only with one exception, Luke 135, where the angel Gabriel announces to Mary, the Holy Spirit shall come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.

Therefore, the child to be born will be called the Son of God. Overshadowing in the gospels is what the Holy Spirit does. It is no surprise in that the ancient Greek translation of Exodus 40, 35, which describes the cloud of God's presence, the glory of God filling the tabernacle, the tent of meeting, it uses the exact same Greek word to say that the cloud overshadowed the temple, the tabernacle.

This is what later Jewish theology called the Shekinah glory, the dwelling of the visible glory of God. This is the Holy Spirit. And the Spirit of God manifests the glory of God as a bright cloud.

It's the same great cloud with brightness around it that Ezekiel saw in his vision of the glory of God in Ezekiel 1, 4. But if you think about it, a bright cloud is an oxymoron.

If you look up a thesaurus for the word cloud, it will suggest words like darkness, shadow, shroud, not things that you would describe as radiant or bright.

[31:58] When something is clouded, it is hidden. But this is a bright, radiant cloud that gives forth light. This paradoxical description captures how the incomprehensible, unknowable God reveals himself and makes himself known.

Isaiah 45, 15 says, truly, you are a God who hides himself, O God of Israel, the Savior. There is knowledge of God that is hidden from us.

We can never fully wrap our minds around who God is. We are too puny for that. And yet, throughout history, we see that God graciously condescends, comes down to our level, to reveal himself to us time and time again.

And we read earlier from our call to worship, it says in Hebrews 1, 1-2, long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets. 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.

He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature. God has revealed himself to us in his Son. No one has seen God.

[33:17] God, the only Son who is at the Father's side, he has made him known, John 1, 18. This is why Jesus can say in John 14, 9, whoever has seen me has seen the Father.

And in John 14, John 10, 30, I and the Father are one. All the fullness of God is pleased to dwell in Jesus, the Son.

So do you see what's happening here? The triune God is revealing himself in Jesus in a way that he has never revealed himself before.

Here is Jesus Christ, God's Son, the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, radiating the very glory of God. What I would give to see that.

And one day soon, we shall all see that, all those who belong to Christ. So God, the Father, is rebuking Peter here.

[34:26] Peter's poor guy, right? He just got rebuked by Jesus. Now he gets rebuked by God, the Father. No, no, there is no need for three tents. Moses and Elijah have not appeared to you, James and John, so that you can gawk at them.

No, they are fans. They're here to see Jesus. And what they could not do previously during their lives on earth, their greatest desire that did not bear fruit in their life on earth, now comes to glorious fruition as they behold Jesus Christ whom they have been waiting for.

Listen to him. Don't worry about these other guys. The days of the tabernacle and the temple are no more because John 1, 14 says, the word became flesh and dwelt among us and we have seen his glory.

Glory is of the only son from the father. And that word, dwelt among us, is literally he pitched a tent among us. He tabernacled among us. Jesus is himself the very dwelling place of God.

He is the new temple, it says in John 2, 19 to 20. And all who are united to Jesus Christ by faith, God is building into his dwelling place.

[35:55] You all are the dwelling place of God. The house of his spirit. You don't need tents anymore. You don't need tabernacles anymore.

Imagine how shocking this revelation would have been for these good Jews, Peter, James, and John. John 9, 28 to 29, a man born blind from, a man who was born blind is healed by Jesus and he starts to bear witness to Jesus and tells people about Jesus.

I once was blind but now I see and then the Pharisees sneer at him and they revile him saying, you are his disciple but we are disciples of Moses.

We know that God has spoken to Moses but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from. That's how much the Jews revered and trusted in Moses but in the transfiguration, God the Father draws his lines very, very clearly.

As Hebrews 3, 3 to 6 says, for Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses. As much more glory as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself.

[37 : 10] For every house is built by someone but the builder of all things is God. He's saying Jesus is God. Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant to testify to the things that were to be spoken later but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son.

Moses is merely a servant. Christ is God's son. When Moses came down from Mount Sinai after talking with God, the skin of his face shone, it says.

But this glory as we see in 2 Corinthians 3, 13 and 15 is a fading glory. It's merely an external reflection of the glory of God that he had just been in the presence of.

