

In other words, here for the Church of all ages, and here for us tonight, is a mission of the majesty and heavenly excellence of our own Saviour.

A great encouragement, not only to our own faith, and a great message, not only to our own intellects, but a great stimulus too, as I hope to show, to our own ministry in the valley below.

[6 : 35] I want them to identify for the moment the main movements of this narrative, and I want to transpose them slightly for the sake, simply, of collegiate and rhetorical arrangement.

I want to start first of all with the event itself, with what happened. We see that he was transcible before them, Mark chapter 9 and verse 2.

There he was transcible before them, his clothes, his raven became dazzling white, quite so that any creature on earth could reach them.

Now, what happens here, is that the form of the Lord, his visible appearance, was completely changed.

He had had an outward form, which was ordinary, unhuman, and unexceptionable. The ordinary of a frail mortal, of a human being, in fact, in very humble circumstances.

[7 : 47] That's how he habitually looked. He had the appearance of a man. He had the form of a servant. But here for a moment, the Lord is given another form.

His morphology, if I may use that word for a moment, his morphology is changed. His appearance is changed.

And he becomes almost pure light. Gazing brightness, which is manifestly superhuman and unearthly.

And which I suppose was also profoundly unnerving for those privileged to witness it. So for a moment, all the ordinariness is gone.

All the unexceptionableness, all the commonness, all of that is gone. And for a moment, there is this magnificent appearance on the part of our Savior.

[8 : 54] Now it seems to me that, again, there are three levels of significance in this transformation.

I think first of all, for suffering here, is that the underlying glory of the Savior is being unveiled. The underlying divine glory is being disclosed.

We saw last night that Jesus did not avail himself of his divine powers to mitigate the conditions under which he had to serve.

But you must not take that to mean that he had ceased to be divine or laid aside his divine being or his divine nature.

We know that in becoming man, Christ had literally edged himself. He had laid aside the paraphernalia of his greatness, the insignia of his divine majesty.

[10 : 11] He had taken certain things and by taking them, he had emptied himself. But the language of Saint Paul in Philippians told that Christ emptied himself, taking.

It's a marvelous paradox that by adding things to himself, he had in some way subtracted from himself, and did himself take.

He had taken the form of a servant. He had taken the likeness of a man. He had taken a human appearance.

He had taken even the cursed death of the cross. He looked like a slave. He looked like a pauper. He looked like a condemned and a ruined man. He had not laid aside his deity, but he kept it hidden for a while.

[11 : 19] He was buried in an obscured veil under all the outward circumstances of human ordinariness and human poverty, enslavement, condemnation.

And all those words, those nouns that the manager that Saint Paul for example uses, all those that are about the Lord's visibility for Jesus looked like.

But here on the mount for a moment, the veil is drawn aside. And for a moment the appearance, the form, the likeness corresponds with the underlying glory.

For a moment he looks like the Son of God. For a moment he looks like Jehovah looked on outside him. For a moment he looks like the way he will look when he comes in the glory of second advent. When he comes in the glory of his Father. At this particular moment you would never have thought that here was an ordinary man.

[12 : 34] Because here was pure, splendid, dazzling, overwhelming light. Here the form corresponds to the truth. This man is the Son of God.

That's what he looks like for this moment on the mount of Transfiguration. Thus he moves therefore into the abyss of Calvary.

As he moves into a situation where the veil is going to be so complete. That even to himself he'd appear like a condemned and ruined man.

For a moment before he does that, there is this great reminder of his own underlying glory. A reminder to him and a reminder to his disciples of the glory that underlies.

And is being asked to remember. When disadvantage is heaped upon disadvantage.

[13 : 43] And veil and obscurity are heaped upon veil and obscurity. As all the glory is buried beneath the pain and the shame on the cross and the dead.

And at last the abandonment itself is being told. Remember the glory that underlies. That can be veiled and can be obscured.

But can never be annihilated. The cross can never destroy the divinity, the deity, the majesty. It can veil it.

But it cannot destroy it. There can be an eclipsing of it. But there cannot be any annihilation of it. And we are being asked to remember.

That the one who went to the cross. Went to the cross as the one who possessed this globe. That's one of the great paradoxes of Calvary.

[14 : 47] This fact that on that cross it's God's own son. This one who is light, oh light and very God and very God. It is he who dies on the cross.

