

Grace and Peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ. Amen. Heavenly Father, I pray that the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts will be alive with the Holy Spirit and acceptable in your sight. Amen.

Faster than a speeding bullet, more powerful than a locomotive, able to leap tall buildings in a single bound. Look! Up in the sky! It's a bird. It's a plane. It's Superman! Yes, it's Superman – strange visitor from another planet who came to Earth with powers and abilities far beyond those of mortal men. Superman – who can change the course of mighty rivers, bend steel with his bare hands, and who, disguised as Clark Kent, mild mannered reporter for a great metropolitan newspaper, fights the never ending battle for *Truth, Justice and the American Way*.

With those words, the classic 1950's television series was on the air. Seated on the floor in front of the Television were the 3 Arntson boys, fascinated by this man of steel. We watched with rapt attention as Clark Kent transformed to Superman simply by removing his glasses. He, in a real sense, was transfigured before our very eyes. Once he was transformed Superman really went to work. He stopped terrorists, murderers, thieves, and generally every other criminal that walked the earth. What was important to us Arntson boys were the battles, the fights, the bombs exploding that couldn't hurt superman, and the bullets bouncing off his chest. Looking back we missed the most important lessons that were taught during the show. We looked at it with flawed eyes. What was important was Clark Kent's interaction with cub photographer Jimmy Olson, Clark's mentorship of Lois Lane, and his mellowing of the acerbic Perry White.

I will tell you truthfully that at no time while I was watching Superman did I ever think about Jesus, but I should have because the similarities are obvious. As superman saved the world weekly, Jesus saves the world every single minute of every single day from the beginning of time to the end of time.

Jesus went up on a mountain. He took with him Peter, James, and John. While they were apart from everyone else, Jesus was transfigured. It was as though suddenly they could see the real Jesus, the Jesus who was the son of God. The word transfigured means that they could see Jesus in an altered more spiritual,

more exalted state. Mark doesn't tell us how Jesus was altered. But it was like those three disciples were seeing Jesus for the first time. They were awe struck. It was like Clark Kent taking off his glasses and all of a sudden realizing that Superman was in front of you. But not just superman, on one side was Mighty mouse and on the other side was batman. This was a trifecta of fabulous.

On one side of Jesus was Moses and on the other side was Elijah. The three chosen disciples saw and probably heard Jesus speaking to these icons of the Jewish faith. I say probably heard because Moses and Elijah would need to have been identified in some way. There was no pictorial evidence to identify Elijah and Moses. For the disciples to know that the figures beside Jesus were Moses and Elijah, Jesus would need to have called them by name. I wonder what they were saying. What topic of conversation would these three share? But that's a different sermon.

As Jesus talked with Moses and Elijah, the 3 disciples talked among themselves the way we would have talked. We know what Peter said. He said, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." What Peter was saying at this point in time was "We need to remember this moment and establish a shrine. We'll honor you three by establishing memorials. We need a building project!" Peter was in effect saying let's build boxes where we can keep you safe and sound to remember this occurrence. Peter did what we often do; he missed the importance of the occasion. What was the significance of Moses and Elijah with Jesus? What could he, James and John learn from the situation?

Chronologically, Peter just before they came up the mountain had said that Jesus was the son of the living God, the savior of mankind, the long awaited messiah. Now standing before him was Jesus the messiah and next to the messiah was Moses, the man who delivered God's law and Elijah, one of God's most prominent prophets that was carried up to heaven in a chariot of fire. The Law was fulfilled by Jesus. His perfection took the place of our failures. Jesus was also the one who was spoken of by the prophets. With the arrival of Jesus everything that was foretold by the prophets came to fruition. Religion had come full circle. Prophets – Elijah, law – Moses, fulfillment – Jesus. God had kept his covenant and replaced it with a new covenant.

Peter bellows let's build and suddenly there was a cloud and the sound of God voice. It was like God spoke to bring Peter to his senses. God said Peter let's focus on what is important here. It isn't the buildings to honor these three to box them in but rather the fact that Jesus is my son. I love him. Listen to him.

So, what does this mean for us in the 21st century? Quite a bit actually, first and foremost we must take God's specific instruction and follow it. He tells us in no uncertain terms that we are to listen to Jesus. Obviously Jesus is not literally with us today but he is with us physically. Look around you at the members of this congregation. I see Jesus sitting in every pew. I see brothers and sisters in Christ. When they talk I need to listen and hear the words of Jesus. We also listen to Jesus when we read scripture. When you read your Bible you can see and hear the words of Jesus. God tells us to listen to those words and live them.

