

THIS IS MY SON; LISTEN TO HIM

Luke 9:28-36

Key Verse 9:35, A voice came from the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him."

Today's message is closely related to last Sunday's message. When Jesus asked his disciples: "Who do you say I am?", Peter answered correctly: "God's Messiah." (9:20) Jesus blessed Peter's confession of faith and told him that he would build his church on his confession (Mt 16:18). Peter was very happy for being commended by Jesus. However, it didn't last long. After the confession of faith, Jesus told his disciples that he must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life (9:22). The disciples of Jesus couldn't accept it. Especially, Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke him: "Never, Lord! This shall never happen to you." Then, Jesus rebuked Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns." (Mt 16:22-23) Just a few minutes ago, Peter was a wonderful disciple of Jesus; but then he was called Satan and severely rebuked by Jesus. Peter was greatly discouraged. But Jesus continued to teach them: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it." (9:23-24) When the disciples heard this teaching of Jesus, they got worried a lot thinking that they would die with Jesus. Jesus understood their hearts and gave them a word of hope: "Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God" (9:27). Jesus referred to his glorious transfiguration, which is the anticipation of his resurrection and second coming. Through the transfiguration of Jesus, we can learn two important lessons: first, Jesus is glorious God in very nature; second, we should listen to Jesus to follow him throughout our lives.

I. Jesus is glorious God in very nature (28-31)

Verse 28 says, "About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray." About eight days had passed after Jesus taught his disciples that they had to deny themselves and take up their cross daily. Jesus took Peter, John, and James, the inner circle of his disciples, with him and went up onto a high mountain to pray. A mountain in the Bible is a place where God revealed himself. The purpose of Jesus to go up to the mountain was very clear, which was to pray and reveal his glory to his disciples through his transfiguration. Jesus always prayed and prayed more intensely before any important event. What happened while Jesus was

praying? The appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning (29). Jesus was transfigured before his disciples (Mk 9:2).

Jesus' transfiguration was described in two aspects: First, the appearance of his face changed. Matthew describes that his face shone like the sun. The glory of God was revealed in Jesus' face like the sun. This is the very nature of Jesus, who is glorious God. John saw the glory of Jesus at the island of Patmos and described the figure of Jesus as follows: "The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance." (Rev 1:14-16) His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance! When John saw the glorious Jesus, he fell at his feet as though dead. A similar thing happened to Isaiah. When Isaiah saw the glory of God, he cried out saying, "Woe to me! I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty." (Is 6:5) When we see the glory of Jesus, we will be terrified due to our sins and fall at his feet as though dead. We will cry out saying, "Woe to me! I am ruined!" We will be desperate before his holiness and justice. However, it will be a great blessing for us to see the glory of Jesus if we repent of our sins. Our sins will be removed, and our wounds will be healed by the love and power of Jesus Christ. Do you want to see the glory of Jesus?

Many years ago, I was very weary and burdened because of my emotional wounds. I couldn't overcome my loneliness and sadness and wandered the streets at night. I complained to Jesus saying, "What does your death on the cross have to do with my wounds?" (picture 1, p.7) But while I was praying, Jesus showed me his glory on the cross. I could clearly see Jesus who was suffering on the cross because of my wounds. He said to me, "It is for your sins. It is for your wounds." Before the glorious presence of Jesus, I couldn't resist his love anymore. I burst into tears for a while and felt that all my wounds had been healed. "By his wounds you have been healed." (1Pe 2:24b) The glorious presence of Jesus had power to change my sadness to happiness, my darkness to brightness. When we see the glory of Jesus, our lives will be changed, and we will be empowered by the Spirit of God. Do you want to see the glory of Jesus?

Second, his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. Mark describes that his clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them (Mk 9:2). Clothing reflects social class. Usually, Jesus was wearing old, dirty, and smelly clothes. His clothes probably had so many holes that he looked like a homeless man. Actually, Jesus was homeless because he didn't have any place to lay his head (Lk 9:58). But at the mountain, his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. His clothes looked more glorious than any king of the world. Jesus, in his very nature, is King of kings

and Lord of lords. The transfiguration of Jesus revealed the true nature of Jesus, who is our glorious God, King, and Lord.