And that's why the cross always challenges our understanding. And he asked him, what is he doing there? What is he doing there?

This Christ, this glorious Christ of God. And so first of all, here is the moment when the veil is drawn aside.

And the underlying glory is made manifest. There is also a moment when he's given what I have called to start off with.

A prophetic glimpse of the glory that's to follow. He's given a prevision of a glory that lies beyond the cross.

[15 : 49] A reminder that the cross is not the last word. Although it's going to look like the last word.

And maybe for a moment about the abandonment. Maybe even he will think it's the last word. And certainly Peter would think it was the last word. The light, the eternal light, had been forever extinguished.

And the great eternal word of God had been silenced. And they would think it was darkness forever. And speechlessness and silence forever.

And it would look like that. As it often does in our own lives. When the darkness, the silence of heaven, seems to be the last word.

And the moment of the triumph of evil seems again to be the last word. The death beyond which there is no resurrection. The darkness beyond which there is no light.

[16 : 58] The terrible divine, no, beyond which there is no divine, yes. But he was being told that there was something beyond the cross.

There was a transfiguration that was to follow all that was to transpire on Mount Calvary.

And what he's seeing here is not simply the glory of his own underlying deity. But the glory of his own resurrection humanity.

Because up to the cross there will be a new glory. The glory the eternal Son had with the Father before the world was.

When all the glory of the God's image humanity bears. Would be poured into the humanity of the man Christ Jesus.

[17 : 59] And the last Adam would share to the utmost of creation's capacity. Would share, would partake of the divine nature.

And the glory of God will be seen in the face, in the human face. In the scarred face. In the wounded body. Of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And that's what he's seeing here. What a soul body would look like. What a soul humanity would look like.

After the cross. In the glory of the resurrection. On the cross. That body, that humanity would suffer horrendous abuse.

It would be flogged. And beaten. And wounded. And bruised. And battered. Beyond the possibility even of human recognition.

[18 : 59] Beaten to a pulp. But beyond there would rise. This glorified humanity. Of the man in Christ Jesus.

Because. God the Father. Astonished by the glory of his Son's. Loyalty and service and obedience. God the Father. Would pour all his own love. And all his own wisdom. And all his own creativity. And to making that body of Christ.

As glorious. As God could make it. And in that body. God would raise matter. To its omega point. To the limit.

Of all its potential. All the artistry. All the imagination of God. Because Christ on the cross. God would do something.

[19 : 57] Unspeakably beautiful for God. And God in response. Would do something. Sublimely and ineffably beautiful for his own. And give him a body.

Into which God would concentrate. All the beauty and all the glory. Of which God was capable. And here on the mountain. There is a prevision of that.

Because he is seeing here the glory. Of his own resurrection body. And that's part of his comfort. And there is this too.

He is seeing the glory. Of a new risen humanity. The glory of the church. The church.

What is to rise. Out of the tomb with them. Because. It would die with them. It would be crucified with them.

[20 : 54] And it would rise with them. To newness of life. And be placed in the heavenlies with them. And it would undergo. Its own transfiguration.

And its own metamorphosis. And it would share too. In the divine nature. As second Peter. As second Peter. Tells us.

And what he is seeing therefore. Is not only. The glory of his own resurrection body. But the glory of your resurrection body. And the glory of my resurrection body.

Because we shall one day rise. With a body. Like his. His the template. His the pattern. And we with him.

Should undergo. No transformation. The old. And early Greek theologians. They regarded. Salvation in terms. What they called.

[21 : 51] Thiosis. The God making. The transformation. Of our human nature. It's not only. That God. Puts us right.

With himself. That God. Transforms us. They are only changing. Our relationship with God. They are changing. Our constitution.

Changing our form. Our morphology. Our appearance. So that we shall look. The way Christ looked. On the mount. Of transfiguration. And that too.

Is part. Of the Lord's encouragement. As he moves. As he moves. Up that long. Road. To Jerusalem. To the Judean desert.

Towards the cross. As he ponders. All the crosses. Going to me. He is. He has to know. That. Underlying. All the outward circumstances.

[22 : 49] There is a divine glory. And beyond. The horror of the cross. There is the glory. Of God. For himself. And beyond. It further still. There is the glory.

