

The Transfiguration of Our Lord – 2026

Exodus 24:8-18

2 Peter 1:16-21

Matthew 17:1-9

How many of y'all have ever had a tension headache? When we get nervous or upset our bodies tense up. When we're worried, when our mind is on high alert or conflicted our bodies respond as well. Muscles tighten, jaws clench, heart rates increase – hence the tension headache. A commercial back in the day had a very sincere woman, red hair, blue eyes look into the camera and say: "Crime victims, runaways, helping them is my job. It's not easy. For stress headache pain I take Anacin 3." The camera gives the viewer a close-up of the bottle and the narrator then carries the ball: "Over 70% of all headaches are tension headaches. Aspirin free Anacin 3 ~ pain relief for today's tension headaches." Have you ever had a tension headache? Have you ever had a crick in your neck born of stress. The body reacts to stress, doesn't it?

What about your soul? What about your trust in God? What about your faith? Is there a spiritual reaction to stress, a spiritual reaction to difficulty, to uncertainty, a spiritual reaction to spiritual pain or loss or radical disappointment or confusion or failure? Do you think that it's only your body that reacts to adversity? What about your soul? What about your trust in God? Life in this broken world isn't always a picnic. There's no spiritual equivalent to Anacin 3 on the shelves at Walmart. What are some of the less-than-stellar reactions that Christians fall back on in adversity? I can think of at least three. One is to seize control, to take over, to displace God and attempt to strong arm my personal will onto a situation. Another is to wilt spiritually, to crumble into self-pity and adopt a defeatist posture (woe is me, all is lost). The third is the saddest of all; to simply abandon God's promises and search of an idolatrous solution. I've seen them all – in my life and others'.

Peter had a breakthrough. Jesus asked His disciples who the crowds were saying He was. They responded with the word that they had heard on the street, all of it misidentifying the Lord. Then Jesus honed in. What about you? Who do you say that I am? (Matthew 16:15). "Simon Peter replied, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God'" (Matthew 16:16). Jesus was elated. Peter's confession captured the truth. The Father revealed the truth; Peter apprehended it by faith and confessed the reality that he saw with the eyes of his heart. You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. It was a priceless moment. And then Jesus leveraged that moment. He told the disciples what it *meant* to be the Christ. What does it mean *to be* the Christ? He must suffer. The Christ must atone. Jesus didn't hold back. Jerusalem and shame beckoned. He would be rejected. He would be killed. Imagine hearing that for the first time. Imagine knowing how regal and holy and blessed and supremely good the Lord is; imagine loving Him unreservedly and Him telling you that He is going to be spit upon, cursed, crucified. Peter reacted.

St. Peter is one of the most fallible men in the Scriptures, but he is also first among equals within the tribe of the apostles. He reacted to the Lord's prophetic word. It wasn't a great reaction. It was a horrible reaction. Peter came face to face with something that he didn't like. Peter came face to face with a theological truth that defied his sense of order. It had come directly from Jesus' mouth but that didn't seem to matter. "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you" (Matthew 16:22). Peter literally rebuked the Son of the living God because Jesus told

Peter about His coming sacrifice. Peter, apparently, knew better that Jesus. How often have you reacted to something in your life in the same way? I have. It's not a great place to be. Our Father will not leave us there, in that hollow and vain state of mind. He will restore us. He will, by His grace, call us back to trust, back to an active reliance on Him, back to His will being done, not ours.

After six days Jesus took with Him Peter, James and John and led them up a high mountain. Jesus *is* the Christ. Jesus *is* the Son of the living God. In Him all the fullness of the deity dwells in bodily form. True God and true man, Jesus is the Messianic King, the Ruler of the Cosmos. And He takes Peter up a mountain to show him. James and John are there too. Jesus is transfigured. He glowed, as radiant as the sun. Light was coming from *within* Him. His deity shone through His humanity. His face, His clothing – it was an epiphany. He shone. God's glory shined through the flesh of an otherwise humble looking man. Peter, James, and John saw it. With the eyes in their heads, they saw it. Moses and Elijah were there. Heavenly men, dead men who resided in heaven; Moses and Elijah were there speaking with Jesus about what He was to accomplish in Jerusalem (Luke 9:31). A bright cloud and the Father's voice overshadowed the mountain. "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him" (Matthew 17:6).

When you encounter something in this life that makes you uneasy, "Listen to Him." When you are sick and there is no good path to recovery and your soul becomes tense and you are tempted to find your own spiritual solution, "Listen to Him." "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die" (John 11:25-26). Listen to Him!

God's ways are not our ways. As the heavens are higher than the earth so are God's ways higher than our ways (Isaiah 55:8-9). He will not operate according to our myopic parameters. There will be unexpected obstacles in your life that will be difficult. God works all things together for good (Romans 8:28). The cross was something Peter couldn't understand as being divine, couldn't understand as being pure salvation, as being the highest expression of love, so he spat it out. He was implicitly constructing his own religion, an idolatrous religion. "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you." Peter suffered a stern rebuke. "Get behind me Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God but on the things of men" (Matthew 16:23). But did Jesus leave Peter there, in his confusion, in his self-constructed spiritual prison? No. So also us. When we fail, when our faith tenses up and our hearts get foggy and our trust is rattled, God will restore us. "Listen to Him."

Elsie was a trusting soul. Her memorial will be a constant reminder to the saints of Christ the King that the light of Christ is found in His word. Our souls are illuminated by His promises. Our faith finds the ground to stand on in His Word. He is risen. Death has no sting. We shall not die but live. Death is a mere door to heaven. Death has been transformed by the sacrifice of the King of kings and the Lord of lords. His glory, the glory that was revealed on the mountain, is what the eyes of faith see as the Christ hangs on the cross to pay for my sins. Radiant, blood streaming from every pore, He is giving Himself totally into death's grip – to vanquish death. He bears the weight of our sin. He suffers the Father's wrath – and that is the very definition of God's glory. You see it. By faith you see it. Trust what you see with the eyes of your heart. He

restores us. His grace fills your soul and you are restored by the objective work of the Son of God. Listen to Him.

Christopher will walk through this life in faith. Christopher will listen to the voice of His Good Shepherd. Christopher will encounter difficulty and lean on God's promises. Why? Because God's Word calms our spirit and directs our minds toward what is trustworthy. God's Word creates contentment and a faithful resolve when difficulty comes. We are blessed. The glory of the Lord is here. His Word is here. Our nervous spirit is calmed by the Word of God and We are blessed.