When Jesus was transfigured, two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus (30). Why did Moses and Elijah appear in that moment and talk with Jesus? Why not Abraham and David? Moses represents the law and Elijah represents the prophets. As the Old Testament could be represented by the law and the prophets (Mt 22:40), Moses and Elijah, representing the Old Testament, talked with Jesus about God's redemptive history. Also, Moses and Elijah were suffering servants and taken up to heaven (2Ki 2:1). Traditionally, the Jews considered that Moses had been taken up alive to heaven, even though Dt 34:5 says that he died. It is meaningful to see that two suffering servants of God appeared in glorious splendor and talked with Jesus. Jesus was also a suffering servant (Is 53:4) and he will come in clouds with great power and glory (Mk 13:26). Every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all peoples on earth will mourn because of him. "So shall it be! Amen!" (Rev 1:7)

Jesus, Moses, and Elijah spoke about the departure of Jesus, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem (31). 'Departure' is ἐξοδος (exodos) in Greek, which literally means "the road out" or figuratively, death. For Jesus, his death is his exodus from this world to the glory of God. Jesus would suffer and die on the cross at Jerusalem for the fulfillment of God's redemptive history. However, his suffering and death is just the departure of his journey to his glorious resurrection, ascension to the throne of God, and second coming to the world. Therefore, his departure gives us living hope because he will restore God's creation and give us eternal rest when he comes again in his glory. Glorious Jesus will dwell among us and wipe every tear from our eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain in the new heaven and new earth (Rev 21:3-4). It is so exciting and encouraging. If we have living hope in the glorious coming of Jesus, we can give ourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because our labor in the Lord is not in vain (1Cor 15:58).

II. Listen to Jesus (32-36)

What was the spiritual condition of the disciples? Peter and his companions were very sleepy (32). They were always sleepy because they were very tired physically and spiritually. It was never easy for them to follow Jesus as his disciples. They had to leave everything behind including their families to follow Jesus. They didn't have a fixed place to stay but had to move here and there. Sometimes, they had to skip meals for helping many needy people. They couldn't take a good rest for serving Jesus' ministry. They wanted to have a summer vacation, but they couldn't. Nevertheless, they endured everything because they had hope in Jesus. But when they heard that Jesus would suffer and die, they became depressed spiritually. They lost their hope and strength. They didn't do anything but just slept. We understand them. Sometimes, we don't want to do anything

but just sleep. When they went up onto the high mountain, they got very tired. They couldn't understand why Jesus had to go up such a high mountain. While Jesus was praying, they got very sleepy and were drowsy. But suddenly they felt that something very bright was shining. They couldn't open their eyes well because of brightness. When they became fully awake, they saw the glory of Jesus and the two men standing with him (32). They had never seen the glory of Jesus before. It was such an awesome spectacle that they had never experienced before. Their Lord Jesus was so glorious that they fell before him. Also, they saw that Moses and Elijah were standing with him. We don't know how they could recognize Moses and Elijah, but they fell into a trance by the heavenly glory of God.

As Moses and Elijah were leaving Jesus, Peter said to him, "Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah" (33). I think that Peter said to himself in his mind: "and one for me." Peter didn't know what he was saying, but it was his sincere desire. He was so happy with the glory of Jesus that he didn't want to lose it. He didn't want to go down from the mountain. He didn't want to go back to the towns where many people were waiting for them and where he had to work hard again with suffering, tiredness, poverty, conflict, humiliation, etc. He wanted to stay forever on the mountain with the glory of Jesus. How about you? Don't you want to stay in the glory of Jesus without any problems and troubles? In this world, we should work or study hard to survive; we have many conflicts at our workplaces and families; we get sick with different diseases; we are worried about our future, etc. It seems that it is never easy for us to live by faith as disciples of Jesus and servants of God's ministry. Our coworkers have double and triple crosses: work, study, family, ministry, etc. Our UBF missionaries have double vocations: self-supporting and God's ministry, which are very hard to achieve. Thus, they have a lot of conflicts doubting their vocation as self-supporting missionaries. Our full-time staff members must have their own agonies in serving God's ministry. I am no exception. I have my own conflicts and struggles. Sometimes I feel very burdened and tired and want to take a break for a while. Sometimes I ask myself, "What are you doing here in Chicago?" Sometimes I want to go up onto the mountain of transfiguration and stay in the glory of my Lord Jesus forever.