Of his church. And the salvation. Of his people. And all that is shown to him. As one of the early. The father said.

He is given. A prohibition. Of his own glory. And. Of the glory. Of his own. In a very important sense. Jesus saw. Your resurrection glory. On the mount. Of transfiguration. And the second point. I want to raise is this.

The voice that came from heaven. And that said. This. Is my son. The loved one. Listen to him.

[23 : 46] And as. Mr. McLeod said to us. Last night. This differs from. The word. Of the baptism. In that the word. Of the baptism.

Was addressed to himself. Primarily. You. Are my beloved son. For us. Here it's addressed. Primarily. To the disciples.

This. Is. My beloved son. Those words. Are spoken to them. Of course. Of course. He. Also. He.

He. He. He. He. He. He. He. He. He. He. These.

He. He. He. One. He. This. To the. But. He. One. He.

[24 : 42] He. One. He. That. He. Of. He. He. the parent. The offspring shares fully in the nature of the progenitor. There is a very important difference between whatever we make and what we beget or give birth to. What we make may be glorious. It may be hugely impressive in its intricacy, in its beauty, in its grand. You take for example Michelangelo's great statue of David. And you can look at it and you can wonder at the creativity, the imagination, the artistry, the dexterity, the craftsmanship that's gone into that.

And there is so much of Michelangelo's soul in that great work of art. His blood is silent, his sweat, his toil, his tears, his imagination is still. Yes they're all there, but his nature is not there. It cannot smile back at him, it cannot hug him, it cannot love him, it cannot say to him, I love you.

But the child of the artist, the son, the daughter, in that child there is the whole nature of the parent. That child can smile back, that child can love, that child can hug, that child can embrace, that child can say I love you and I adore you and I thank you.

Christ is not a made thing. Christ is not even one of God's great works of art, not even God's greatest work of art, not even the greatest of God's creatures. Christ is his only son. And in this Christ there is all the nature of God.

every perfection, every attribute, every power, every beauty, every prerogative, every function, all that constitutes the godliness of God, it is all here. Just as you have your father's and your mother's nature, just as you should have your nature, so the son of God has the nature of God. He is light of light. He is very God, of very God. And God can look at him and say this is of my substance, this is of my nature. God the Father looks in the face of the Son and sees his own image.

[28 : 02] He sees love there. He sees love there. And he sees love, and he sees love, and sin in back. Because as the Son of God, he has the whole nature of God.

He sees love, and we're told too, and we're told too, and we're told too that he's beloved. And this word interchanges in the Greek scriptures, but the word only or uniquely or only begotten. He is the only Son and he is the beloved Son.

And God loves him. Because he loves nothing else. Because he loves no one else. Because he is his only Son, there is no one else in this relationship with God.

Not an angel. Not even the Holy Spirit is in this particular relationship. But only God the Son and God the Father loves him. In a unique and special way.

There is a bond here. There is a bond here. There is peculiar. Never had a father such a son, or a son such a father. As Christ moves into the darkness, and goes down towards the abyss, he has been reminded, remember, you're my Son.

[29 : 39] And you'll always be my Son. And every moment of this journey, remember, I'll regard you as my Son. And every moment I'm going to love you. Indeed, I suspect, the deeper he went, the more God was loving you.

It's the glory of the Son's love, the more God is loving you. As the glory of a Son's own love, manifest itself in his willingness to go ever deeper into the abyss. Remember, I love you. And when they betray you, and they arrest you, and they plog you, and try you, and beat you, and bruise you, and wound you, and nail you to that cursed tree.

And when they mock you, and when they mock you, you'll remember, you are my Son. Remember, I'm loving you. Remember, I love you. And wait, wait, wait. I love you.

You'll always be loved. You'll always be loved. You'll come moments when you'll know that I'm angry with you because you're carrying the sin of the world. And you know I'm angry with the sin of the world.

And with you, with you, with you as the bearer of the sin of the world. Remember, I love you. And when it gets very, very dark, and there is darkness over the whole earth. Remember then that I love you.

[31 : 04] And remember when all the lights go out, and you have no sense of my presence. Remember then who you are, that you are my Son. And remember that I love you.

That is the ultimate reality. That's what the universe is built on. The love of God, the Father for God, the Son. The most important bond that is the foundation of all order.