But in the case of Jesus, his glory shines from his essence, from his very being, from the inside out. This is an essential glory, the unveiling of the divine glory that Jesus, earlier we saw from John, that he said he had before with the Father in eternity past.

Moses' light was the light of the moon, merely reflecting the light of the sun. Jesus' light is the light of the sun. So the Father says, this is my beloved son.

[38 : 35] Yeah, sure, Moses' beloved servant, great. Elijah, this is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased. Listen to him.

This is why in verse 8, I love this, when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only. all three transfiguration accounts in Matthew, Mark, and Luke emphasize this, that at the end, Moses and Elijah were gone.

No one but Jesus only remained. Why? Because Jesus only is the Christ, the son of the living God. Because Jesus only, there's salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved, but the name of Jesus only.

Because there is one God and one mediator between God and man, and that's the man, Christ Jesus. It says in 1 Timothy 2, 5. Because Jesus says in John 14, 6, I am the way, the truth, and the life, and no one comes to the Father except through me.

because Jesus is the only one. So no, I don't mean to be rude, but Jesus and Moses and Elijah are not in the same category.

[40 : 05] No civic or religious leader, no wise man or guru or monk or prophet in all of human history is in the same category as Jesus.

Jesus we're talking about this in our CG.

It upsets me that his name gets mentioned alongside all these people as if he's just one of them. One of many. He's not one of many.

There's only one. I pray, this is my prayer for you that whenever you come to worship here, you gather with Trinity Cambridge Church that you leave with an eye full of Jesus only.

No one but Jesus only. It's quite the privilege for Peter, James, and John, isn't it? But this glorious vision is predictably terrifying for the disciples.

[41 : 12] It says in verse 6, when the disciples heard this, heard the Father speak, they fell on their faces and were terrified. This was the response of Moses when he fell upon his face on the ground and worshiped God.

This is what Elijah did when he wrapped his face to cover himself from the presence of God. This is what Isaiah did when he was called and saw, Woe is me, for I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.

This is how every sinful human being reacts when they are faced with the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. He is pure light and there is no darkness in him at all.

God, it says, is of purer eyes than to see evil. So, in Habakkuk 1.13, so holy is he that the priests and the Levites were allowed to enter the tabernacle, only the priests and the Levites, so that it says in Numbers 18, 21 to 22, the people of Israel do not come near the tent of meeting lest they bear sin and die.

How can a sinful man like me with overweening pride self-sufficient arrogance and self-focused insecurity and selfish impatience and sinful anger?

[42:36] How can a man like me enter into the cloud of divine glory and behold the face of God? I will bear my sin and die.

My sinfulness alone is disqualifying enough, but to make this point even clearer, when he gives the requirements for the priests in Leviticus 21, 16 to 21, he says, it's not enough that you're a descendant of Aaron, of the priestly class.

No, any, any Levite that has any blemish is not allowed in the presence of God. And these so-called blemishes get quite specific.

No hunchback or a dwarf or a man with a defect in his sight or an itching disease or scabs to list just a few. This is not because God is an, what do you call it, an ableist or whatever.

Is that right? But because, it's not because that because he's, it's because he's trying to teach us that God is holy. Approaching the living God is no casual thing.

[44:03] It is a fearful thing. And no man with any blemish, any sin, any imperfection can approach him. I'm not a hunchback or a dwarf, but I do have ugly hunched shoulders.

I'm diminutive in stature. And I have all kinds of scabs and scars and blemishes that only Hannah has ever seen. Right?

How am I supposed to approach God? Soon our city is going to be blanketed with snow, pristine snow, if the weather focus is right.

And I love that part of our city, our area. I would miss seeing the snow if I were to move away from here to a place that has no snow.

It's so beautiful. Pure. But soon thereafter, probably within hours, the white snow is going to be soiled by our muddy shoes, blue salt, and dog urine and feces.

[45:29] Have you ever felt hesitant to step on virgin snow? Wake up early in the morning, go out to Gore Park, which I've done in the past, not a single footprint on the field.

Like, you feel hesitant. I don't want to be the first person to ruin that. Have you ever wished that snow could stay unsullied like they are when they first freshly fall?

