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**Message Series: Jesus Set His Face****Message Title: The Glorious Face of Jesus****Scripture: Luke 9:28-36, 51**

As we look forward to celebrating Easter in four weeks, we will journey with Jesus to Jerusalem, where he will suffer, die, and be raised to new life. Throughout this series, we will follow Luke's Gospel.

Luke 9:51 is the turning point in Luke's Gospel. Everything before this moment has been building toward it, and everything after it moves toward the cross. "Set his face" is a Hebrew idiom that appears in the Old Testament (Gen 31:21; Jer 21:10) and means that someone has decided and is determined to do something. With this phrase, Luke reveals that Jesus resolutely embraces his divine destiny in Jerusalem, where there will be betrayal, suffering, and the cross. Jesus willingly walked this road out of obedience to the will of the Father.

Before Luke 9:51, another story about Jesus' face appears. The Transfiguration story appears in all three Synoptic Gospels (Matt 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-10; Luke 9:28-36), each time in the same narrative context, just after Jesus asks the disciples, "Who do you say I am? Peter confessed Jesus is the Christ (Messiah), the Lord's anointed one. In each of these three accounts, there are various differences in the details. The Gospel of John does not include the Transfiguration, although it could be argued that the event is central to it.

**The Transfiguration**

- "About eight days later..." refers to Peter's confession that Jesus is the Messiah.
- Jesus took three disciples, Peter, James, and John, up to a mountain to pray. The Bible doesn't tell us exactly which mountain this was. Christian tradition points to Mount Tabor, but many scholars think it may have been Mount Hermon near Caesarea Philippi. Either way, the focus isn't the mountain; it's the moment when the disciples glimpse the glory of Jesus.
- While he was praying, a dramatic change in Jesus' external change took place. Jesus' face was changed, and his clothing dazzled with white light. His appearance was changed as a divine sign revealed to humanity, the sign of his true identity. "The transfiguration afforded the disciples a glimpse behind the veil of Jesus' flesh, revealing his true identity, an outward manifestation of his inner being" (Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Mere Christian Hermeneutics*, 240).
- Suddenly, two men appeared with Jesus. Moses represents the Law (Torah), and Elijah represents the Prophets, both of whom had mountain-top experiences with God's glory.
- Only Luke tells us what Jesus, Moses, and Elijah were talking about. They were talking about his "exodus", which is a reference to his departure from this world through his death, resurrection, and ascension that he was about to accomplish in Jerusalem. Certainly, this is also an allusion to the Old Testament exodus, God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt. Jesus death, resurrection, and ascension would provide freedom to all humanity.

- After waking, the disciples saw Jesus' glory, his divine character and light revealed in his human body. Glory throughout the Scriptures refers to God's presence and majesty.
- Peter suggests building three shelters for everyone to stay on the mountain. However, there was no need to set up tents, because Jesus was already "tenting" among them (1 John 1:14), the tabernacle of divine glory in the flesh.
- The glory cloud interrupts Peter's suggestion. As the cloud covered the disciples, they were terrified. The cloud represents the presence of God, and the verb "overshadowed" is the same word used in Luke 1:35 to describe the Spirit coming on Mary.
- A voice spoke from the cloud, "This is my Son, my Chosen One. Listen to him." Rarely does God's audible voice occur in the New Testament, only at Jesus' baptism, here at the Transfiguration, and in John 12 as Jesus nears the cross.
- The story ends with the disciples seeing Jesus alone, as Jesus is the first and last word of God, the Alpha and Omega (Rev 22:13).
- The disciples were witnesses to a literal act of God: the Father audibly confirming Jesus' identity as the eternal Son in a bright cloud of the Spirit. The whole event is overwhelmingly terrifying to the disciples: the cloud, the voice, the shining, all signal the mystery of God's immanent presence.

The Transfiguration story is about Jesus' identity as the Son of God, the Messiah. However, the reaction of the disciples teach us how we respond as people who follow and listen to Jesus the Messiah. From their reaction, we learn that followers of Jesus today

1. Listen to the Voice of Jesus Only
  - The essence of discipleship is listening to the voice of Jesus alone. Our world is full of many voices: cultural, political, influencers, experts, and opinions.
  - Followers of Jesus listen to what Jesus says about humility, forgiveness, taking up our cross, transformational suffering, and the glory that comes through suffering.
2. Behold the Glorious Face of Jesus
  - The shining face of Jesus revealed the glory of God. In 2 Corinthians 4:6, Paul wrote, "the glory of God that is seen in the face of Jesus Christ."
  - When we behold Jesus, we do not remain the same. Beholding the face of Jesus occurs through seeking to hear Jesus' words through scripture
3. Reflect the Transforming Glory of Jesus
  - Romans 8:17, "And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God's glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering."
  - 2 Corinthians 3:18, "So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image."
  - The glory of Jesus shines through our everyday lives as we reflect his character.

As we move toward Easter, read one chapter in Luke each day to hear and see Jesus.