

**St. Luke Ev. Lutheran
Church**

**Sermon by Pastor
Anthony E. Schultz**

Exodus 24:12,15-18

February 11, 2018

**The Last Sunday after the Epiphany:
The Transfiguration of Our Lord**



¹²The LORD said to Moses, “Come up to me on the mountain. Wait there, and I will give you the stone tablets with the law and the commands that I have written, so that you can teach them.” ¹⁵Moses went up onto the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. ¹⁶The Glory of the LORD settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered the mountain for six days. On the seventh day the LORD called to Moses out of the middle of the cloud. ¹⁷The appearance of the Glory of the LORD looked like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel. ¹⁸Moses entered into the middle of the cloud and climbed up the mountain. Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

Day by day dear LORD three things I pray. To see Thee more clearly; to love Thee more dearly; to follow Thee more nearly day by day!

People of God~rescued from the flaming lake of fire in Hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

If you go to almost any big city~around the world~you will find homeless people begging-literally begging. Beggars are literally on their knees – with their forehead down on the ground. They have their

hands – wearing gloves with the fingers all worn off – their hands folded – their stained hands with ink black lines around each fingernail – their fingerprints black too from grease and oil and dirt. They can't remember the last time they washed their hands. Just past their head lies their cloth hat into which they hope and pray you will throw some spare change. Their hair is tangled and greasy. Their teeth – what teeth they still have are stained black and brown and yellow and green. They wear layers of clothes – some too big – some too small. Sometimes beside them lie their dogs – their head between their paws – as if they are begging, too. If you come too near them – you smell this sweet and sour smell of their sweat and their filth. These beggars – these homeless people are everywhere – down this block and down that street. They are everywhere. And no one seems to notice – they just hurry by – their noses literally turned up – as if to ignore them is to make them go away! Sinful people are so spiritually desperate. It doesn't matter that we come to Church – all showered squeaky clean what with our expensive shampoo and conditioner and body wash – what with our new clothes from Kohl's – our colorful socks and literally shined shoes and styled hair. We are spiritual beggars and yet by the grace of God today – **Transfiguration Sunday** we are blessed to:

See The Glory Of The LORD!

- I. On our own we are in darkness
- II. Forgiving love shines through Jesus!

We have said before – Context! Exodus chapter 19 sets the stage. **In the third month, on the same day of the month that the Israelites had left the land of Egypt, they entered the Wilderness of Sinai.**
² After they departed from Rephidim, they entered the Wilderness of Sinai and camped in the wilderness, and Israel camped there in front of the mountain. ³ Moses went up the mountain to God, and the

LORD called to him from the mountain: "This is what you must say to the house of Jacob, and explain to the Israelites: ⁴ 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to Me. ⁵ Now if you will listen to Me and carefully keep My covenant, you will be My own possession out of all the peoples, although all the earth is Mine, ⁶ and you will be My kingdom of priests and My holy nation.' These are the words that you are to say to the Israelites." *Holman Christian Standard Bible.*

Chapter 20 begins with words of Gospel encouragement to serve the LORD. Exodus chapter 20 begins: **20 Then God spoke all these words:² I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery. ³ Do not have other gods besides Me. ⁴ Do not make an idol for yourself, whether in the shape of anything in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters under the earth. ⁵ You must not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the fathers' sin, to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, ⁶ but showing faithful love to a thousand generations of those who love Me and keep My commands. ⁷ Do not misuse the name of the LORD your God, because the LORD will not leave anyone unpunished who misuses His name. ⁸ Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy: ⁹ You are to labor six days and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. You must not do any work—you, your son or daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the foreigner who is within your gates. ¹¹ For the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and everything in them in six days; then He rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and declared it holy.** *HCSB.*

Exodus chapters 20-23 are all sorts of rules and responsibilities. Take for example The Three Annual Festivals. Do you celebrate The Feast of Unleavened Bread? I don't think so! Do you celebrate The Feast of Harvest with the firstfruits of the crops you sow in your field? I don't think so! Do you celebrate The Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you gather in your crops from the field? You might say, "I do that *turkey* thing on a Thursday in November and say a special prayer and come to Church. Does that count?" How come we were

never taught this stuff in Confirmation Class? The fact is – these rules are part of the ceremonial law – ceremonies Old Testament believers were commanded to do – to set them apart from their neighbors – and to serve as shadows of how Jesus would be the Lamb of God – to take away all their sins. Some of the rules in chapter 20-23 are moral laws – timeless truths about right and wrong. For example: **Do not follow the crowd in doing wrong...if you see the donkey of someone who hates you fallen down under its load, do not leave it there; be sure you help him with it....do not oppress an alien; you yourselves know how it feels to be aliens, because you were aliens in Egypt.** Much to think about and so? When was the last time we sat and instead of binge watching NETFLIX – read our Bible?

