

## Luke 9:28-36

### Transfiguration; February 27 & 28, 2022

On January 24, 1848, James Marshall, a carpenter, was building a sawmill on the south fork of the American River for a man named John Sutter. He noticed something sparking in the water by the waterwheel. He picked up the pieces because they looked like gold. He shows them to his boss, John Sutter, and they took the pieces to be tested. They found out that the shining nuggets were actually gold.

That discovery of gold was one of the most significant events that would shape American history during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. As news began to spread of the discovery, thousands of prospective gold miners traveled by sea or over land to San Francisco and the surrounding area; by the end of 1849, the non-native population of the California territory was some 100,000 compared to with the pre-1848 figure of less than 1,000.

Throughout 1849, people around the United States (mostly men) borrowed money, mortgaged their property or spent their life savings to make the hard journey to California. In pursuit of the kind of wealth they had never dreamed of, they left their families and hometowns; in turn, women left behind took on new responsibilities such as running farms or businesses and caring for their children alone. Thousands of would-be gold miners, known as '49ers, traveled overland across the mountains or by sea, sailing to Panama or even around Cape Horn, the southernmost point of South America. They all came to find the hidden treasure of gold. A total of \$2 billion worth of precious metal was extracted from the area during the Gold Rush, which peaked in 1852.

We love to hear the stories of those who find the big gold nuggets hidden in the dirt; stories of the person who buys a painting at a local garage sale for next to nothing and then finds out that it is worth millions; stories of the person who buys one lottery ticket and it turns into being worth millions. Then we think to ourselves: *I wish that would happen to me. Right?*

This morning, Jesus wanted three of his disciples to see something much greater than just some hidden glory or hidden treasure. For nearly three years, Jesus' disciples had seen some pretty amazing things. They saw how he changed water into wine. They saw the five thousand fed from five small loaves of bread and two fish. They had seen Jesus drive demons out of people. They saw him calm the storm. They had listened to his parables and illustrations. They were amazed at how clearly Jesus could teach all kinds of different truths. They had experienced highs and lows over those years.

But now that time that they had with Jesus was getting closer to the end. Jesus had come into this world with only one purpose in mind. He didn't come to setup an earthly kingdom. He didn't come to change the politics of his day. He didn't come to get the Romans off the backs of the Jewish nation. He **"came to seek and to save what was lost."** (Luke 19:10) As Jesus got closer and closer to the day that he would be crucified, he began to prepare his disciples more and more for that day when he would make the payment for the sins of the world. Every day would be one step closer to the cross.

A week before the events of our text Jesus spoke about his upcoming death. He couldn't be any clearer: **"The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life."** (Luke 9:22) They didn't like Jesus to talk that way. They didn't want to hear about his death. After all, he was the **"Christ of God."** (Luke 9:20) Whether they liked it or not, it wasn't going to change the reality that Jesus had come into this world to die.

In some ways, that is Jesus' glory. He didn't come into this world let his glory shine a time or two. He came into the world to suffer a horrible death on a cross. Some would look at the cross and think: *What glory is there in the cross?* The people of Jesus' day were looking for a Messiah that would carry out a *shock and awe campaign against the Roman rulers*. People want a God who will give them everything that they want. We want all the problems in our lives to be gone. Yet, God came into this world to do something much more glorious than all of those things.

For a moment on the top of that mountain they saw Jesus as God. They wanted to stay there. **"Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah."** Who wouldn't want to stay

there? Jesus had so much more to give them than just a few moments. He wanted to show them what an eternity in heaven would look like. What better way to show them than by letting them see two of the greatest people of the Old Testament – Moses and Elijah? Moses who had led God's people to the Promised Land – the place from where the Savior would come. Elijah – the prophet who proclaimed that message of hope and had been taken to heaven by God himself in a fiery chariot. There they were standing there in the presence of the *God-Man*, Jesus. There on that mountain top they saw who Jesus is. When Christ came at Christmas, they saw God becoming a man. The Transfiguration of Jesus shows man becoming God.

Jesus knew his disciples needed to be shored up. They were about to see a horrific scene unfold before their eyes. They would see Jesus be captured, tortured and killed. It would be so easy for them to question their faith. This is the Messiah? Really? It certainly was not the glory they wanted or expected. Yet, it was exactly the glorious work that Jesus had come to do. He came to crush the head of the Devil. He could try as hard as he could, but he couldn't stop Jesus from carrying out his mission. Jesus' glory wasn't just seen in his face and clothes. His true glory is seen in his Grace.

We look around this world today and it is so easy to see pain and suffering. We have fears. We may even question God himself. How are we going to face the cancer that was just discovered? As you face the up and downs of life, Jesus wants you to know that you have something more glorious than a pocketful of gold. You have his Grace. You have his forgiveness. You have his hope. In Jesus, you have the most valuable treasure in this world. Treasure it with all your heart. May God use each of us to bring His Glory to this world. May God grant it. Amen.