



Queen Anne

LUTHERAN CHURCH

Called to Proclaim God's Love in Christ for Every Person

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Cantor	Kyle Haugen
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TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD

February 14, 2021

"Word Out" video transcript



Prelude

Chorale prelude on SCHÖNSTER HERR JESU
Charles Ore (b. 1936)

Welcome

P: Welcome, this last Sunday after Epiphany, the Transfiguration of Our Lord, to Queen Anne Lutheran Church. Wherever you are listening, whatever challenges you might be facing, we invite you into this space: one where you can hear the good news through proclamation, spoken and sung; a time where you can be still, and know God is God. The Sundays after Epiphany began with Jesus' baptism and end with three disciples' vision of his transfiguration. In Mark's story of Jesus' baptism, apparently only Jesus sees the Spirit descending and hears the words from heaven. But now Jesus' three closest friends hear the same words naming him God's Beloved. As people of faith, we too are enabled to see the light of God shine through the face of Christ Jesus, a light we carry into the world in service to and care for others.

Greeting

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

G: And also with you.

Gospel Acclamation (*congregation may join for Alleluias*)

Luke 9:35

G:

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Repeat alleluia

P:

G:

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

The Holy Gospel:

Mark 9:2-9

A: The Gospel according to Mark, the ninth chapter.

G: Glory to you, O Lord.

A: ²Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, ³and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. ⁴And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. ⁵Then Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses,

and one for Elijah.” ⁶He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. ⁷Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, “This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!” ⁸Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.

⁹As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

A: The Gospel of the Lord.

G: Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

The Transfiguration of Peter

Pastor Dan Peterson

It was still dark when Peter awoke. His room was quiet. Just outside the door, however, he could hear the guard shuffle only to resume his snoring. In any other circumstance the noise would have been irritating. But Peter welcomed it. At least he wasn't totally alone.

Peter rubbed his groggy eye as he sat up on the edge of the bed. The lashings he acquired yesterday afternoon across his back – 39 according to custom – made it too painful to lie down any longer.¹ The regrets, temporarily banished by a brief spell of light sleep, returned almost immediately.

He thought of the time when he and the other disciples saw Jesus walking on the water, how he ventured forth, only to sink upon the first sight of a potential threat. “You of little faith,” Jesus said, “why did you doubt?” (Matthew 14:31)

Peter turned to the single window of his cell. Through it a fading beam of moonlight created a tiny square in the middle of the room. Another memory came to him. He recalled the rebuke he received from Jesus in front of the other disciples for trying to dissuade him from continuing to enact the reign of

God, knowing his call for justice and service to the poor would gain the attention of the powerful and inevitably lead to his suffering and death.

“Get behind me Satan!” he could almost audibly hear Jesus saying. “For you are a stumbling block for me; you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things” (Mark 8:33).

The memory that disturbed him most came next. He was in the courtyard of the high priest after Jesus had been arrested. One of the servant-girls recognized him. “You also were with Jesus, the man from Nazareth,” she said, pointing to him (Mk 14:66). He denied it, and after he did a cock crowed. Then two others asked him the same thing. He denied it again, only to hear the cock crow once more. Then he recalled what Jesus had said to him, “Before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times” (Mark 14:72). The pain of his betrayal made him break down and weep, just as he realized he was doing now.

“Lord, forgive me,” Peter said as he wept. “Forgive me my sin as I forgive those who sin against me.” The guard shuffled again outside. “In his anguish [Peter] prayed more earnestly and his sweat, barely illuminated by the lingering light of the moon, became like drops of blood falling down on the ground.”²

“Forgive me my sins as I forgive those who sin against me,” Peter repeated, recalling now the first time he heard these words. It was early in Jesus’ ministry. He and the other disciples had just begun to follow Jesus. As Jesus taught in the synagogues, healed the sick, and proclaimed the good news of God’s coming reign, great crowds gathered around him, following him from Galilee to the Decapolis, then Jerusalem, Judea, and finally from beyond the Jordan (Matthew 4:25). When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up Mt. Hermon just as Moses ascended Mt. Sinai.³ From there he interpreted the law of Moses – not just the Ten Commandments but the other stipulations one finds in Torah. Yet something was different: love your enemies? Pray for those who persecute you? Nobody present had heard anything like it.

Yet for all his teaching concerning the law, it was the instruction Jesus gave in response to a request from one of the disciples that made its biggest impression. "Lord," one among the twelve called out, "teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples" (Luke 11:1). Jesus looked first at him, then up at the swelling crowd. "When you pray, say, 'Father, holy be your name. Your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us. And do not bring us to the time of trial'" (Luke 11:2-4).

For once, the meaning was not lost on Peter. Even though Christians would eventually replace the language of debt with "sins" or "trespasses," Jesus was originally advising something more radical. "This is outrageous," Judas said to Peter afterward. "How can he tell us to forgive what other people owe us? We'll have nothing!"

