

February 15th, 2026

**A Transfiguration Sunday Sermon:
“A Glimpse of Glory to Steady Our Walk”**

by Rev. Tamera K. Jacobi

Exodus 24:12-18, 2 Peter 1:16-21, Matthew 17:1-9

Friends, there are moments in Scripture when God pulls back the curtain just enough for us to glimpse a glory too great for us to hold, and yet somehow that is exactly what we need.

Transfiguration Sunday is one of those moments. It is a mountaintop day, but it is also a day meant to steady us for the valleys ahead we must walk.

Moses knows something about mountains. In Exodus 24, God calls him up into a cloud so thick it looks like fire.

The people below see only danger and distance, but Moses is invited in. Moses steps into mystery because God has something to give him, something that will shape the life of God's people.

I imagine Moses climbing with trembling legs, not because he doubts God, but because he knows that stepping into God's presence changes a person.

It's like standing at the edge of the Grand Canyon for the first time. You feel small, but **not** in a way that diminishes you; you are small in a way that reminds you that the world is bigger, deeper, more beautiful than you realized.

Moses steps into that kind of awe.
And centuries later, Peter will step into it too.

In 2 Peter, he writes like someone who still can't quite get over what he saw. "We did not follow cleverly devised myths," he says.

In other words: *I'm not telling you a story to inspire you. I'm telling you what happened.* I saw His majesty. I heard the voice. I was there.

It reminds me of the way people talk after witnessing something extraordinary, like a parent describing the moment their child took a first breath, or someone recalling the instant they survived an accident they shouldn't have walked away from.

There's a tone in their voice that says, "I can't unsee this. It changed me."

Peter carries that tone because the Transfiguration marked him, changed him forever.

Matthew tells us Jesus takes Peter, James, and John up a high mountain. They think they're going for prayer. Maybe a little quiet. Maybe a break from the crowds. But instead, a new understanding of the world opens and transforms them.

Jesus' face shines like the sun. His clothes blaze white. Moses and Elijah appear, representing the Law and the Prophets, the whole story of God's people standing beside the One, Jesus who fulfills it.

And then the voice that once thundered over Sinai speaks again: **“This is my Son, the Beloved... listen to Him.”**

The disciples fall to the ground. Overwhelmed. Terrified. Because glory is beautiful, but it is also more than human beings know how to hold.

And then Jesus does something so tender it almost breaks the moment open even further. He comes to them. He touches them. “Get up. Do not be afraid.”

The glory of God’s power does not crush them. It steadies them in their fear.

This is why this moment matters. Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem. The cross is coming. The disciples don’t understand this yet, but Jesus knows that they will need something to hold onto, something bright enough to cut through the darkness of Good Friday.

So, Jesus gives them this moment. A glimpse of who He truly is. A glimpse of the victory already written. A glimpse of resurrection before the suffering.

It’s like the way a parent might tuck a note into a child’s backpack on the first day of school, something small, something encouraging, something to hold onto when the day gets hard. Jesus gives His disciples a note written in light.

The voice says, “Listen to Him”. The command from the cloud is simple and urgent: *listen*.

Not “look at Him.” Not “admire Him.” Not “stay here forever.” Listen.

Because Jesus is about to teach them what glory really looks like: The dazzling light of service and self-giving love, the triumph of selfless sacrifice for the sake of someone else.

Notice that Jesus does not stay rooted on the mountaintop experience, but *willingly* walks into the valley of despair. Jesus shows us that he does not avoid suffering but transforms it!

Listening to Jesus, following Jesus as a disciple means trusting that the way of the cross is not the end of the story.

A basic truth is what comes up the mountain must also come down the mountain. And Peter wants to stay. He wants to build shelters, as if holiness can be contained, as if glory can be preserved beneath a tent.

But Jesus leads them back down. Because faith is lived in the valley: where people hurt, where fear is real, where hope feels thin, where the world needs healing.

The mountain gives us revelation. The valley gives us purpose.

It’s like those moments in life when everything comes into focus, like clarity on a retreat, or a sacred realization during a powerful worship service, or...the transformative power of a quiet moment of prayer.

I get it...we want to stay there. But God sends us back into the world because that clarity is meant to fuel compassion, kindness and love...not escape.

That is when the touch changes everything. When the disciples fall in fear, Jesus touches them. That touch is the gospel's hope and reassurance that:

God's glory does not stay distant,
God's holiness does not remain untouchable,
God's power bends low to lift us.

Jesus tells each of us, "Get up. Do not be afraid." God tells each of us, "Listen to him".

The same Jesus who shines like the sun also kneels beside trembling disciples. The same Jesus who stands with Moses and Elijah also walks with ordinary fishermen. The same Jesus who reveals divine glory also carries a cross.

This is the Jesus who meets us. This is the Jesus who steadies us. This is the Jesus who sends us back into the world with courage.

So, what do we carry down the mountain? Transfiguration is not about escaping life's challenges. It is about seeing life's valleys through the light of Christ.

We carry down the mountain: a clearer vision of who Jesus is, a deeper trust in His word, a steadier hope for the road ahead, a courage that comes from being touched by grace.

We carry the promise of that grace even when the world
grows dim, the light we saw on the mountain is still shining,
in Christ, and through our lives.
Amen.