¹²The LORD said to Moses, “Come up to me on the mountain. Wait there, and I will give you the stone tablets with the law and the commands that I have written, so that you can teach them.” Moses went up and down the Mountain several times – according to what the LORD said. The LORD told Moses come up to me on the mountain and wait there...**¹⁵Moses went up onto the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. ¹⁶The Glory of the LORD settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered the mountain for six days. On the seventh day the LORD called to Moses out of the middle of the cloud. ¹⁷The appearance of the Glory of the LORD looked like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel.** What can you say about that? There was a Professor long ago named August Pieper. He used to write comments about God’s Word that were published and read by students at the Seminary – during those precious years – when you are blessed with time to study Scripture and think about God. Prof. Pieper wrote Moses saw “*a more or less complete image of the true glory of the absolute and infinite transcendence of God over all creatures according to his all-pervading presence, his all-dominating power, his infinite grace and his all-consuming holiness.*” It’s like wow! It’s like how can you string every big word in the world together to say the glory and holiness and wonder of God are more than words can express! And there was Moses – right by Glory of the

LORD for 6 days. And then – on the 7th day – Moses was caught up smack in the middle of it! That would be like being in Heaven itself – right by God! It would be so completely wonderful – you couldn't begin to explain it! Why did God love Moses so much – he let Moses feel and experience Heaven on earth? Grace alone! That's the only answer – by grace alone!

¹⁸Moses entered into the middle of the cloud and climbed up the mountain. Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights. 40 days and 40 nights. That's a number that the LORD likes. When in Noah's day the flood came – water pouring down from the clouds – some theologians suggest for the very first time – plus water bursting forth from under the soil – plus water from oceans and seas and lakes and rivers and streams – all going sideways. It rained 40 days and 40 nights! When Jesus was in the wilderness of rock and stone and boulders with nothing to eat or drink – Jesus was hungry and thirsty for 40 days and 40 nights! It's a long time – the time the LORD determined – according to His unlimited power and knowledge and goodness! 40 days and 40 nights – Moses was with his Heavenly Father. How amazing that must have been!

Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights. Moses was by the glory of the LORD. From hundreds of yards away – it looked like the top of the mountain was literally on fire – with a fire that never went out! Again – it's something people could see – and at the same time – not even begin to understand – Heavenly glory! Heavenly glory is far *far* removed from earthly glory which is fast fleeting. Take for example the Super Bowl last week! Some people think this is the kind of glory you can only dream of ever achieving. I am here to tell you this glory is fast fleeting! Who was the most valuable player for Super Bowl #5? Chuck Howley – Dallas Cowboys Linebacker. MVP Super Bowl #20? Richard Dent – Chicago Bears Defensive End! MVP Super Bowl #50? Von Miller--Denver Broncos Linebacker. Or more recently the Grammy Awards – just a few weeks ago – Song of the Year, Record of the Year, Album of the Year? Bruno Mars! Can you name his award winning song? "That's What I Like!"

Who will remember that – 5 years from now – or 10 or 20? I guarantee I won't! Earthly glory – who knows who won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction last year? As the Winter Olympics are about to begin – who was the last winner of the Bi-athlon – that thing where you ski and ski and ski – then shoot a rifle with a scope and then ski and ski and ski some more? Who was the gold medal winner where they ski around all those poles with cloth stretched between them and who won that thing where they run and run and run and then all jump into that bullet shaped sled and go whipping through that ice tunnel track? Don't even get me started on that thing with the stone with a handle – and the brooms! Earthly glory doesn't last. It is here today and forgotten today! Heavenly glory will last for eternity! It is the only glory that will never end – and it is ours by grace alone through faith alone!

Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights. Moses was with the Great I AM – the Triune God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. When you think about being with the Lamb of God – in Heaven what do you think? Do you think it's going to be perfect – oh, sure – like it will smell like disinfectant – and there will be no dust or dirt – everything all scrubbed clean and washed – and antiseptic – but painfully dull. Do you worry it's going to be painfully dull – like forever church – where the Old Testament will be 66 chapters of Isaiah – chanting all 176 verses of Psalm 119; the Epistle Lesson 22 chapters of the Revelation to St. John and the Gospel reading all 28 chapters of Matthew – followed by some hymn with a zillion verses? I think it's very hard for us to imagine how wonderful the new heaven and the new earth will be. There will be no more death. Think about that! There are no obituaries in Heaven – no funeral homes – no cemeteries – no wakes – no visitation – no funerals. There will be no more cancer – no bone cancer – no breast cancer – no lung cancer – no pancreatic cancer – no prostate cancer – no ♥ -attacks – no strokes – no aneurisms – no house fires – no car crashes. There will be no more war! No more war – no invasions – no intercontinental nuclear missiles – no more post-traumatic stress! There will be no more arguing – shouting or pushing or shoving or threatening. No more anger – no more

unfaithfulness – no more lying or deceiving or cheating or betraying. There will be not even the *possibility* of *anything ever* going painfully wrong. There will be no more worries or doubts or fears. Only joy and rest and peace and calm. We will be safe with Jesus. We will see the glory of God. We will be home forever saying, **“Thank you, Jesus!”** Amen!

To God alone all glory!

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light blue background, reading "Rev. Anthony P. Schwetz".