

**INTRODUCTION:** Last week we celebrated the fact that the Transfiguration was such an encouragement for the prophets of old, including Moses, Elijah and even John the Baptist. After all, during their ministries, they struggled against the unbelief and hardness of heart of their day. When these men preached and declared God's prophetic word, their audience was for the most part unresponsive. (Yes, alas, I speak here even of the generality of God's own people!) Jesus sums up the spiritual rebellion of those blessed with such great prophetic leaders in Matthew 17:12: "They" (hard-hearted Israel), did to John (and Moses, and Elijah), "what they wished." Oh may the Lord not leave us prisoner to our own sinful desires, plans and wishes, but redeem us from our world of spiritual rebellion. May this week's Bible notes in particular encourage us by reminding us of God's great *antidote* to such apostasy, (namely), the time-tested habit of walking with God in communion with Him by faith.

**MONDAY/TUESDAY: Read Genesis 5:18-24; Hebrews 11:26-27; 2 Kings 2:1-3 and Matthew 17:1-3.**

Moses, Elijah and the other prophets of old drew their strength for ministry from the same place which we are to draw our daily grace, wisdom and strength for the challenges of life – from walking with God. To put it in terms of the *first man in the Bible* whose life is described in this way: Enoch the prophet "walked with God" in Genesis. 5:22,24.

This is the great blessing of communion with God for which we long, and which God promises to give us through the Lord Jesus Christ. To walk with God is to know Him as our friend, guide, redeemer, protector and the object of our devotion and love. Look now how this daily fellowship with God is the *common denominator* which these Old Testament heroes shared:

- Moses himself perseveres in suffering ejection from Egypt and living in the desert for forty years because of his intimate experience of God by faith: "He saw Him who is invisible" (Heb. 11:27). What did this mean for him in practical terms? It meant that Moses knew fellowship with the Son of God in his suffering persecution in Egypt. As Hebrews 11:26 plainly says: "He reckoned mistreatment for the sake of Christ as worth more than the riches of Egypt"! Fellowship with Christ even back then! What light flowed into his life through the presence of Christ as the Redeemer of Israel out of Egypt!
- Elijah as well knew what it meant to walk with the Lord. When he tested Elisha's devotion to continue to follow him as his master and mentor, Elisha took an oath promising to follow in Elijah's footsteps to the very end, using words that prove that Elisha recognized the Lord's presence in Elijah's daily life: "As the Lord lives, and as you live Elijah, I will not leave you"! (2 Ki 2:2) Elisha recognized the blessing of the Lord's Divine life being intertwined with Elijah's! And he sought such fellowship with God himself.

***Meditate and Pray:*** How excited Moses and Elijah must have been at the Transfiguration to see the revelation of glory in the very Christ with whom they had walked in the Old Testament! What a privilege for us to walk in the same footsteps as these men as we enjoy, and depend upon the daily presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. As hymn # 188 puts it:

*O soul, are you weary and troubled?  
No light in the darkness you see?  
There's a light for a look at the Savior,  
And life more abundant and free!*

***Refrain*** *Turn your eyes upon Jesus,  
Look full in His wonderful face,  
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in  
the light of His glory and grace.*

*Through death into life everlasting  
He passed, and we follow Him there;  
Over us sin no more hath dominion—  
For more than conquerors we are! **Refrain***

*His Word shall not fail you—He promised;  
Believe Him, and all will be well:  
Then go to a world that is dying,  
His perfect salvation to tell!*

**WEDNESDAY/THURSDAY: Read Hebrews 1:1-2 and Matthew 17:1-8.** What a wonderful balance we have seen in the lives of the prophets, such as those who appeared with Jesus on the mount of Trans-figuration. On the one hand, there was the undeniably supernatural communion with God which they had in a special way – through signs, wonders and predictive prophecy. Men like Moses and Elijah were indeed set apart by such miracles and inspired utterances - which were given them to perform in order to put God’s seal of approval on their work. By the way: it was the same way for the Apostles when they *saw* Elijah and Moses on the mount with Jesus. What they saw is described in Matthew 17:9 as a ‘vision’ by Jesus. (See ESV version). This is prophetic, revelatory language, reserved for the age of the prophets and the Apostles which has passed.

But here is the striking thing: the *longings of* Moses’ and Elijah’s hearts *were not answered* by means of the miracles and signs which they performed. In fact, when they *put their hope in* the miraculous, confidently expecting that miracles would change the people of Israel and impress the heathen kings such as Pharaoh, they were sorely disappointed. No – they learned through the *failure of their miraculous signs of wonders* that only the revelation of Jesus Christ would bring God’s people back to Himself and convert the nations.