And Christ is being told that's who He is before He moves into the abyss and into the maelstrom and into the chaos, the black, black, black, black hole of Calvary.

He's to go into it knowing that He is God's Son and that God loves Him. And that's always going to be true. He must remember that.

The disciples too must remember it because they are not going to understand. The Father of the Ek remembered the words that said that we heard God saying He was His Son and we heard God saying that He loved Him.

[32 : 20] So let's just hang on and let's just wait because it may not be the last word because God said He loved. And that maybe some of you tonight are at the edge. In your own abyss and your own black hole. You hang on.

And if someone close to you is in that black hole, you tell them to hang on because of the love of God and always give them hope. You are my son and I love you. That's what God was saying to them.

And if there is anyone in this whole wide world that you love, you tell them the same thing. And you remember in your own darkness nothing separates you from the love of God.

Nothing at all. Absolutely nothing at all. Not life, not death, not things present, not things to come. When the kingdoms are moved. When the mountains and the hills heave and all is tempestuous and all is dark then.

[33 : 25] And hang on to the last thing. The last thing is God loves us. So that's what He's been told here. This is my son and I love him.

Such a love as you've never known. It's against that background that you and I to ponder this fact of the pain of God on the cross of Calvary.

For which sometimes we have to suffer so much ourselves. But really there is no way that God could have put him through what God put him through without cost to God Himself.

Because God loved him as Abraham could never have loved Isaac in your mansion, Isaac of Abraham offering up his own son. And don't you think for a moment it cost God nothing to put a son through hell?

God only did it because He loved you. This is my son. The beloved one. And for your sake I'm putting him through something you can't imagine.

[34 : 36] And you must never think it's because I don't love him. And you must think it's because it cost me nothing. We must never think it. And then God says to them, hear him.

Listen to him. Listen to him. They've seen Moses and Elijah, those great spokesmen for God.

And they spoke great words for God but they didn't speak the last word. And he says listen to him because he's got the last word. And he knows the whole glory of the Father.

And he knows how much I love you when you listen to him. And we keep on listening to Jesus. Now, he's also telling them this.

He has told you, God is saying to them, he's told you, that it's going to be rejected and handed over. It's going to suffer many things. And it's going to be crucified and it's going to die.

[35 : 43] And I know he says that you hear find those words hard to endure and hard to pay. But he said, please listen to him. And listen to him when he tells you what's in front of him and what's in front of you in Jerusalem.

Listen to him. Though he's my son and though I love him and though he's your savior and your messiah. Nevertheless, listen to what he says to you that in Jerusalem.

It's death and cross and curse that are there a way to listen to him. And let him, I'm sure God is saying to him too, let him talk to you about it.

Because he needs to talk about it. He needs someone to listen to him. Because of the burden on his heart and the sorrow on his soul. And listen to him.

Give him a chance to talk about it. To share with you, as far as you can, something of the agony and sorrow in his own soul. So listen to him.

[36 : 48] And I'm sure you listen to him too. Because you know we are selective hearers of the word of God and of the word of Christ.

The human ear as you know is a great filter of sounds. That's why a tape recording sounds different to what you're hearing as I preach to you tonight.

Because the tape doesn't filter out what you hear is filtering out. You're hearing a lot. It's hearing a lot of background noise that you don't hear because it's filtering it out.

But when we hear God's word we're also filtering it out. And that's why we're amazed when sometimes there is a croak of our own lot. Because we haven't listened to the word of God.

But I want to move on. We've seen the event, the transfiguration. We've seen the voice from heaven. And then those heavenly visitors that appeared to Moses and Elijah.

[37 : 54] They appeared to them and they were talking with Jesus. Now it may be to some extent that these two men represent the law and the prophets.

But I think there's more than that too. Because the point is that here were the two greatest figures in the Old Testament. Those who played crucial roles at moments of great crisis in his fierce history. Moses in the exodus from Egypt. Elijah in the great battle with the gods of Baal. And there they are talking with Jesus.

And we know from Luke's Gospel what they were talking about. The exodus, the death that he was to accomplish at Jerusalem.

And then back again to the point I made a moment ago because I deem it to be of great importance. They were talking about the death and the crucifixion of Christ.

[39 : 07] That thing about what the disciples did not want to talk. Which they wanted to banish on their minds.

