

Occasion: Transfiguration / Fellowship Sunday

Date: 02-14-2010

Text: Hebrews 3:1-6; Luke 9:28-36

Title: "Jesus' Transfiguration, Our Transformation"

Setting:

I use this well known illustration to highlight a word that is key in understanding the emphasis of the six verses of the Epistle Lesson, the word "**Faithful**". On this Sunday that we remember the Transfiguration of our Lord, we see with Him two of the most **faithful** servants who ever lived, Moses and Elijah. As God's servants they were **faithful** in proclaiming His Word, so the message of repentance and forgiveness of sins was able to be heard and believed. Also, as God's Son Himself was **faithful**, so He was able to win salvation for all separated from God by sin. Following in their footsteps, as we are **faithful** to believing the Gospel, we ourselves are delivered from sin and death and as we are **faithful** servants, we are able to proclaim the Gospel and to lead others to salvation in Christ.

Introduction:

Old Faithful was named by the first official expedition to Yellowstone, the Washburn Expedition of 1870. They were impressed by its size and frequency. **Old Faithful** erupts every 35 to 120 minutes for 1 1/2 to 5 minutes. Its maximum height ranges from 90 to 184 feet.

It is not the biggest or the most regular geyser in Yellowstone but it is the biggest regular geyser. Furthermore, it has been erupting in nearly the same fashion throughout the recorded history of the park. Through the years, it has become one of the most studied geysers. One result of this close observation is that the Park Rangers are able to predict its eruptions fairly accurately. This makes Old Faithful geyser one of the easiest geysers in Yellowstone to see.



The time to the next eruption, the interval is predicted using the duration of the current eruption. The longer the eruption lasts, the longer the interval until the next eruption. For instance, a 2 minute eruption results in an interval of about 55 minutes whereas a 4.5 minute eruption results in an interval of about 90 minutes. *(The following table shows the intervals for eruption. It is not possible to predict more than one eruption in advance.)*

Duration	1.5 min	2.0 min	2.5 min	3.0 min	3.5 min	4.0 min	4.5 min	5.0 min
Interval	50 min	57 min	65 min	71 min	76 min	82 min	89 min	95 min

<http://www.yellowstone.net/geysers/oldfaithful.htm>

The dictionary defines "**Faithful**" as (1) strict or thorough in the performance of duty; (2) steady in allegiance or affection; loyal; constant.

For over 100 years, the eruption of the geyser known as "**Old Faithful**" has been constant and consistent in performance. Certainly the name it received in 1870 is still appropriate in 2010.

I. MOSES THE FAITHFUL SERVANT:

Of all the servants of the Lord in the Bible, Moses had a calling that was unique, as God called Moses to lead the nation of Israel out of slavery in Egypt and to lead them to the Promised Land. In that sense, in his calling as a prophet, Moses was a "type", an "illustration" of what Jesus would do as the Savior in leading us out of slavery to sin and death and to the promised inheritance of everlasting life. Moses, foretelling the prophetic work of the Messiah, said, "**15The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to Him.**" It is no accident that God the Father spoke those words from the cloud on the Mount of Transfiguration, in the hearing of Jesus' disciples: "**This is My Son, Whom I have chosen; listen to Him.**"

Moses was a great prophet, a **faithful** prophet indeed. God gave the Ten Commandments through Moses, and the first 5 books of the Bible were written by Moses. God spoke "face-to-face" with Moses. Scripture tells us:

²⁹When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the Testimony in his hands, he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the LORD. ³⁰When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, his face was radiant, and they were afraid to come near him. - Exodus 34:29-30

Once, when Moses' own brother Aaron and sister Miriam, spoke against Moses, Scripture tells us:

⁵Then the LORD came down in a pillar of cloud; He stood at the entrance to the Tent and summoned Aaron and Miriam. When both of them stepped forward, ⁶He said, "Listen to My words: "When a prophet of the LORD is among you, I reveal Myself to him in visions, I speak to him in dreams. ⁷But this is not true of My servant Moses; he is **faithful** in all My house. ⁸With him I speak **face to face**, clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?" - Numbers 12: 5-8

After Moses' death, Scripture tells us in today's Old Testament Lesson: **"¹⁰Since then, no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face,"** (Deuteronomy 34:10).

Moses was **faithful!** As Moses was **faithful**, God was able to work through him to lead the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt and to the promised land. As Moses was **faithful**, God was able to give us His Word, the Scriptures, to instruct us in God's Way of Salvation and in God's Will for our lives.

Is it any wonder, then, that on the Mount of Transfiguration, Moses again stood **"face-to-face"** with **"the Word made flesh"**, God incarnate in Jesus.

II. JESUS THE FAITHFUL SON:

Yet, as **faithful** as Moses was as a servant in God's **"house"**, Jesus was **faithful** as the Son over God's **"house"**. As the Son, Jesus is the "Builder" of the house, Who through His holy life and His sacrificial death, became both the "builder" and the very foundation of the "house". All this Jesus did as He was **faithful** to God's Will. Jesus said,

³⁸For I have come down from heaven not to do My Will but to do the Will of Him Who sent Me... ⁴⁰For My Father's Will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in Him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." - *John 6:38, 40*

Jesus' was committed to the doing the Father's Will. On the night that He was betrayed, before He was arrested, Jesus prayed:

⁴[Father], I have brought You glory on earth by completing the work You gave Me to do. - *John 17:4*

Jesus was **faithful!** He came on the mission to be the Savior of the world, and He was **faithful** in completing the work of His mission.

III. FAITHFULNESS IN YOU:

As the writer to the Hebrew Christians began the section of our Epistle Lesson, he did so with the words: **"¹Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus,"** As we look at our calling, at God's Will for our lives, we are to commit ourselves to the Lord and to be **faithful**. In committing ourselves to live a **faithful** life to the Lord, we seek to follow in Jesus' footsteps and His example of being **faithful**, even unto death. Plus, we have the example of all those holy men and women recorded in Scripture (Hebrews 11) who were **faithful** in their commitment to the Lord.

Later in his letter, the writer to the Hebrews encourages each one of us, his readers:

¹Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses [*all the faithful*], let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. ²Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, Who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. - *Hebrews 12:1-3*

As we learned earlier, the dictionary defines **"Faithful"** as (1) strict or thorough in the performance of duty; (2) steady in allegiance or affection; loyal; constant. Jesus is the perfect pattern of being **faithful** to God's Will.

Today, at St. Paul's, we observe not only Transfiguration Sunday, but our annual Fellowship Sunday. On this day we welcome all those who have joined our congregation in the past year, and, we recognize the service of those who have completed the terms of their offices. As we do this, we are lifting up the calling of every Christian to be **faithful**. God can only work His Will through us, as we are **faithful**, committed to loving and serving Him and all people.

Conclusion:

You know, when Moses came from speaking with God and his face was radiant, he put a veil over his face, and kept it there until over time, that radiance would go away. Then he would remove the veil. We, however, have a greater blessing than Moses himself had. Through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, God is working to reveal His glory in us, a glory that does not decrease, but rather, increases as we are **faithful**. The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians:

¹³We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away... ¹⁸we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, Who is the Spirit. - *2 Corinthians 3:13, 18*

In His Transfiguration, Jesus revealed the glory that was His before He left heaven to come to earth and that would be His again after His resurrection. In our Transformation, as we are **faithful**, God reveals more and more of His glory through us, a glory that will be with us not only in this life, but forever. AMEN