

Escúchale! [Listen To Him!]

Entonces salió de la nube una voz que dijo: “Éste es mi Hijo, mi escogido; escúchenlo.” [Lucas 9:35]

Que las palabras de mi boca y la meditación de nuestro corazón sean aceptables ante tus ojos, oh Señor, mi roca y mi salvación. Amén. [Salmos 19:14]

In preparing today's sermon, I have been studying the commentaries in search of an easy to understand description of the importance and significance of Jesus' transfiguration. One commentary I read summed it up nicely:

Undoubtedly, the purpose of the transfiguration of Christ into at least a part of His heavenly glory was so that the “inner circle” of His disciples could gain a greater understanding of who Jesus was. Christ underwent a dramatic change in appearance in order that the disciples could behold Him in His glory. The disciples, who had only known Him in His human body, now had a greater realization of the deity of Christ, though they could not fully comprehend it. That gave them the reassurance they needed after hearing the shocking news of His coming death.

Symbolically, the appearance of Moses and Elijah represented the Law and the Prophets. But God's voice from heaven – “Listen to Him!” – clearly showed that the Law and the Prophets must give way to Jesus. The One who is the new and living way is replacing the old – He is the fulfillment of the Law and the countless prophecies in the Old Testament. Also, in His glorified form they saw a preview of His coming glorification and enthronement as King of kings and Lord of lords.¹

The commentator continued saying that: “The disciples never forgot what happened that day on the mountain and no doubt this was intended.” Then added the words from John 1:14: “We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only.”²

Another commentator portrayed the transfiguration as “a pivotal moment,” and described the setting on the mountain “as the point where human nature meets God: the meeting place for the temporal and the eternal, with Jesus himself as the connecting point, acting as the bridge between heaven and earth.”³

However, the part of today's Gospel lesson that spoke to me was the voice of God: “This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!” [Luke 9:35] Listen to him!

While not a part of today's lessons, when I read the lesson appointed for today, the thing I felt Jesus would most wants us to listen about is his summary of the law:

‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. [Matthew 22:37-40]

This passages from scripture connects me to something I experienced a few months ago, at a time, when I encountered Jesus.

Yes, Lina's translation was correct, a time when I encountered Jesus.

One Saturday a couple of months ago, I was on the way home from my part time Saturday job, and I decided to stop at a grocery store to buy some food to make a special dinner at home. When I pulled in to the shopping center parking lot, I saw a man lying face-up on the ground at the rear of a plexiglass bus shelter. That day it was a little bit chilly, probably about 45 degrees or so. I was wearing a light jacket.

¹ “What Was the Meaning and Importance of the Transfiguration?” *Got Questions Ministries*, accessed February 2, 2016, <http://www.gotquestions.org/transfiguration.html>.

² *Ibid.*

³ “Transfiguration of Jesus” *Wikipedia*, accessed February 2, 2016, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transfiguration_of_Jesus.

I thought it was odd for this fellow to be lying on the ground and I wondered if he were all right, so I parked my car, got out, and approached him. As I approached him, I noticed that he had a jacket, but he was not wearing it. Instead, it was rolled up under the back of his head like a makeshift pillow. He was wearing one work boot and I noticed that the other one was lying a few feet away from him. He was wearing a short-sleeved tee shirt and painter's pants, with a few smudges of what looked like fresh paint, so I assumed he must be a day laborer and had finished a day-job as a painter.

He appeared to me to be barely conscious and I thought he had to be cold, since he was only wearing a short-sleeved tee shirt and painter's pants. I also found it odd that no one at the bus stop appeared to notice that he was even there. It was almost as if he was invisible. In fact, as I approached him, I noticed that some people stepped over him and others made a wide arc to avoid him on their way to the bus stop.

When I got to him, I knelt on the ground next to him, put my hand on his shoulder and said, "hello, are you ok." He did not answer. Realizing that he was Korean, I asked him again in his language. "*Annyeonghaseyo, dangsin-eun hwag-in hada.*" My Korean friends have taught me a few words of greeting.

The poor fellow moaned and mumbled something I could not understand. Having been trained in emergency first aid, my first-responder instincts kicked-in, and I made sure his airway was not obstructed and that he was breathing; I took his pulse, felt his chest to get a sense of his heartbeat, and held his eyes open to check his pupils. My assessment was that this fellow might have been at the early stages of having a stroke, and that if he did not care immediately, he might not survive. So, I reached for my cell phone and dialed 911.

The paramedics and police were on the scene in less than five minutes from the time I made the call. When the poor fellow saw the paramedics arrive, he grabbed my hand and said "*Kamsahamnida*" – Korean for thank you.

Although the paramedics did not share their assessment with me, from the nature of their examination, their conversation among themselves, their conversation with the dispatcher, and the medications they administered on the scene told me they had reached the same conclusion as I had concerning this fellow's medical condition.

After the paramedics had completed their emergency first aid and had loaded the fellow into the ambulance, the lead paramedic turned to me, shook my hand, and said, "Thank you. You know you just saved this fellow's life." Then the paramedics departed with their patient for the hospital and before I went about my business, I provided the police officer who responded with the same account I have just shared with you.

I can't imagine not stopping to help that fellow. And, I still don't understand how so many people could just walk past and over this poor soul as though he were not even there. This was the stranger in our midst. This was Jesus. Given my emergency medical training, what I did was part instinct. However, I would like to think that even if I had never been trained to even so much as put on a bandage, I would have at least called 911 to say that a fellow human being appeared to be hurt and needed some help.

Therefore, if we heed God's word and listen to Jesus – God's chosen – then we are bound to follow Jesus' admonition about loving our neighbor as our self. As it is written in Matthew's Gospel [25:34-40]:

"Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'

En el nombre del Padre, del Hijo, y del Espíritu Santo, Amén.