What sinner dares to approach the pure and holy God with their dirty hands and unclean lips and impure hearts?

What sinner dares to do that? We must be cleansed. We must be purified.

But how? This is why the glorious Son of God must be, it is necessary that he be the suffering Son of Man.

[46:36] Jesus must die as the atoning sacrifice for sin to cleanse us of all unrighteousness. This is why Jesus again returns to this unpopular topic of his impending death in verses 10 to 13.

He tells them the prophesied Elijah already has come. That was John the Baptist. He's already prepared the way. And these Jewish leaders and these Gentiles did to him whatever they wanted. They beheaded him and killed him.

And you know what? The Son of Man is going to suffer in the same way. This is why Jesus commands them in verse 9, tell no one the vision until the Son of Man is raised from the dead.

Because if the other disciples find out about what happened on the mountain and what the transfiguration that took place, it will hinder his mission to seek and save the lost by dying on the cross for their sin.

They will not allow it. No, no, no. You are the glorious Son of God. That's not the path for you. But Jesus knew that was the path for him.

[47 : 40] Notice how this whole experience was intended to prepare Peter, James, and John as witnesses in verse 2. It says, He was transfigured before them.

Verse 3, Behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus. Verse 5, Behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them and God the Father speaks to them saying, listen to him.

This whole experience is designed to help Peter, James, and John to see and never forget that Jesus is the glorious Son of God because their faith will be tested.

They will see this glorious Son of God get flogged and sped on and stripped naked and crucified as a suffering Son of Man. But they must remember this vision that the death and the resurrection of the Messiah is God's salvation plan after all.

Just because Jesus was born of Mary, just because he was a baby like us we all once were, just because Jesus walked the dusty roads of the Middle East like millions before him and since, just because Jesus died a shameful death on the cross, do not be tempted to disbelieve that he is the glorious Son of God.

[48 : 59] Jesus needed to die on the cross. It is there he dies and he spills his blood because blood is what atones for sin and as the glorious Son of God his blood is sufficient to atone for all of our sins so that when we put our trust in Jesus and when we confess our sins and all of our soiled snow and repent of it, as Brittany read from Isaiah 1.18 this morning in her prophecy, though your sins are as red as scarlet, it shall be as white as snow.

When I was giving you guys earlier a biblical theology of mountains, I left out one very, very important mountain, perhaps the most important mountain, it's Mount Zion where Solomon builds his temple where atoning sacrifices for sin are made and that mountain has another name, we find this out in 2 Chronicles 3.1 this mountain, Mount Zion is also called in earlier era Mount Moriah where Abraham first offered his only son, his beloved son, Isaac, as a sacrifice and God provided a substitute, a ram, to die in the place of his son so that he might live do you think

God's been planning this all along? Yeah. From Mount Moriah, the place of sacrifice that's substitute to Mount Zion where sacrifices offered, lamb is offered on the day of atonement and then to the Mount of crucifixion where we all deserve to die and God gives instead his only son.

If Mount Horeb is the place where we receive God's law, Mount Zion, Mount Moriah is where we receive the mercy and grace of God. So, all you, my brothers and sisters who long for that Mount of Transfiguration, remember, that path to Mount Transfiguration leads through the Mount of crucifixion.

It is when we behold the light of the knowledge of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the glory of God revealed in the face of Jesus Christ who died for us on that cross.

[52 : 00] that's when we are redeemed, forgiven, united with Christ and sanctified to be more and more like him.

And this is why Jesus gives that main exhortation, anyone who would come after me must carry his cross and follow me. yes, we long for that glory, the divine glory of the Son of God and we will see it one day.

We will be transported into heavenly eternal ecstasy and when we behold that beatific vision, that blessed vision of God seeing him face to face and we long for it and we wait for it, we pine for it but as we do that we live this life knowing that we must carry our cross through the mount of crucifixion and then we will get there.

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father, please, please enlarge our vision of your Son Jesus Christ.

oh, Father, if we could see his beauty, oh, all these trifling temptations of this world would lose all their luster.

[53 : 45] open up the eyes of our hearts so that by eyes of faith, Lord, we might behold Jesus more clearly today than we ever have before.

In his precious name we pray. Amen.