

*After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. <sup>3</sup> His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. <sup>4</sup> And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus.*

*<sup>5</sup> Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” <sup>6</sup> (He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.)*

*<sup>7</sup> Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: “This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!”*

*<sup>8</sup> Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus.*

*<sup>9</sup> As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. (Mark 9:2-9 NIV2011)*

### **Listen to Him**

Think about the things to which you listen. It might be your favorite radio station, a band, a certain news channel, etc. Why do you listen to it? Maybe the simplest reason is that you like it. You enjoy the way it sounds. You like how it makes you feel. If it’s a news channel, even when it is bad news, you like the way they present it. And if you don’t like it? If you don’t like what it does to you or how it makes you feel, what do you do? You turn it off. You change the station. You flip to another channel. Don’t like the announcers during the football game, mute the TV and turn on the radio announcer. Driving down the road and a song comes on that you can’t stand, you change it hoping that something, anything else might come in. If you use *Pandora* (or another music service), click the “thumbs down” or next and move on to something else. Of course, it’s not just the TV channels, radio stations, or podcasts where we find ourselves doing this. We do it in our conversations with people. Don’t like the conversation, move on to the next one. We find ourselves doing it also when God speaks to us.

The inspired-by-God author Mark invites us to tune into his station today. But as we tune in it seems like we could have missed the first part. Mark tells us, “**After six days Jesus takes Peter, James, and John with him and led them up a high mountain.**” Six days from what? If you would have tuned in before, you would have heard Peter speaking. Peter had been listening to Jesus for a little over two

years. He had seen many of Jesus' miracles. He had seen much with his own two eyes and heard with his own two ears, and by the faith and knowledge the Holy Spirit works in him, Peter has come to a conclusion. So when Jesus asks, "Who do you say I am?" Hardly skipping a beat Peter says, "You are the Christ!" Hit the nail on the head. Good work Peter. But, what does that mean exactly? It would have been interesting tuning into the disciples conversations about this while they brainstorm what this all entails that this Jesus is the Christ, God's chosen one.

Six days go by and Jesus decides he's going to show Peter, James, and John. So there they go, Peter, James, John and Jesus with no one else. Up the high mountain they begin to hike. As they hike, I'm sure they stop to catch their breath a few times. As they go along they need to be sure they also stay hydrated. Finally, they stop and Jesus is transfigured before them. The man who moments before had been catching his breath now has a face that shines like the sun. The man they knew needed time to rest, food to eat, and water to drink looks like nothing they had ever seen. Even his clothes change. They are a dazzling bright white like when the sun reflects off freshly fallen snow. No one in this world could have bleached them that white.

As they shield their eyes from the brightness and fear, they see through their fingers and under their arms two men who had been dead for thousands of years. The one had spoken with God in a way that no one since had. That's Moses. The other God had brought up to him in a whirlwind. That's Elijah. And what are they doing? Talking; like a couple of old friends catching up. If you were to quickly switch the station to Luke's Gospel, we would hear their topic of conversation with Jesus. It's the same thing the disciples had heard Jesus talk about around six days before what they are seeing now. He who is Christ, God's chosen one, must go to Jerusalem. He, the Son of Man and true God, must suffer things and be rejected by the leaders of the people. He—the Christ, God's Son—must be killed. But after three days he would rise again. That's what Jesus, Moses, and Elijah are talking about: Jesus' departure. God's plan to save is what Jesus would accomplish in Jerusalem.

Then a cloud appears. A voice speaks. The glory of the Lord; the presence of the God of free and faithful grace is there. The voice speaks, "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him."

Listen to him. Listen to Jesus. Tune your ears to what he is saying. They had been doing that, haven't that? Many people had listened to Jesus. Many had followed

him. But were they really listening? So much Jesus had said went in one ear and out the other. So many times Jesus had to address things again because they would either conveniently forget or decide it didn't apply to them in that situation. So much what they heard out of Jesus' mouth had been interpreted and filtered through their own presuppositions and assumptions about who the Christ should be and what his kingdom would be like.

Not listening. Not paying attention. Tuning into the other channels what they want to hear. Listening to others—other people, other influences, other philosophies—instead of Jesus. Viewing spiritual things from a worldly point of view. Who are we talking about? That's me. That's you. In one ear and out the other, not listening or paying attention, sometimes. More often though, we filter it through our own reason and logic that our Old Adam insists on putting in the way of hearing God's Word and the heart that believes what God's Word says. We find ourselves tuning into a society driven by independence, free-thinking, popularity, financial success. We tune into family and friends, TVs and movies, music, self-help books and so-called experts. We tune into ourselves—pride, arrogance, self-reliance—"I can do this. I can do whatever I put I mind to. I've got this." We tune into the station of, "No one is going to tell me what to do or how to do it." When what Jesus' says isn't what we like to hear—especially when told what we are doing is wrong—we find ourselves flipping stations until we find something that we like. You can almost always find another station that tells you what you are doing is fine.

Listen to Jesus? That's pretty hard. It's pretty hard when there are so many other stations to listen to that come in so clearly, loudly, and demanding your attention. It's pretty hard they are smooth-talking, whispering, intriguing, and satisfyingly scratch the itch that your ears want to hear. It's hard to listen when so many things inside each of us constantly questions and undermines creating doubt and causes confusion in our hearts of faith.

That's why the Father spoke from the cloud. That's why Jesus takes us on a hike of our own. Not up a mountain, onto the peaceful Sandhills, or out into a fishing boat. He takes us to the pages of his holy Word. It's from there that he speaks to you. And your heavenly Father says, "Listen to him." You weighed down with the burdens of responsibilities of life. You who feel the weight of shame from sin. You who feel the pressure to find answers, to be better, Jesus says, "**Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest.**" For those feeling lost in life, not knowing what who or what to believe, Jesus says, "**I am the way,**

**the truth and the life.**” And the Father says, “Listen to him.” Jesus says to you, “I was pierced for your transgressions. I was crushed for your iniquities. The punishment that brings you peace was upon me. By my wounds you are healed.” And the Father says, “Listen to him.” Jesus wants to say, “I love you. I gave my life for you. I made you holy washing you in the waters of rebirth and renewal in baptism. For all those times you have not listened and tuned me out, for every time that you have listened to other things, though your sins are red as scarlet, by my blood shed for you, you are as white as wool. You are my bride. Holy and blameless.” And the Father says, “Listen to him.” That same Jesus says, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live even though he dies.” And the Father says, “Listen to him.”

There’s so much more that Jesus wants to say to you. There’s so much more that he does say to you. It’s not coming in visions or dreams. It’s here. It’s his Word. It’s from these pages you hear his voice. And the Father tells us, “Listen to him.” God has given us this church and church family so that we can do just that. We gather together to listen to Jesus’ voice and feed on his Word. We have Sunday school and Bible class so we get better in-tune with His voice and better know what he says. Use the opportunities He has given you and to your children. He has blessed us with a Lutheran Elementary school for over 75 years. He’s given us a Preschool through which little children can listen to Jesus’ voice. He’s given us Our School, Nebraska Lutheran, where high schoolers listen to Jesus’ voice while receiving a solid, well-rounded education. Through our schools we are not only preparing citizens in society but preparing leaders for our church and gospel-proclaimers who will share Jesus’ voice so more may listen to him. Support the work of our Preschool, Grade School, and High school with your prayers and your offerings, the way you speak about them and promote them in our community. Use the opportunities God gives you. Encourage others to be here around God’s Word. There are many stations to listen to on the radio of life. But there is only one voice that leads to eternal life. And the Father says to you, “Listen to him.” Amen.