But what is God's will? While Peter was speaking, a cloud appeared and covered them (34). And a voice came from the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him" (35). The cloud represents the presence of God, and the voice was from God the Father. "This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him" was an indirect rebuke of God the Father to the disciples of Jesus. They had not accepted the way of Christ, which was to suffer and die on the cross, and be raised to life on the third day. Also, it was God's rebuke so that they could accept the way of disciples, which was to deny themselves, take up their cross daily, and follow Jesus. At the same time, it is God's rebuke to us so that we can follow Jesus faithfully as his disciples, denying ourselves and

taking up our cross daily. This wonderful experience of the glory of Jesus remained in the heart of Peter and empowered him to carry out God's mission during his life (2Pe 1:16-18).

God urges us saying, "This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him." Are you ready to listen to Jesus? We need to be ready to obey every single word of God throughout our lives. Also, we need to listen carefully what God speaks to us. Do you believe that God still speaks to us? If God doesn't speak to us, we cannot listen to him. Unfortunately, some Christians think that God no longer speaks to people. For them, it is irrational and premodern to believe that God speaks to people in the 21st century. But is it true? No! Our God is living God who dwells among us and speaks to us through his Holy Spirit. (a photo of the book, p. 8) Henry Blackaby, the author of *Experiencing God*, says that "God speaks by the Holy Spirit through the Bible, prayer, circumstances, and the church to reveal Himself, His purpose, and His ways." He explains, "In our days, God communicates to us through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will use the Bible, prayer, circumstances, and the church (other believers) to guide us. When you hear God speak to you through a verse of Scripture, it's always best to verify what you heard through prayer, other believers, and your circumstances. If you hear God say the same thing through each of these sources, you can proceed confidently."¹ Therefore, we need to listen carefully to God and Jesus through the Holy Spirit while we read the word of God, study the Bible, pray personally and communally, praise the Lord together, and do whatever in our daily lives. "Listen to him" means to discern the voice of God and his Son Jesus Christ through the revelation of the Holy Spirit who uses the Bible, prayer, community, and circumstances and to obey God faithfully putting the word of God into practice. Especially, we need to listen carefully in way of disciples to fulfill God's mission in our lives.

I experienced many times God spoke to me. When I was receiving intern shepherd training at Anam UBF Center in Seoul, South Korea in 1995, a pastor of the church asked me if I could go to Venezuela as a missionary. I had desire to be a missionary, but I had never thought of Venezuela as my mission field. Frankly speaking, I was unfamiliar with the country name Venezuela, and later confused it with Bolivia. Anyway, I prayed to know God's will for me. While praying for several days, God spoke to me through Genesis 12:2, "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing." When I heard the word of God, my eyes opened to see God's vision, and my heart began pounding with joy. I responded to God saying: "Yes, I will go. Send me!" Even though I heard God speak to me through the Bible, I needed to verify it by experiencing God's leading in my life. There was a single missionary named Ana Choi

¹ Henry & Richard Blackaby and Claude King, *Experiencing God: Knowing & Doing the Will of God* (Nashville, Tenn.: B&H Publishing Group, 2008), 63-64.

who was working at Venezuela UBF. I didn't yet know her personally, but I accepted that I would marry her to serve God's ministry in Venezuela for the glory of God. That was the best decision of my life! But I had to talk to my mother that I would marry and leave Korea for a faraway country, which was the biggest obstacle for me. When I talked to my older brother about it, he got very upset and told me that my mother would collapse from shock. He told me that he could not help me with this. I didn't know how to say it to her and prayed. In the middle of prayer, God spoke to me through Exodus 14:14, "The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still." I believed the word of God and didn't say anything to my mother. Several days later, my older sister asked me to call my mother. When I called her, she was very sad, but accepted my decision. It was my brother who had already persuaded her. My mother supported me financially for my marriage and air fare. 4 years later, she visited Venezuela and met Jesus as her Savior. Since then, she has become my prayer supporter. As God had spoken to me, He blessed my missionary life in Venezuela using my family as a blessing for many people.

When we listen carefully to God and Jesus who speak by the Holy Spirit through the Bible, prayer, community, and circumstances, we can discern God's voice, obey God's will, and be blessed for the glory of God. "Listen to Him." I pray that all of us can listen to Jesus carefully and be used for the glory of God. Amen.