

The Transfiguration of our Lord

February 15, 2026

Text: 2 Peter 1:16-21

*“Sure Words Light our Way”*

Faith in Christ grows stronger through trials. We might wish that it were not so, but God fashions and matures us as His baptized people in His chosen way. He speaks to us through His Word, commanding and convicting us of sin, but also comforting and clothing us with His righteousness. Faith leads us to answer God’s words with prayers of intercession, request, thanks, and praise. By faith, we wait for God’s answers, another kind of testing. Faith also bears fruit when it directs us to serve our neighbours as Jesus serves us with His steadfast love. Faith is further tested by experiences in life that oppose what we think God promises.

As an example, take Peter. Peter stands out among Jesus’ twelve disciples, doesn’t he? He was so confident. Quick to speak up. The first to act. It was he who answered Jesus for all the rest, when asked who they thought He was. “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God!” Yes! Peter was right, blessed with insight from the Holy Spirit. But then Jesus told them what His future held: *“he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and on the third day be raised”* (Matthew 16:21). “No, Lord, never,” cried Peter “You must live and not die, for you are the Christ, our glorious king, the great, long-awaited champion of Israel!”

Who had promised that Jesus would restore Israel's sovereignty? Not Jesus. "*Get behind me Satan...you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of men*" (Matthew 16:23). This clash threw Peter into uncertainty and doubt. Was Jesus really the Christ, after all? On what did Peter rely? On what should he rely?

Six long days passed, then Jesus led troubled Peter up a mountain with James and John. What a sight they beheld up there! Jesus lit up like an incandescent light, accompanied by Moses and Elijah. What did it mean? Peter had no idea, until one came to him. "Lord, we can make you some shelters. There is so much that we would like to ask the three of you." No, that was not to happen. The whole sky was suddenly shrouded and then lit by a bright, thick cloud that descended upon them, leaving them blinded. And a voice called them to attention: "*This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased. Listen to him.*" Jesus' three disciples felt the terror of their ancestors, who, at the foot of Mt. Sinai, once heard God speak. They fell on their faces, trembling with dread.

But then the cloud lifted and left, taking the vision of Moses and Elijah with it. They felt the steady, calm touch of Jesus on each of their heads. They were alone with Jesus, and they heard him say, "*Rise, and have no fear.*" "This is the time for faith, not fear. Peter, your confession of me was true. I am the Christ. I am the Son of the Father. His will is mine, and mine is His. I am here to fulfil the promise that Moses, Elijah and the rest

of prophets proclaimed. I will not fulfil your dreams, but God's promise is better by far than the things for which you have hoped. Trust me."

Peter did, for he and the brothers Zebedee kept on following Him to Jerusalem. Peter's faith was tested and tried many more times on the way to Jesus' cross. He boasted about his loyal resolve. He lashed out with a sword to vainly protect Jesus from arrest. He fell into desperate denials, just as Jesus said he would. But Jesus prayed for him that his faith would not fail, as Satan desired. Jesus forgave Peter's sins on the night of His resurrection day, and He commissioned him to serve as His apostolic shepherd after an early morning breakfast on the shore of the Galilean sea.

Peter never forgot the sight of Jesus alight in His divine glory. He grew to understand what it meant. Yes, he had been right in his confession of Jesus. He is the Christ and Son of God. Peter had been wrong in his hope for Jesus though. That was why he had to suffer Jesus' rebuke. And that was why God the Father preached to him out the heavenly cloud. Jesus' correcting word crushed his false hope of Israel's earthly revival. God spoke from heaven to set His salvation promise before Peter once again to renew his wavering faith in His Son.

In Baptism, God does the same for us. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, all of God's promises of salvation in Christ are given to us. Christ's sin-atoning death belongs to us, so with Him we have died to sin, and by faith, we can die to it daily as we face temptations in life.

His resurrection is our rebirth as new people in Christ, children of our heavenly Father. Though we remain sinful through Adam's inheritance, by faith, we confess ourselves to be redeemed, beloved, and well-pleasing to God because of Jesus. We live and worship God together as His royal priests who are privileged to approach Him freely in the name of Jesus, our High Priest. In our families, we teach our children to live with us as God's dear children. In our work, we labor as God's servants to help and bless people. All of life is energized and illuminated by the God-given hope that this life we live by faith is the rehearsal for the eternal life that will arrive when Jesus returns.

Faith rests upon God's Word, His promises of saving grace in Jesus. This is why, as Peter looked back on his vision of Jesus transfigured, he urged his hearers to set their hearts upon the divinely inspired words of Holy Scripture: *"we have something more sure, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts."*

How do we know that we are God's children, when we still sin each day? How can we be certain that our sins are forgiven when we have done nothing to deserve such favour? How will we face death without fear of God's judgment? God has promised us all these things. Jesus Christ, God's beloved and well-pleasing Son, sealed the prophetic promises of God with His holy life, innocent death, and glorious resurrection. God's Word is sure, trustworthy and true.

So, as Peter exhorts us, let us give our full attention each day to the promises God has given us through His Son. Let us come here with ears tuned and hearts open to receive what God says to us in His Word, for it is the lamp and the light that keeps us on God's straight path. Though the darkness of unbelief, pride, and selfishness persistently looms over us, and what we see and feel tempts us to lose heart and give in to our fallen weaknesses, God's promises testify truly and shine brightly within our hearts to strengthen our faith and carry us through every trial and to bring us to eternal joy. Amen.