"Maybe our faith will provide," Peter recalled saying in response. "Didn't he say our Father knows what we need even before we ask, and that we should not worry about tomorrow since today has enough troubles of its own?" (Matthew 6:31-32, 34).

Judas shook his head. "You're as crazy as he is."⁴

Later Jesus took Peter aside. "I overheard your conversation with Judas," he said. "You were right about my teaching." Peter beamed, but the memory was fleeting. Outside of his cell Peter heard a cock crow, calling forth the break of day and ushering Peter back into the present. For every morning of the past 30 years it was a reminder of his betrayal. Peter bowed down his head, sobbing. "Lord," he replied for a third time, "forgive me."

Just then Peter heard a door in the hallway of the jail creak open. Footsteps followed. His heart thumped against his ribcage until he realized it was simply the changing of the guard. He still had time. Outside he could hear the world spring to life. Birds had begun chirping. "Look at the birds of the air," he remembered Jesus saying, "they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?" (Matthew 6:26)

Moments passed. Peter started to feel exhaustion produced by insomnia descend upon him as if giant hands were gripping his shoulder and pushing him evenly into the ground. Then he heard it.

At first it was virtually inaudible. A conversation was occurring between two or three people outside of his window. He listened intently but could not hear what they were saying. Suddenly, the door in the hallway thundered open, causing Peter to jump and turn immediately to see what was coming. He could feel his heartbeat reverberating through his ears. Multiple guardsmen – at least two, maybe three – had entered. He could hear them speaking to the guardsman on duty. Then came another sound, the sound of “pitter patter” rain makes when it first lands on dry dirt. Beads of sweat, Peter realized, had gathered on his forehead and were once again falling onto the cell floor.

He collected himself as best he could, praying to God for strength as he brought forth the victory of the one he betrayed, he who beat death, he who suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he who descended into the lower-parts of the earth only to be raised on the third day; he who was exalted to God’s right hand, and now fills all things.⁵

The beauty of the sunlight outside that came through his window reminded him of the time he met Jesus, now risen, on the shore of the Tiberian Sea. Not a single cloud hung from the morning sky. At first nobody knew it was him. Then the one whom Jesus loved exclaimed from the boat out of which they were fishing, “Look! It is the Lord!”⁶

Immediately they headed back to the shore where a charcoal fire was burning. Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast” (John 21:12). The whole experience was strange. How could Jesus eat, and how did they know it was him even though they did not recognize him?

After the meal, Jesus spoke with Peter apart from the others. Time had washed away most of what Peter recalled of the dialogue, except for one thing Jesus kept asking, “Simon Peter, son of John, do you love me?”

All of a sudden, the cell door rattled. Over the increasing volume of the voices coming from outside of the window, he could hear the guards speaking. "Is this him?" one of them asked, "the one who insists upon dying upside down?" A ring of keys clanged as a hand gripped the rusty bar closest to the lock. The door opened and before him stood a burly centurion. "Simon Peter son of John," he declared, "by order of the Emperor Nero, Son of God, I hereby summon you to your execution."

Peter could not move. Great fear reverberated through his body just as it had when he denied Christ to avoid capture, just as it had when he witnessed the martyrdom of Stephen, and just as it had on the mountaintop with Jesus. There he, James, and John watched as Moses and Elijah appeared followed by the appearance of a dark cloud from which a voice bellowed, "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!" That cloud, Peter would later realize, was an allusion to Moses' experience at Sinai. Jesus, it would seem, was not only the Son of God; he was the new Moses who had come to redeem the lost sheep of Israel (Matthew 15:24).

Still frozen before the guard, a final piece of the story snapped audibly into place for Peter: the transfiguration of Jesus on the mountaintop was not a secret meant exclusively for himself, James, and John. It was a preview of what Jesus would become after death, namely, a new creation.⁷ No wonder nobody recognized him! On the third day after his death the transfiguration—or rather, the *transformation*—was complete. Jesus was the "first fruits" of new life for all people, Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female.⁸ "Listen," Peter remembered Paul telling him when he stood before the council in Jerusalem, "I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet" (1 Corinthians 15:51-52). The guard waited as Peter sat. Then suddenly he heard a voice, a whisper, at his right ear. "Take heart and rise," it said. "As was I, so shall you be."

Two other guardsmen entered the cell, flanking the increasingly impatient centurion on each side. Peter remained transfixed. The voice came to him once more. "Take heart and rise. *This is the end, but for you it is the beginning.*"⁹

Tears streamed down Peter's cheeks, but these were no longer tears of fear. They were tears of joy, tears of reassurance and peace. Suddenly Peter felt himself standing up as if by a power not his own. The centurion fastened a belt he was holding around Peter's waist, ready to take him where neither he (nor anyone else) would wish to go: death by crucifixion, the most brutal form of execution in the Roman world.¹⁰

Yet something incredible happened in that jail cell and Peter knew it. As the light of day filled the whole room, Peter had been changed. He had been transfigured. As the guards led Peter out of his cell, and as he could hear now the throng of people gathering to watch, death – as his brother Paul often said, had been swallowed up in victory. Death, indeed, had lost its sting.¹¹

Amen.

