

Title: “Listen to Him”

Chris Ryan	Matt. 17:17	2/15/2026
<p>Service Readings: Ex. 24:8-18, 2 Peter 1:16-21, Matt. 17:1-9 <i>On the mountain, God does not give the disciples something to do or build but His Son to hear. The Transfiguration reveals that faith is preserved by the Word of Christ.</i></p>		

Message:

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

17 After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. ² There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. ³ Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.

⁴ Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.”

⁵ While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!”

It was as not as if Peter, James and John had not listened to Jesus before; they considered him their teacher. They traveled with him and hung on his every word. “Listen to him” was not a simple reminder to keep paying attention, as though the disciples had grown careless. It was something far deeper. It was God anchoring them to his Son’s Word before the cross. For soon Jesus would speak words they did not want to hear—that he must suffer, be rejected, and die. These were not words meant to prepare them emotionally, but words meant to sustain them when sight would fail. What was coming was not a tragedy or a mistake, but the necessary for the salvation of the world.

In the words of Isaiah Jesus would be “pierced for our transgressions” and be “crushed for our iniquities.” He would willfully offer his back to those who beat him, his cheeks to those who pulled out his beard. He would not hide or withdraw from the punishment. He would not call down his army of angels to defend and free him. On the cross, in full obedience to the Father, he would bear the punishment for the sins of all humanity. He would do this all to bring us peace.

Peter, James and John would soon be witnesses to this. They would look upon the man who taught them that he was the Son of God. A man who would hang upon a cross as a bloody sacrifice. They would wonder how this could be so, for surely God wouldn’t allow it! But they would also be witnesses to his resurrection. They would be recipients of the Holy Spirit. They would know that everything Jesus taught about himself was proven true.

“This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!”

Upon that mountain, God didn't give the apostles something to *do* or to *build*. Instead, he gave them someone to *hear*. Now the Church is led into lent. And today we hear the same words from God about his Son. He is calling us to not *do* something or *build* something, but to *listen*. *Listen to Jesus.*

And here is what is crucial for us to take away. On the mountain, God told the apostles to listen - to the living Christ. He had not yet been killed; he was with them in the flesh, living and breathing. He was experiencing all that they were experiencing: hunger, weakness, joy, sorrow. He was alive; he was present; he was relatable. And they were to listen to him. Today we hear the same command: "Listen to him!" This doesn't mean that we are to listen to the lessons of one who has simply gone before us, someone who once lived and whose words only echo through the pages of history. No! it is a command to listen to the same living Jesus where he has promised to speak – through his living Word. The same Jesus who walked with the disciples, ate with the disciples, experienced everything they did. That Jesus! The one who did die, but then rose from the grave. That Jesus! He is as alive today as he was on that mountain.

And what were they to listen to? Not the words of glory, but the words Jesus had already spoken – and would continue to speak: that he must suffer, be rejected, and die for the sins of the world. He would continue to speak this Word as they came down the mountain. It was not what they wanted to hear, but it was what they needed to hear, for what was about to happen was not an accident but the will of God for the salvation of the world.

Listen to him. Not because listening itself is a work that keeps faith alive, but because through this Word God himself preserves his people. The Word Jesus speaks—of suffering, of the cross, of forgiveness—was the Word that carried the disciples through what their eyes could not understand. And it is the same Word that carries us now.

As we are led from Christmas into Lent, the glory fades from sight. Ashes replace light. Repentance replaces wonder. But Christ has not gone silent. The One who shone on the mountain now speaks in humility, in suffering, and in mercy. And where his Word is heard, there he is present—crucified and risen—for the forgiveness of sins.

So listen to him. Not to climb back up the mountain, but to follow him down the way of the cross. For the Word he speaks is faithful and true, and it will carry us all the way—from the mountain, through the cross, and into the resurrection.

Please pray with me.

Lord Jesus Christ, beloved son of the Father, keep us attentive to your Word.

When glory is hidden and the way of the cross lies before us, preserve us by your voice alone.

Lead us in repentance, sustain us by your promises, and grant us peace through your holy cross; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.