



## **Transfiguration of our Lord, Year A**

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Gospel Text - Matthew 17:1-9*

### **Matthew 17:1-9**

<sup>1</sup> Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. <sup>2</sup> And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became bright as light. <sup>3</sup> Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. <sup>4</sup> Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will set up three tents here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." <sup>5</sup> While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!" <sup>6</sup> When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. <sup>7</sup> But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Get up and do not be afraid." <sup>8</sup> And when they raised their eyes, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone.

<sup>9</sup> As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, "Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

## **SERMON TEXT:**

During the spring of 2020, when we were all staying at home and trying not to spread Covid, there was a lot of joking about what people were wearing for on-line meetings.

It was mostly that people would put on a decent-looking top but wear pajama bottoms or shorts with it, because nobody was going to see it on a video meeting.

(I want to assure today as I write this that I am not in my PJs!)

CNN reported during that time pajama sales increased by 143% but sales of pants decreased by 13%. I can remember in those days of working from home that if it was a work day, I felt like I should dress appropriately but also “appropriate” seemed different in that time; so I would wear one of my church t-shirts.

There were experts encouraging us to still get up and get dressed – To put on what we would normally wear to work or school. To spend our days at home in something besides our pajamas, because it is scientifically proven that the clothes we wear affect how we think about ourselves.

The clothes we wear affect how we think about ourselves....

I think I would like a set of those dazzling white clothes that Jesus was wearing up on the mountain as his appearance changes and he’s there with Moses and Elijah and God’s voice rings out from the clouds: *clothes that became bright as light.*

Imagine what it would be like to spend your day wearing sunshine. Imagine what it would be like to spend your day wearing Jesus' holiness. That would be a day to remember!

You know why Jesus so shiny, right? He contains God! We don't always get to see the *shiny* Jesus, but the God in Jesus comes out in other ways: casting out demons, healing people, walking on water, calming storms, confronting the powerful with no fear of them. That's what you can do when you are God.

Here's the most amazing thing about that though: Jesus lays his dazzling clothes aside.

Not long after his transfiguration, Jesus goes to Jerusalem. He is met by enthusiastic crowds waving palms and cheering him on, but later that week he is arrested. And the shiny-ness seems to disappear.

In fact, he is stripped of his clothes not long after his transfiguration on the mountain top.

He is whipped and then clothed with a purple robe – purple is a sign of royalty.

He is given a *crown* – but one made out of thorns. The soldiers mock him for being a pretend king.

Then he is dressed back in his own clothes for the walk to the place of his execution and just before they nail him to a cross, they take his clothes away again and roll the dice to see who will get to keep them.

I wonder if Peter, James or John remember the beauty of Jesus being transfigured as they see him being arrested and tortured. Does Jesus look bright as light in that moment?

But we know – that’s not the end of the story. God raises Jesus and clothes him once again with glory. And Jesus shares his clothes with us. We do get to experience what it’s like to be dazzling like him.

When someone is baptized we say they are “clothed with Christ.” In baptism Jesus shares his identity with us. Jesus lends us his status, his glory. We aren’t just covered, we are lifted. We are given a new identity. We shine like Jesus in God’s eyes.

Yes, I know. We don’t always feel so shiny. We maybe feel more days like the disciples are described: curled up on the ground, overcome by fear. We know the messes we make and the ways we are most definitely not like Jesus.

I’m just here this morning to remind us all how God is working this out. Jesus shares his brilliance with us. Lends us his coat. The presence of God infuses us all. There is glory all around.

The end of the process is done. Jesus took care of that. God is just working out the last details for us in this life.

At the beginning of the funeral service, we begin by placing a white cloth over the coffin or over the urn. We are all reminded by the voice of the presider:

*All who are baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*

*In our baptism we were clothed with Christ.*

*In the day of Christ' coming, we shall be clothed with glory.*

In other words, Jesus has us covered – in life and in death.

It is scientifically proven that what we wear influences how we think about ourselves. We don't have to wonder how God feels about us or what God thinks about us, because Jesus has us covered. We are beloved by God, from the beginning and at the end.

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