¹ See 2 Corinthians 11:24.

² These are the words of Jesus in Gethsemane shortly before his arrest. See Luke 22:24.

³ See Lawrence Wills, "Mark," in *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, eds. Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Brettler (Oxford University Press, 2011), 88.

⁴ Biblical scholars speculate that Jesus' ministry may have occurred during a year of jubilee. According to Leviticus, every fiftieth year Moses commanded his people to forgive the debt of those who could not pay up. As such, Jesus, an observant Jew, may have simply been calling for people to return to the law of Moses. See especially Leviticus 25:28.

⁵ The belief, as reflected in the wording used here from the Apostles' Creed, that Jesus descended into hell draws from two places in Scripture: Ephesians 4:9-10, which I alluded to here, and 1 Peter 3:18-21.

⁶ See John 21:7. The beloved disciple appears only in the Gospel of John. He (or she) is never named. Tradition surmises he was John of Zebedee, one of Jesus' disciples. The Gospel, however, may offer an alternative. See John 11:3.

⁷ The language here comes from Paul. See 2 Corinthians 5:17.

⁸ See Galatians 3:28.

⁹ These are reportedly the final words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer who was executed by the Nazis on April 9, 1945.

¹⁰ This prediction regarding how Peter would die appears in John 21:18-19.

¹¹ See 1 Corinthians 15:54-55.

Hymn of the Day

Beautiful Savior

Stanzas 1, 3 & 4

ELW 838

1 Beau - ti - ful Sav - ior, King of cre - a - tion,
2 Fair are the mead - ows, fair are the wood - lands,
3 Fair is the sun - shine, fair is the moon - light,
4 Beau - ti - ful Sav - ior, Lord of the na - tions,

Son of God and Son of Man!
robed in the flow'rs of bloom - ing spring;
bright in the spar - kling stars on high;
Son of God and Son of Man!

Tru - ly I'd love thee, tru - ly I'd serve thee,
Je - sus is fair - er, Je - sus is pur - er,
Je - sus shines bright - er, Je - sus shines pur - er
Glo - ry and hon - or, praise, ad - o - ra - tion,

light of my soul, my joy, my crown.
he makes our sor - rowing joy - it sing.
than all the an - gels in the sky.
now and for - ev - er - more be thine!

Prayers of the Church

A: Guided by Christ made known to the nations, let us offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all people in need.

A brief silence.

A: For the gospel proclaimed in word and deed, for communities of faith far and near, and for all who show the face of Christ throughout the world;
Lord, in your mercy,

G: **hear our prayer.**

A: For creation: sun, moon and stars; life forming in the dark earth and ocean deep; mountains, clouds and storms, and creatures seen and unseen, and for the Holy Spirit's guidance in our stewardship of God's creation;
Lord, in your mercy,

G: **hear our prayer.**

A: For those responsible for safety and protection: for emergency responders and security guards, attorneys and advocates, civil servants and leaders of governments, that they witness to mercy and justice throughout the world;
Lord, in your mercy,

G: **hear our prayer.**

A: For all who suffer this day, that Christ our healer transform sickness into health, loneliness into companionship, bereavement into consolation, and suffering into peace; Lord, in your mercy,

G: **hear our prayer.**

A: For companions in life's journey in this worshiping community, for loved ones who cannot be with us this day, and for guidance during struggles we face, that God's glory is revealed around and among us;
Lord, in your mercy,

G: **hear our prayer.**

A: For whom or what else do the people of God pray?

A silence is given so that your prayers may be offered.

A: Lord, in your mercy,

G: **hear our prayer.**

A: In thanksgiving for the faithful departed who now rest from their earthly pilgrimage, that their lives of service and prayer inspire us in our living;
Lord, in your mercy,

G: **hear our prayer.**

A: Merciful God, hear the prayers of your people, spoken or silent, for the sake of the one who dwells among us, your Son, Jesus Christ our Savior.

G: **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

P: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

G: **Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread
and forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever.**

Amen.

Announcements

P: We thank you for joining us for this service. If you would like to hear other services or access the newest edition of *the Quill*, our newsletter, we invite you to go to our website at queenannelutheran.org.

P: Receive now the blessing:

Benediction

A: Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

P: Almighty God, the Father, † the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
bless and preserve you.

G: **Amen.**

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

G: **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude

Chorale prelude on IN DIR IST FREUDE
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

About today's music

Today's Hymn of the Day continues post-Epiphany light imagery for Transfiguration Sunday. "Beautiful Savior" (ELW 838) is often among the most cherished hymns of any Lutheran congregation, describing Christ as the "light of my soul" who shines "brighter" and "purer" than all the angels in the sky (perhaps today we recall the brightness of the Christmas angels and the star of the Magi this final Sunday after the Epiphany). Bach's rather rollicking setting of "In Thee Is Gladness" employs full sounds from the organ, evoking the poet's description of Christ as "sunshine of my heart" (see ELW 867).

— *Cantor Kyle*