They said far be it from you Lord. People said don't be talking ridiculous rubbish and such nonsense. We don't want to hear about it. No more about this cross. And then those two men. Those two men who had achieved such great things in God's service. These two men whose departure from this world had been so mysterious. Because no one ever found the body of Moses. And Elijah was taken up to heaven again in a mysterious way. And they come from heaven. And what are they talking about?

They are talking about his death. They are talking about the cross. It's the one thing in their mind. Because they are enthralled by them.

[40 : 10] They are engrossed by them. They are amazed by them. And what they are saying in effect is this. Lord they said. Heaven is a God. Heaven is amazed at what you are doing.

Heaven is astonished at the love you are showing. And in heaven. First they don't want to know. But Peter would say later on.

Which things the angels desire to look into. And again it's part of the reassurance Jesus has given. As heaven comes and says. We are all talking about it. And we are all adoring you for it. And we are all speechless with admiration.

That's what they were saying to him. And you ponder it for a moment. As the angels watch the great downward progress of Jesus.

[41 : 15] And the heaven can't believe its eyes. God's son in a manger in Bethlehem. And the Lord said. And the Lord said. I'm sure.

Well. We have seen everything now. The son of God. The maker. In a manger. And then before the rise.

The great drama unfolds. And that's what these men are here for. They are here to talk about one thing.

And I would hope. That our own minds have the same bias. Our minds have the same obsession. Our fellowship.

Our worship. Our devotion. Our prayer. Our witness. Christ crucified. The cross. Is the test.

[42 : 25] Of everything. Here. Everything comes to light. The dynamics of God. As Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The glory of God's love. The wonder of God's wisdom. The magnificence of God's power. Turning darkness into light. It's all here. And we say to them. We talk about nothing else.

And it don't matter where you'll be in heaven. That's what you'll see. No way you can turn somewhere.

And ask for a change of you. You wouldn't want to. But even if you did. There wouldn't be. The lamb is all the glory. Of Emmanuel's lamb.

The lamb having been slain. That's what heaven was talking about. And of course. Peter says.

[43 : 22] Lord it's great being here. Great, great being here. Lord, great being here. Let's be three tabernacles. One for you. One for Moses. One for Elijah. And I'm sure the key to that is the comment to one of the evangelists.

He didn't know what he was saying. And that's a warning to us. Not to read too much. Particularly too much solemnity into Peter's words.

Because he was under control. He just wasn't working at this point. And he says. Let's make three tabernacles that it's so sure.

She seems putting Christ and Moses and Elijah on a level. On a level. And they weren't on a level. And he just wants to stay here.

Wants to stay perhaps because. He didn't like that talk about the cross. And there was no cross up here. And there were no Pharisees.

[44 : 30] There were no Roman soldiers up here. And it was very secure. And very comfortable. And he liked. He liked being here. Although. There were things happening.

He wasn't really quite able to understand. And all this light was rather terrifying. But to. Maybe this stream of consciousness.

That's pouring out words. That have no reflection behind them. He is indicating a common mindset. On our own part.

That. We want to stay. Where things are cozy. We don't want to go. Where there is the possibility. Of trouble.

And confrontation. With the demonic. And the satanic. And the possibility of. Pain and suffering. And death. So he says.

[45 : 29] Let's stay here. We have no record of the Lord's. Except response to those words. We have only this. As they were coming down the mountain.

There is something quite. Brilliant too. There is a movement of that. That Jesus ignores. The common. Let's make the heat.

Have a little. The next thing. We are going down the mountain. Going down the mountain. To two things. You remember. The world down below. Is demon possessed. Or this is demonic. And in that world below.

The church is a complete. A. Why could not we. Cast about. On this mountain. There was a way from the demonic. And on this mountain. There were a way from the demonic. And on this mountain.

There were a way. From the uncomfortable reality.

[46 : 29] From the uncomfortable reality. The church couldn't. Deliver. couldn't achieve. The church was failing.

Well one day of course we'll be on the mountain and there'll be no coming down. And I'm not going to say really all that simplistically that we tonight are on the mountain top because we need to be careful lest we are to give too much in making such judgements for ourselves but certainly it is good to be here and it's closely up here and we need to be here.

As a disciple submitted as well in this. In fact the Lord said we need it too. And yes we all need the mountain tops.

