**“Something More Sure”**

Exodus 24:8-18

**2 Peter 1:16-21**

Matthew 17:1-9

 Transfiguration

“We have something **more sure**, the prophetic word, to which you will **do well to pay attention** as to a lamp shining in a dark place.”

Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Bridge**

Peter had, literally, seen **the best of it**. He (with just 2 others) got to be eyewitnesses to what would have to be considered “The Event of (most certainly) **All Centuries**”. “So, Lord, **it’s** **good** that we are here”. That’s what he opened his mouth and said. “If you wish, Lord, I will make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah, so we can **stay this way forever**”. You can hear the wheels of Peter’s brain churning in the moment. And you knew that James and John were the **same way (just couldn’t find any words to say)**. John, one day, would get the **Revelation**, but **this** was **more focused** and, even, **bigger in some ways**. **This experience** he got also with 2 others (Peter and James), seeing **with them** Jesus aglow and standing with Moses and Elijah, 6 men **preparing for the season of Lent just like, here, we are**.

And **THAT’S** what that event was **FOR**. The Holy Spirit as **a cloud**, the Father **spoke**, and 5, plus God’s Son, were **there,** **fully revealed for what they all were** … and each one **preparing for what was talked about there: the Exodus of the Son of God … the sacrificial necessity of that Holy Lamb Jesus brought into, Himself, humanity so as to be slaughtered, though perfect, for the saving of the world from its sins**.

**Text**

This was 6 days from when Jesus’ had asked His disciples if they confessed Him as the Christ, the Son of the Living God, in the midst of the most trying of circumstances (when obstacles and opposition and even complacently stress the most severely … demonically). “Who do **people** say that I am?”, and Jesus asked expecting any who are His disciples to know their surroundings and into what midst they must confess. “But who do **you** say that I am? And from that time Jesus began to show His disciples that **He** must go to Jerusalem soon and suffer many things, and be killed, then on the third day be raised”, and “if anyone would come after Him (actually be His disciples), then “he too must deny **himself** and take up his own cross and follow. Whoever loses his life for My sake”, Jesus said, “will find it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come with His angels in the glory of His Father” (in an instant that we don’t know), “and then He will **repay each person according to what he has done**.” **Lent** that is **discipleship** (with all that implies, no matter what that might ever be) is **expected** and **demanded** of believers, and this coming season we must notice **the reality of it as Jesus displayed it (and insisted upon it from followers)**. The **Transfiguration happened to prepare everyone (with Jesus) to bear a cross**. Strength and perspective was given to Jesus and disciples **there** by this **preparatory event**.

So distraught had **Peter been** about Jesus forecast (the week before) of suffering and death that he’d taken Jesus aside and “rebuked Him” then: “Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you”. So distraught had **Jesus been** with the devilish suggestion that suffering and death could be, somehow, avoidable, He reacted to Peter’s temptation with “Get behind me Satan! You (even that suggestion) are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”

The **“thing of God”** was a “provided sacrifice” … “God loved the world giving His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him should not parish but have everlasting life”. That “giving” of the divine life of the Son of God, Jesus, was (at that point) less than a year away. And it loomed **necessary (and He knew it)** and **large**, and the Transfiguration (with Words from His Father and encouragements from the prophets of old who’d spoke so much about it) were **timely for Him**, **help disciples John, James, and Peter** through that same Passion and Exodus, including their own that would, often, be very hard before their own resurrections. And through their witness of this event it would grant us perspective and help for all the places that **we must go yet … even to and through the cross that’s Christ’s-for-us then ours-for-Him**.

“We do not follow cleverly devised myths” Peter later leaves us with. Some of us “were eyewitnesses of Jesus’ majesty. For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to Him by the Majestic Glory, ‘This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased’, **we ourselves heard this** **very voice borne from heaven**, for **we were with Him on the holy mountain**.” But for all of your following this (and here’s, from Peter, the **amazing trans-figurative thing from His learned perspective**), “**WE have something MORE SURE, the prophetic Word, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit**.”

For instance, **we have** the **entire history (in “prophetic Words”)** of an perfect creation originally but, then, our fall from that perfection (rebellious mankind became, with a desire to know for ourselves also **evil** apart from God and Good), so separated from Him by choice, such that (as our Old Testament account reminds us) only **by grace** could God and man **be together in the same place** (some granted that grace to eat and drink near the Divine Glory at Moses’ time). But blood thrown upon the people who’d accept that **blood covering** made covenant with God in graciousness possible … and that covenant would, one day, be explicitly shown as always having been the blood of Jesus (grace by the **saving sacrifice of the death of God’s divine Son … His blood shed for us**.

**Application**

Peter wrote 35+ years after the Transfiguration event and the Exodus event of Jesus’ Passion and rising from death. And he called “what **we have**” in the history **of that remembered by proclamation the Gospel** and **a “more sure” mountaintop thing** than even the glowing sight they got up on a hill … us (like the 3 disciples) given the ability (in it) to “rise also and have no fear, Jesus the focus of our eyes”. Peter’s 2nd Epistle was his **last**, written shortly before his death by his own cross of crucifixion. But he left us with **what he knew as a “more sure” trans-figuring thing than any mountaintop experience: divine Words and the historical accounts (Gospel) of God’s work, strength and perspective for us (with honesty, but encouragement) for all that we have to face till our eyes can really see Jesus glaringly**.

This coming Wednesday we will be reminded of **our mortality** … and **that fact** God knows about. Death there is dealt with honestly, **inevitable-for-us** as ashes get placed upon foreheads with the announcement of the fact that “**you and I** are dust; and to dust **we** shall return”. From **that assessment**, we’ll then **have to walk faithfully and usefully** for as long as this life calls us to do it. And we’ll have to face it (all of it), graciously, with the **same kind of rhythmic pulse that the Lord, Himself, needed and wanted and got**.

See, He came down from the Transfiguration mountain to, then, **face the remaining time toward His duty** yet **do-so by the promise (from His Father) that, through and to even Him**, **all would work for Good to those, like Him, who’d “love God”, duty-bound (called and acquired and relishing that) “according to His purpose and conformed to the image of His Son, so more than conquerors through Him who loved us”**.

Our “**something more sure**” (as Peter called it) is every time we hear the Words (so voice) of God and, then, **have** the “**something more sure**” than the Tran-figurative mountain. **We have** (before any valley of death or cares in our days and weeks) what will **help us** (what will strengthen us and give us perspective for the journey and duty). **We have** what we need. **Transfiguration** (and the **“something more sure” of the “prophetic Word” of it and so much beyond it)** is what prepares, strengthens, and gives perspective to our yearly Lenten season. **We have** the **“more sure” thing** (the “**prophetic Word**”) that’s able to prepare, strengthen, and gives perspective to the rhythms and seasons of our weeks and days.

Until our resurrection (and our, then, **even physical appearance** that matches closer to that of our resurrected and now-reigning Lord’s), may His **Word, which does trans-figure** (its gift in rhythm and vision and experience in hearing and epiphany), shape and strengthen **us**, **prepared for what’s all to come**. May it be so with us, in +Jesus’ name. Amen.