

Many members. One body united in Christ.

The Festival of the Transfiguration of Our Lord

St. Matthew 17:1-9

25 January, Anno Domini 2026

Beloved sons and daughters of the heavenly Father, with whom He is well pleased in Christ,

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

What an inglorious way to spend the Lord's Day - huddled in our houses trying to stay warm unable to gather with our brothers and sisters in the house of our heavenly Father. I pray that it leaves you unsatisfied and hungry for the feast of Holy Communion from which we must fast this morning.

This is a good reminder, however, that we do not yet live in the glory of eternity which Peter, James, and John were blessed to have a foretaste of on the mount of our Lord's transfiguration. Creation itself crumbles and prevents us from being where we belong, with Jesus and with one another receiving the forgiveness of our sins, being filled with the word of life and truth, and feasting on the rich food of His Body and Blood. How often we are reminded of the fact that we are not where we belong. How often we are reminded that we cannot here, in this world, enjoy the full glory of Jesus. We want to. We long to. We crave the relief from pain and disappointment and sorrow. We hate that every day we are reminded, as we examine our lives in light of the Ten Commandments, that our hearts are filled with greed and selfishness and pride and covetousness and lust. We grieve to look around and see so much anger and division and hatred, senseless wars, violent uprisings, power-and money-hungry politicians, and broken families. Can anyone blame Peter for wanting to stay on the mount - away from the evil's of this world, away from the cross and affliction?

No. But the only way for us to be able to enjoy that glory for eternity is to leave the mountain and go with Jesus to Jerusalem, to endure the cross, despising its shame. We must suffer the trials and tribulations of this world and in the strength of our baptism fight every day to drown our Old Adam with all of his sins and evil desires. We must endure inglorious days like these when ice and snow threaten us and keep us away from church. We must fill our ears and hearts with the Word of God so that He may conform our will and our thinking to His own. But we do not need to fear because Christ has already prepared the way before us and made it safe. His cross condemned Him so that our crosses are made safe, more than that,

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our crosses have been made blessings, the very way in which God trains and protects us and keeps us in the true faith.

So let us listen to Jesus, as His Father has directed us. Let our homes this and every day be filled with God's Word. Let us not attempt to have the glory promised to us apart from Jesus cross and our own. We can't. Let us with joy process with Jesus to the cross, the very height of Jesus' glory. On that cross He laid down His life for us that we might look forward to with great joy and eagerness to the day when we will stand beside Moses and Elijah, Peter and James and John and the whole company of heaven speaking with Jesus in that life where all crosses and afflictions will be put away from us forever.

In the Name of +Jesus.

Pastor Ulmer