



Message: **Stop. Look. Listen.** | February 15, 2026 | Speaker: **Pastor Eddie Eddy**

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE: Matthew 17:1-9 *New Living Translation* **The Transfiguration**

¹ Six days later Jesus took Peter and the two brothers, James and John, and led them up a high mountain to be alone. ² As the men watched, Jesus' appearance was transformed so that his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as light. ³ Suddenly, Moses and Elijah appeared and began talking with Jesus.

⁴ Peter exclaimed, "Lord, it's wonderful for us to be here! If you want, I'll make three shelters as memorials—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

⁵ But even as he spoke, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy. Listen to him." ⁶ The disciples were terrified and fell face down on the ground.

⁷ Then Jesus came over and touched them. "Get up," he said. "Don't be afraid." ⁸ And when they looked up, Moses and Elijah were gone, and they saw only Jesus.

⁹ As they went back down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, "Don't tell anyone what you have seen until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

Leader: *This is the word of God for the people of God* **People: Thanks be to God**

Stop, Look , Listen

Have you ever thought that you really knew someone well...that you believed that they could never do anything that would surprise you? And then, somehow out of the blue... you discover something about that person that far exceeds your expectations. Through one experience or another, you find out that you really only knew that person on the surface.

All of a sudden, you see into the beauty that makes that person who he or she really is. We've all heard of people, maybe you are one of them, who become best of friends with someone they previously did not like at all. When this happens, we are able to put a new face on a person whom we mistakenly thought we already recognized.

Jeanie's grandfather...Pap...was a guy who had achieved a high level of success. To most people he was a pretty shrewd businessman. He was a bit gruff, set in his ways and could be a bit intimidating if he wanted to be. I really liked Pap and loved to sit and listen to him tell his stories. But, while he was alive, I never really got to know who Pap was as a person.

PAUSE

I have 2 weddings to do this year. I enjoy sitting down with the couples and talking with them as they prepare for the big day and for their life together in the future as husband and wife. It is amazing to talk with the young couples...and then...have a conversation with a well-seasoned married couple.

Husbands and wives who have grown in love over years are in amazement at how little they really knew about each other when they got married and started their lives together. It's funny how a budding couple only dating for a couple of years will tell me how they know "everything" about each other.

As a pastor...one thing I know for sure about a young couple getting married...is that they have a lifetime of learning ahead of them. Time and circumstances will reveal a new reality of who you are married to. Truth is...knowing things about someone is not the same thing as knowing who the person really is.

In life...some new insights come gradually while others can happen rather quickly. Sometimes we are forced into a circumstance that helps us gain a deeper understanding of another person. But even these instant insights require an ongoing growth and nurturing to really sink in and make a difference in how well we know the people we are in relationship with.

Even after seeing what they saw...Peter, James and John did not come down from the mountain with a complete understanding of who Jesus really was. In reality...they were far from that point. They had to continue to grow in their relationship with Jesus.

How many of us have thought we knew all there was to know about the person we are married to, or the kids that we raised, or the friends that have stood by us for years...only to be surprised that they could still surprise us. Friends...this is as true with our relationship to Jesus as it is to anyone else.

PAUSE

Remember the story of Peter, James and John when they first met Jesus? They hardly knew him at all. They had only heard about him from others. Jesus was just beginning to build reputations, good with some folks and not so good with others. But with little more than this word-of-mouth knowledge, these fishermen left the life they knew and began to follow him.

The more time they spent together the more they came to know him better. They watched him heal people. They listened to him when he talked with people. He became their friend, their teacher and their Lord. And then one day, as Matthew tells us this morning...they went up a mountain with him and their understanding of who Jesus was to them...was radically changed by the experience.

They saw Jesus...literally in a whole new light. The Jesus they knew had been a carpenter. They knew that he healed people. They knew that he brought a message that seemed in contrast the expectations that society held firm to. They also knew that there were some people who did not like what Jesus stood for...and yet there were some who could not get enough of this good news. But on that mountain, on that day...they started to know Jesus on a whole different level.

What about us...you and me? How well do we really know Jesus? Does it matter to us how well we know him? Is it enough to simply know some things about Jesus...or...could we be in somewhat the same place that Peter, James and John were when they left their boats? Have we moved beyond that space to the point where need to know Jesus better so it makes a difference in our relationship with him?

PAUSE

Last year about this time...the youth group from my former church got together, and we watched the movie...The Passion of the Christ. Some of the kids...and some of the adults...were moved to tears. Others...as

you can imagine teenagers doing...slept through much of the movie. For some, the film was a kind of mountain top experience that put a new face on Christ.

For those who watched it and felt something shift inside...for those who walked away believing the film made a real impact in their faith...you have to wonder: **does that difference still hold today?** Does it continue to shape who we are? Does it show up in the choices we make, in the compassion we show, and in the courage we find to share the message of Jesus in the ordinary moments of everyday life?

I can tell you this...One of the kids shared that they have the Passion poster in their house...and after experiencing the movie...she saw Jesus and what he did for her in a completely different light. That person is now sitting in the back with her dad making sure that the people who join us online every week have a good experience seeing Christ working in the life of the church and the world.