Let no one begrudge us or anyone else for such moments. High days and feasts and festivals.

Moments when the very sound of the opening words of Islam can move us in ways we can't explain and couldn't have a mansion. And we certainly thank God for moments of that kind and we need those moments.

[48 : 01] And without such moments I'm sure that the church will be less and less effective. But we can't stay. As they were coming down the mountain. Back to the harsh reality of a Satan dominated world.

And back to the harsh reality of the church's failure. Well what are the options? As we go down there and I'm going to come back to the Consiguration in just a moment.

But I do want to explore those other options. One option that we face. And I think I should acknowledge that this thought did not begin with myself.

One option is the option of antiquarianism. We can go back into the past. We can turn our church into a museum and turn our worship into a fossil.

And pretend it's still the day Sir Thomas Chalmers and Dennis Lemuel. And there's nobody in this entire audience who is more a 19th century man than I am.

[49 : 29] And I'd love to have lived in that century. Some of you might want to go back to the 17th and all those great purities.

Back to the reformation. You can say well let's just reprint the old books. Let's just worship in the old ways.

And let's discuss the old questions and give the old answers and deal with the old demons. In this dreadful dreadful dreadful 20th century.

Let's put a cartwheel outside the church and pretend we're living in the 1890s. And God isn't allowed.

Or sometimes we might say well we want an apocalyptic approach to our own time. I mean by that quite simply this.

[50 : 33] That if we just wait and keep on having our own cozy discussions and conversations and so on. And what is called prayer. If we do that then revival will come.

It will come. And we'll say to each other I'm sure revival will come. Days of a mightier pouring of God's spirit.

We shall wait for it. Well it may be that a revival will come.

I'm sure perhaps the revival will come. But I'm sure of this too. If you think for a single moment that when God opens the windows of heaven and proves the eldest blessing.

It's going to be easy to be a Christian. You can think again. Because if there's one thing sure. It's that being a believer in a revival is extremely, extremely demanding.

[51 : 41] But God has not given me the chance to deal with the problems of the 1990's by going back to 1647.

Or forward into apocalypse. He doesn't say to me just you stay on the mountain reading these old books. And telling these old stories of great days at the Kirker Schatz.

Or great things in Northampton in New England. Or great things anywhere else. Doesn't say that. Doesn't say just you stay here till revival comes.

And then take the ferry back to the mainland in 1997. He says go down the mountain.

Go down to the demon possessed bar. Go down and face and challenge the church's failure.

[52 : 50] I think in some ways the greatest words in the whole passage are those of the sick will. The demon possessed bar you see.

And there's simply one statement and it's this. They brought him to Jesus. They brought him to the transfigured Christ.

To this one of the divine glory. This one who was God's son. This one that God loved. This one who were to hear. And the boy was transfigured.

He was transformed when they brought him to Jesus. And somehow you and I and the whole church of God.

How to assume responsibility. Not by going back into antiquity or forward into apocalypse. But down the mountain into transfiguration.

[53 : 59] To bring people to Jesus. Malformed. Deformed human beings. Deformed. Deformed. Badly structured.

Sinful. Chaotic human society. And they brought him to Jesus. And he was transfigured. And of course when we go down the mountain.

We bring the memory of the mountain with us. We remember who Jesus is. That he is God's son. Do you know the great hymn.

Those very very simple words. Thank you oh my father. For giving us your son.

And leaving his spirit. Till his work on earth is done. The transfigured and risen Christ.

[54 : 59] He is with us. Our task is. To transform the world. But I want to leave you.

With his mission of the glory. And his mission of the voice. This is. My beloved son. To mention how much God loves us.

To mention how much God loves you in him. And to ponder this. Do you think that God loves his son more than he loves you?

And if he does. Why instead of giving you for his son.

Did he give his son for you? You are a people greatly, greatly beloved. As members of the body. Of the Christ.

[56 : 04] Of whom God said. This is my son. The loved one. And I want to leave you there. May God bless his word. The so and.

Because he says tomorrow. This is my son. But. For more than the youth Novus. We'll be coming east de samsung next year. And this is your son pushing a ladder for us. And now he'll need to veux. Get ahead of ■laming.

But these are the options where he■■■■■■ opportunities. Before we leave you down on this. Because of the question lever,