This, then, was the glorious climax of the Transfiguration for the whole Old Testament era, of which Moses and Elijah were the representatives: when they saw Jesus, it was not the miraculous which is emphasized, but instead the authoritative teaching and fulfillment of Scripture which Jesus would bring about. What made Moses and Elijah rejoice is that Jesus had come to fulfill Scripture. In like manner, what was to impress itself on the memory of the Apostles after the Transfiguration – was the voice of God the Father, telling them above all to: “listen to Him”.

**Meditate and Pray:** This, then, is the emphasis of the full glory of New Testament revelation: It is the authoritative voice of the Son of God, which has *superseded all past or potential future prophetic word and wonder ministry*, as Hebrews 1:1-2 makes clear: In the past God spoke through various prophets, and in various ways. But now the prophets of old rejoice that they no longer have anything to say! God has spoken once and for all through His Son! Let us rejoice, furthermore, that the revelation of God’s Word through His Son is now written down and complete! As hymn # 94 says: “What more could God say then to you He has said? To you, who for refuge to Jesus have fled?” Let’s sing that hymn together now:

*How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,  
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!  
What more can He say than to you He hath said,  
You, who unto Jesus for refuge have fled?*

*In every condition, in sickness, in health;  
In poverty’s vale, or abounding in wealth;  
At home and abroad, on the land, on the sea,  
As thy days may demand, shall thy strength ever be.*

*Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed,  
For I am thy God and will still give thee aid;  
I'll strengthen and help thee, and cause thee  
to stand  
Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand.*

*When through fiery trials thy pathways shall  
lie,  
My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply;  
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design  
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to  
refine.*

*The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose,  
I will not, I will not desert to its foes;  
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,  
I'll never, no never, no never forsake.*

*When through the deep waters I call thee to go,  
The rivers of woe shall not thee overflow;  
For I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,  
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.*

*Even down to old age all My people shall  
prove  
My sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love;  
And when hoary hairs shall their temples  
adorn,  
Like lambs they shall still in My bosom be  
borne.*

**FRIDAY/SATURDAY/SUNDAY: Read Matthew 17:4 and Psalm 27:1-14.** Just as Moses and Elijah enjoyed communion with God on the very famous Mt. Sinai, (also known as Horeb: compare Exodus 24:15-18 with 1 Kings 19:8), so the emphasis at the Transfiguration is on the communion which Peter, James and John enjoyed with God's Son as well as with Elijah and Moses. There was something deeply right in Peter's expression of longing to stay on the mountain in Matthew 17:4 in order to enjoy this Heavenly fellowship.

In the same way, as you worship this weekend in your local church, take in the rich emphasis on communion with God offered to you from the beginning to the end of the worship service.

For example, consider how the *whole design of reformed worship is meant to invite you into God's sovereign presence and into communion with Him through His Son and by His Spirit.* The following explanation of our communion with our Sovereign God in worship was written by Rev. Charles Tedrick, of the United Reformed Church:

**Call to Worship:** God calls us to worship him. He summons us into his presence and we gladly obey his command to glorify his name.

**Invocation:** As we have entered into the presence of God, we call upon his name, the Name of the One who has delivered us from our sin and who promises us eternal life in Christ.

**Confession of Sin and Assurance of Pardon:** Oh, how we need the assurance that God will not hold our sin against us, but has truly forgiven our sin for the sake of Christ! In this part of the service, we are reminded and assured once again that all who call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

**Congregational Prayer:** Assured that our sins are forgiven, we may approach with confidence into the very presence of God and receive help in our time of need. This prayer is an intercession not only for our congregation but for the church all over the world. Our prayers are heard only because of the one mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**The Word of God Proclaimed:** The Word of God is addressed to God's people so that they might believe and therefore be saved. The Word is powerful and active, able to transform, to build up and to tear down any obstacle to godliness and holiness. As God plants His Word in our hearts, it bears the peaceful fruit of righteousness for all "*who have ears to hear.*"

**Prayer of Dedication:** Here we are reminded of God's consecrating us for His service, and that it is His will that we live for Christ in this dark world of sin.

**Benediction:** The Benediction is a word of blessing: God's promise to keep us and be gracious to us always. It is a word of peace, so that we might be always confident that God is favorably disposed to us and that God is not out to "get us" but is working everything out for our salvation and our good.

*(\*Adapted from Calvary URC, Rev. Charles Tedrick)*