PAUSE

Matthew creates such a beautiful image of that mountain experience...but...if we focus on the details of the white garments...the face of Jesus shining like the sun...Moses and Elisha being present there...and apostles face down on the ground in fear...it might be easy to pass over the most important phrase in the story. The apostles had heard God speak to them, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." And then God said, "**Listen to him.**"

What if...in that moment...that Peter, James and John thought that what they already knew was **more than enough?** Could they have... or would they have been able to listen for more from Jesus? If they assumed they knew everything...what would be the point? There would be nothing more worthwhile to learn.

PAUSE

Obviously, there was more to learn and more to share. If this transfiguration experience had been meant only for Peter, James and John...then Matthew, Mark and Luke would not have been informed and inspired to write about it. The need to grow in relationship is alive and well today as we too, are being told to listen. To listen with a new ear...to listen with our strangely warmed hearts.

We are being told to listen so that we might continue to know Jesus at a level beyond what we know today.

SHORT PAUSE

If I were to ask you what you do before you cross the street, what would you say? We were taught to stop, look and listen. We have been told that since we could cross the street.

That lesson might provide a framework for teaching the message of today's transfiguration story. We are very busy people. We are all distracted by something...our minds are constantly preoccupied. It is easy to miss what is going on around us.

But we cannot afford to be too busy...too consumed...to stop, look and listen before we continue to cross the street of life. The three disciples not only stopped what they were doing and went up the mountain, they looked and they listened before coming down the mountain. This is a necessary practice if we are going to truly be faithful followers of Christ.

Our friendships do not remain friendships if we do not continue to grow in them. The things that motivated people to get married in the first place will not be enough to hold a marriage together in the long term.

Relationships do not grow without stopping to look and to listening to each other. This is as true of a relationship with Jesus as it is with anyone else.

PAUSE

Friends...mountaintop experiences with our God are about helping us see his full potential in the relationships we share. They are not meant to freeze us in any one place...but they are meant to **set us in motion**.

Peter wanted to stop right there. He wanted to set up camp and stay right there on the mountain. As much as we would like to stay on the few mountaintops that we experience in our lives, we are called to something more. We are called to take what we have been given and bring it down the mountain.

We are called to share our vision of Jesus to the part of the world we touch. But we can only do that if we take the time to stop and look and open our hearts to listen before proceeding down the mountain. We should get to know Jesus on a deeper level to prepare us for the relationships we are called to cultivate.

SP

So when will the next time be that we stop long enough to look at Jesus in a different way? What is there that he has said that we need to listen to with a new ear? Stop, look, and listen.

Each day is a mountain top opportunity for us to learn more about Jesus and each other. Jesus continues to reveal more to us even as he prepares a place for us. We have more to learn about him than what we have seen.

I mentioned Jeanie's grandfather, Pap, earlier. I thought I had a pretty good idea of who pap was as a person and a businessman. But at his funeral...I learned that there was a lot more to this man. At the graveside service, the pastor told stories about his friend that nobody had ever known. Stories of generosity and care and of a soft heart and of a person who without anyone else really knowing it...was making the effort to stop, look and listen to his neighbors. I learned how Pap was sharing the grace, mercy, charity and hope that Jesus had shown to him. Pap was one of those people who ended up surprising me by being more than I had expected.

I pray that as you stop, look, and listen while you learn more about Jesus and your relationship with him...that you find that you are more capable and blessed than you first expected.

To God be the glory. Amen

Closing Prayer

Let us pray.

Holy and Transfigured Lord, we come down from this mountain moment in Your Word with hearts that are full, humbled by Your glory, and grateful for the ways You continue to reveal Yourself to us. Like Peter, James, and John, we confess that we do not always see You clearly. Sometimes we rush past Your presence—too hurried to stop, too distracted to look, too overwhelmed to listen.

But today, Lord, You have touched us once again with Your radiant grace. Help us carry this moment back into the valleys of our everyday lives. Open our ears to Your voice, open our eyes to Your light, and open our hearts

to grow deeper in our relationship with You. May we never settle for knowing *about* You... but long to truly *know* You.

And now, Lord, we dedicate our offering to You.

You have given so much...mercy that surprises us, love that overflows, grace that meets us on every mountain and every valley. With thankful hearts we return a portion of what You have entrusted to us. Use these gifts to shine Your light in the places that need hope. Use them to bless the ministries of this church and to help us reach those traveling the back roads and the busy roads of life. Shape us, through our giving, into people who reflect Your generosity and compassion.

Bless each giver, each gift, and each step we take in faith.

We pray all of this in the glorious name of Jesus—our Beloved Savior, our Radiant Lord.

Amen.

Benediction

Beloved of God—

As you go down from this mountain,
may you *stop* often enough to notice Christ beside you,
may you *look* deeply enough to see His glory in the ordinary,
and may you *listen* closely enough to hear His guiding voice.

And may the same Jesus who touched the disciples and said,
“Do not be afraid,”
touch your life with courage, fill your days with grace,
and lead you forward with the light of His presence.

Go now in peace—

to love, to serve, and to shine—

in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Next Steps:

- I will stop, look, & listen so that I may continue to know Jesus at a level beyond how I know Him today
- I will read through the Lenten Reading List this Lenten season
- Sign me up for Growth Group: _____ (class code)