

The Lord's Message: Transfiguration: The Glory of Jesus Revealed

Date: February 15, 2026

Where: Tilghman Methodist Church

Scripture Reference: Matthew 17:1-9

We all have milestones in life. A milestone is a significant, specific point in time or event that marks a major accomplishment, turning point, or phase completion in a project, business, or life. Examples of milestones in life include being born, graduating from high school, first car, first date, first kiss, marriage, the date of a child or children being born, and the list goes on. Today, we are celebrating an important milestone in Jesus' life. Most of the milestones in Jesus' life are very familiar to us, being born in Bethlehem, performing His first miracle of turning water into wine at the wedding in Cana, dying on a cross, three days later being resurrected from a borrowed man's tomb, walking around and speaking to over 500 people for 40 days, and then ascending into heaven. Before His death on the cross, there was a major milestone that we are celebrating today, His transfiguration.

Let us pray.

The place of Jesus' transfiguration was most likely on Mt. Tabor. Mt. Tabor was located in the lower Galilee region of northern Israel, standing alone in the Jezreel Valley, approximately 11 miles from the Sea of Galilee. It stands 1,886 feet tall. Not a short hike, by any means.

Looking in the Bible in **Matthew 17:1**, it says that Jesus took Peter, James and John, and led them up a high mountain. The first question that we need to have answered is why? The answer is found in the beginning of this verse, "After six days." What happened six days before this? Let's go back to the previous chapter for the answer.

At the beginning of chapter 16, the Pharisees and the Sadducees get together to question Jesus for a sign for heaven. Jesus replied in **Matthew 16:4** that a sign would not be given to them.

Later on in the chapter, when Jesus and the disciples are at Caesarea Phillipi, Jesus asked the disciples the question, “Who do you say I am? Caesarea Phillipi was the major center for pagan worship in Jesus’ day. Peter replies in **Matthew 16:16**, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Then Jesus explains to all the disciples in verse 21 that “He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests, and teachers of the law, and that He must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.” Instead of Peter supporting Jesus, he rebukes Jesus and says, “Never Lord! This shall never happen to You!” Jesus turns and says to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me: you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.”

The chapter concludes with Jesus talking to the disciples about surrendering their lives to God. If they do this, then they will see Jesus returning in glory with His angels. Jesus would then reward each person for what they have done, in **Matthew 16:27**.

This all happened in those six days. The Pharisees and Sadducees wanted a sign to believe that Jesus came from heaven. Peter declares that Jesus is the Son of God, but then rebukes Jesus when Jesus talks about His death and resurrection. Jesus concludes with talking to the disciples about surrendering their lives to the will of God, in return they will be rewarded.

Jesus knows that the disciples did not take all of this in, especially His three closest disciples, Peter, James, and John. That is the reason Jesus takes them up on a high mountain to prove to them that He is the Son of God. At this time, they have known Jesus as a carpenter’s son from Nazareth, a miracle worker, an outstanding preacher, and a champion of social justice. They have not fully accepted Jesus as the Son of God. They need a sign to prove without a doubt that Jesus is the Son of God.

These are the same three disciples that accompanied Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus was betrayed by Judas. These three may have accompanied Jesus in many places where Jesus would go to pray. It was not out of the realm of possibilities that they accompanied Jesus to the mountain to pray.

I suspect that they started at the bottom of this mountain early in the morning. It was probably late at night before they reached the summit. They must have been very tired. In **Luke 9:32**, it says that “Peter and his companions were very sleepy.”

When they awoke, they saw Jesus in all His glory, **Matthew 17:2**. If you recall in **Exodus 34:29-35** when Moses was in the presence of God, Moses' face would shine, and the people would be afraid. The radiant light coming out of God caused Moses' face to shine. I want you to see the difference between what happened to Moses compared to what is happening to Christ. In the case of Moses, the light is coming out of God and reflecting off of Moses' face causing his face to glow. In the case of Jesus, the light is coming out of Jesus, thus proving that Jesus is the Son of God. Up until this time, Jesus had covered up His glory. Now, Jesus is fully revealing Himself to His disciples, Peter, James, and John.

In **Matthew 17:3**, Elijah and Moses appear and have a conversation with Jesus. Would you want to know what they were talking about? We do know. The gist of their conversation is recorded in **Luke 9:31b**. They are confirming and reassuring Jesus about His mission to save humanity from sin. Peter and the rest of the disciples did not believe that Jesus was telling them the truth about His death and resurrection. But here, Elijah and Moses are confirming what Jesus has been saying. Jesus in all His glory and splendor is showing to the disciples that He is truly the Son of God and that He came to fulfill God's mission of salvation.

Luke also records in verse 33, "the men were leaving," when Peter says to Jesus, let us make three shelters, one for you, one for Elijah and one for Moses. Have you ever had one or two faithful people in your life who you leaned on for strength and encouragement of your faith? They were the kinds of people that would tell you the hard truth, not just what you wanted to hear. Now, they have been taken out of your life. How are you feeling? How are you coping? Are you relying on God for strength? It was great to have those people in our lives, but we must rely on God for strength. We need to help others with their faith.

Besides my parents, the two people of faith that I relied in my life were my great uncle and great aunt, Jesse and Myrtle Downey. They were in my life from the time I was born until late in my twenties. They lived in a modest home and drove late model cars. He was postman for many years in Rock Hall, MD. She was a schoolteacher and taught in a one room schoolhouse in Piney Neck, MD. They were both pillars of the church and pillars of the community. They were both very gifted musicians and singers. They could play almost any kind of music instrument. They taught children, youth, and adults how to play. They tried to teach me, but they told me that God did not give me the gift of music. They reassured me that I was going to do great things for God. I always remember their reassuring words and I hope that I am making them, as well as God, proud.

After this point, God speaks from heaven supporting His Son, Jesus. In **Matthew 17:5**, God says, “This is My Son, whom I love, with Him I am well pleased. Listen to Him!” I hope that you know without a shadow of a doubt that God loves you. Jesus is reassured by Elijah and Moses and is now reassured by God.

This milestone, Transfiguration, has set the focus of Jesus’ life to fulfilling what God had sent Him to do, to become our atonement for sin. Jesus is now dead set on going to Jerusalem. Nothing will change His mind. Thank God for that.

This is also an important milestone in the life of Peter, James, and John, even though at this point, they are still very confused by all that they have heard and seen. Later in his life, Peter will recall this milestone, **2 Peter 1:12-18**.

The Transfiguration of Jesus marks an important milestone in the His life, the life of the disciples and the life of all believers in Him. At Transfiguration, Jesus’ heart and mind are fully committed to fulfilling God’s plan of salvation. This is an important milestone for the church because this week on Wednesday, we will begin Lent. That is the reason we celebrate Transfiguration Sunday.

Let us continue to listen to God so that we can do His will. Amen.