

Matthew 17:1-9 (NIV)

1 After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. 2 There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. 3 Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus. 4 Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” 5 While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!” 6 When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. 7 But Jesus came and touched them. “Get up,” he said. “Don’t be afraid.” 8 When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus. 9 As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, “Don’t tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.”

Have you ever wondered why Transfiguration falls right at the end of the Epiphany season? It really is a proper place to put this wondrous event. When we think of the purpose of Epiphany and when we think of what follows Epiphany, the Transfiguration really couldn’t fall at a better spot.

The season of Epiphany is a season of revelation. Jesus reveals himself as the Son of God by his works and his words. We find no greater work, no greater miracle than his transfiguration. Jesus’ face shines like the sun. His clothes become as white as the light. The glory that he has been masking under his humanity shines forth for a brief moment. All of the miracles that Jesus performed up to this point were shadows compared to this display of glory. The pinnacle of glory is a fitting end to the Epiphany season. There is no doubt that Jesus is indeed God’s Son.

The season that follows Epiphany is the season of Lent. Lent is the season where we follow Jesus’ passion. We watch him journey to Jerusalem. We witness his dealings with the chief priests and teachers of the law. We are eye-witnesses to his suffering in the garden of Gethsemane. We gaze in disbelief as he willingly submits to his captors. We watch in horror as he is beaten and bruised. The season of Lent forces us to look inside and realize that we put Jesus through this. But that’s not the main focus of Lent. The main focus of Lent is the salvation that Jesus is winning for us. He is willingly doing all of this so that we can be saved. It is the height of God’s love for us. Jesus’ transfiguration reminds us that he is indeed God’s Son who is capable of saving us.

As you ready yourself for Lent, don’t lose sight of the glory of the Transfiguration. Heed the Father’s command and listen to your Savior. Listen to the words of comfort and promise that he speaks to his disciples. Listen to the words of warning and judgment. Listen to his willingness to go to the cross for us. Listen to his unparalleled forgiveness. Listen to his cry of victory. It is good for us to be here!