

## Transfiguration

February 14 2021

Luke 9:28-45

Children's Message: This morning I am going to go a little Big Bang Theory on you. In the Television show, I always bust a gut laughing at the interplay between Sheldon and his mother Mary. Sheldon represents science and rational thought. While Mary is portrayed as a religious nut. As Sheldon has so often called her. She is considered backward because her faith has blinded her to the truths of science. Religion and science have only been in opposition for the last one hundred years. Before that they strongly supported each other.

This Wednesday coming we celebrate Ash Wednesday and the start of Lent. On this day we have ashes placed on our foreheads in the sign of the cross. Usually the pastor will say "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return". These words got me thinking. Not so much about our mortality but about dust. Actually, maybe more about our physical immortality. I will explain later. Our bodies when we die decay back into dust. So what kind of dust are we made of? We have all types of minerals and elements in our present bodies. Now you can buckle up your seat belts because we are going for a ride.

There are elements in our bodies that are much older than the years we have been alive. We are made up of star dust or cosmic dust. A planetary scientist and star dust expert named Dr. Ashley King

explained that nearly all the elements in the human body were made in a star. That the elements in our bodies may have come through several Super Novas. She also has said that 97% of our human bodies are made up of star dust. Hold on this gets better. It is also very possible that some of the hydrogen and lithium in our bodies that make up 9.5% started at the Big Bang. So some of that hydrogen and lithium in you and I were present when God created the universe. There are elements in us that are 13 Billion years old. Maybe the pastors should be saying, "That you are cosmic dust and to cosmic dust you shall return."

I found it wild to think that there are elements in us that are as old as the universe when God created it. Those elements in our bodies have kept on going and traveling for 13 Billion years until they came to rest in our bodies. When we die and return to dust they may continue on for another trillion years. It is an odd concept of physical immortality. It kind of makes sense when we consider the law of physics that states, that matter is neither created or destroyed.

Ash Wednesday has been transformed. I will look at this day at it differently and understand it deeply. We are made of cosmic dust. Some of which was there when God created the universe. I guess that those elements physically make us Children of Light.

Adult's Message: I often wonder what more could be said or learned about the major feasts of the church. There are only so many ways you can say the same thing about a given topic. So I asked myself the question, how do other Christians understand the Transfiguration? Do they have insights that we may have forgotten? What insight or

interpretation might they have? So I went looking and I found a wonderful approach to understanding the Transfiguration. This perspective is heavily based in scripture and comes from a traditional church in the Middle East. I will share with you some of the interesting points.

Why would Our Lord want to transfigure? What was the purpose in doing it? It has been understood that Jesus transfigured in order to show His disciples His glory before His crucifixion. So that it may be a source of comfort and encouragement during His trial and crucifixion. Most importantly so they could see the power of His resurrection. The disciples would not be present in the tomb with Jesus when He rose from the dead. Jesus also wanted to correct the misunderstanding that the Messiah was an earthly king. Jesus also wanted to prove Peter's confession of faith that He is the Son of the Living God. Mt 16:16, "Simon Peter answered and said' You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Lk 9:20, "Peter answered and said, 'The Christ of God". That Jesus is the God of the Old Testament and the New. That is why Moses, Elijah, Peter, James and John were present at the Transfiguration.

Why did Jesus choose Peter, James and John to be the ones present at the Transfiguration? They made up His inner core of disciples. I heard a beautiful and fresh interpretation of why these three were present. Peter represents faith. It was his confession of faith that Jesus is the Messiah that was so important. We saw it in Mat 16:16 and Luke 9:20.

James represents deeds. James 2:20, "But do you want to know O' foolish man that faith without works is dead." Mt 5:16, "Let your light

shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven.”

John represents love. He was the beloved disciple of Our Lord. The one Jesus entrusted the care of His mother to while dying on the cross. The three virtues of faith, deeds and love are expressed wonderfully in Galatians 5:6, “But faith working through love.” To believe in Christ involves faith working through love.

There are four transfigurations that Our Lord would go through. The one we just read about on Mount Tabor is only the first. Our Lord would be transfigured again at His resurrection. The disciples would have a difficult time recognizing Him at first. Not expecting Him to have risen from the dead. His body was solid but He could pass through walls and doors. The next transfiguration was the Lord’s ascension into heaven. Acts 1:9, “Now when He had spoken these things while they watched, He was taken up and a cloud received Him out of their sight.” The final transfiguration is more apocalyptic. It will happen when the Lord returns.

Mountains have usually been the place one goes to spend time with God. To go there and listen to what God speaks into our hearts. Jesus often went to the mountains to pray. Mount Tabor is the place where Jesus is transfigured. The Mount of Olives is where Jesus would speak to God about His coming crucifixion and death. Finally Our Lord would be crucified on Golgotha which is also a mountain outside of Jerusalem. It would be there that He would go to the Father after commending His Spirit.

Hopefully this information has helped you to look at the elements of this story in a different way. I certainly appreciated it.

This past year has been one of continuous transformations. That is the best word to politely describe the experience. Throughout it all have you let your light shine? Have you let it shine as brightly as it could have? Remember that Jesus has given you this little light to shine. Sounds like a hymn we all know. True transfiguration happens in us and through us when we let this light shine in our world. Live our faith and grow in it. Let our good works give glory to God and do all things with love. Remember Peter, James and John. Do not worry Jesus will keep your batteries charged. Pastor D