In the transfiguration of Jesus we get a snapshot of the resurrection. When we arrive in heaven we will meet Jesus face to face. We know this because when we are baptized, we are baptized into the death and Resurrection of Jesus. With Baptism we become a child of God claimed by him.

This story of the transfiguration also means that we are called to share the good news that Jesus is the son of God. We are to focus on what is important. We are not to build boxes that hold our faith. We are to live our faith in the world, just as Jesus lived his faith in the world. When we build, we are not to build monuments that restrict God but rather houses like the one built in Jamaica that shares God. We are to build the kingdom of God rather than kingdoms of man. We are to stop worrying about our legacies and rather worry about our fellow man. We are to remember that Jesus told us "even when you do it to the least of these my brethren you do it unto me." The house in Jamaica was ostensibly built for a family but really it was built as a home for Jesus. If you think about it, the house is one of the dwellings suggested by Peter years ago on that mountain.

We know that with our human nature we will fail God time and time again. We separate ourselves from God when we sin. We cannot earn our way to heaven. No matter how hard we try, we will never be worthy. The good news is that Jesus took our sins and died upon that cross over 2,000 years ago. Jesus then defeated death and rose again. We are saved by this free gift of grace.

Faster than we can ask for forgiveness, more powerful than any sin, able to heal the greatest pain with his acts of grace. Look up in the sky. It's a dove of peace. It's a fire of the Holy Spirit. It's Jesus our Savior. Yes, Jesus our savior – a strange visitor sent by God our Father with powers and abilities far beyond those of Mortal men. Jesus – who can change the hearts of mighty sinners, bend the wills of men with a simple word, and who disguised as a true human, son of a carpenter, fights the never ending battle for Love, Salvation, and the kingdom of God.

Thanks be to God. Amen!

With the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, let us pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

Lord God, we pray that we live our lives as you intend. Help us to keep our values, beliefs and moral senses as reflections of your will. Bless the leaders of our nation and the leaders of all nations. Guide them to work together for the good of your world Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

We pray that you may bless those elders who have had and continue to have an impact in our lives. Give them comfort and security so that they may continue to share their wisdom with us. Be with them where ever they may be. Keep them alive in your holy spirit. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

We pray of our members who are in Jamaica adding their hands to your work. Be with them and all who labor in the mission field including the missionaries of the ELCA. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

We pray today for those in our community with special needs, those who are experiencing an illness, Especially we pray for

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for all those who mourn the loss of a loved one, especially we pray for the family of

_____ We pray for all service personnel and their families. We pray for all of the concerns on our prayer wall. We pray for all those dear to us that we name in our hearts. Give them your peace. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

We thank you today for your gift of the Holy Spirit and your promise of eternal life. We ask that you keep us mindful of our failings and our need for grace. Make us dutiful sons and daughters, mothers and fathers, husbands and wives, growing daily in faith. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

2 Kings 2:1-12

2:1 Now when the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal.

2:2 Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here; for the LORD has sent me as far as Bethel." But Elisha said, "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel.

2:3 The company of prophets who were in Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, "Do you know that today the LORD will take your master away from you?" And he said, "Yes, I know; keep silent."

2:4 Elijah said to him, "Elisha, stay here; for the LORD has sent me to Jericho." But he said, "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they came to Jericho.

2:5 The company of prophets who were at Jericho drew near to Elisha, and said to him, "Do you know that today the LORD will take your master away from you?" And he answered, "Yes, I know; be silent."

2:6 Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here; for the LORD has sent me to the Jordan." But he said, "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So the two of them went on.

2:7 Fifty men of the company of prophets also went, and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan.

2:8 Then Elijah took his mantle and rolled it up, and struck the water; the water was parted to the one side and to the other, until the two of them crossed on dry ground.

2:9 When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, "Tell me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you." Elisha said, "Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit."

2:10 He responded, "You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it will be granted you; if not, it will not."

2:11 As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven.

2:12 Elisha kept watching and crying out, "Father, father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" But when he could no longer see him, he grasped his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.

Psalm 50:1-6

50:1 The mighty one, God the LORD, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.

50:2 Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth.

50:3 Our God comes and does not keep silence, before him is a devouring fire, and a mighty tempest all around him.

50:4 He calls to the heavens above and to the earth, that he may judge his people:

50:5 "Gather to me my faithful ones, who made a covenant with me by sacrifice!"

50:6 The heavens declare his righteousness, for God himself is judge. Selah

2 Corinthians 4:3-6

4:3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing.

4:4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

4:5 For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake.

4:6 For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Mark 9:2-9

9:2 Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them,

9:3 and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them.

9:4 And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus.

9:5 Then Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

9:6 He did not know what to say, for they were terrified.

9:7 Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!"

9:8 Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.

9:9 As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.