

**BECAUSE IT IS TRUE**  
**I. Attested by Historical Fact**  
**II. Confirmed by Divine Revelation**  
**III. Fulfilling Ancient Prophecy**  
**IV. Inspired by God**  
2 Peter 1:16-21

SUNDAY, JANUARY 24, 2021 | EPIPHANY

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD

<i>Old Testament</i>	Isaiah 61:10-11
<i>Psalm</i>	Psalm 2, CW p. 65
<i>Epistle</i>	2 Peter 1:16–21
<i>Gospel</i>	Matthew 17:1–9
<i>Chief Hymn</i>	ELH 224

**GRANTS PASS- Divine Service, Rite Two, p. 60**

The Entrance Hymn or Introit – ELH 53 At the Name of Jesus  
Chief Hymn – ELH 224 The Only Son from Heaven  
Distribution Hymn – ELH 329 The Death of Jesus Christ, Our Lord  
Closing Hymn – ELH 327 v. 1 O Lord, We Praise Thee

**MEDFORD- Common Order, p. 15**

Psalm 2, CW p. 65  
Opening Hymn - CW 344 At the Name of Jesus  
Hymn of the Day – CW 86 The Only Son from Heaven  
Distribution Hymn - CW 135 The Death of Jesus Christ Our Lord  
Closing Hymn - CW 317 v. 1 O Lord, We Praise You

Faith & Our Savior Lutheran Churches  
Medford & Grants Pass, Oregon  
Edward L. Bryant, Pastor

The Christian church is unlike anything in history. At the time Peter is writing the message of the gospel had spread from Jerusalem, in a minor Roman province, throughout the empire, from India to Spain. So wide had it spread that it was targeted for persecution.

2 Peter 1:16–21 (CSB)

**<sup>16</sup> For we did not follow cleverly contrived myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; instead, we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. <sup>17</sup> For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased!” <sup>18</sup> We ourselves heard this voice when it came from heaven while we were with him on the holy mountain. <sup>19</sup> We also have the prophetic word strongly confirmed, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. <sup>20</sup> Above all, you know this: No prophecy of Scripture comes from the prophet’s own interpretation, <sup>21</sup> because no prophecy ever came by the will of man; instead, men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.**

Dear fellow redeemed: I’m sure you have heard of the many advantages in being a Christian. The Christian worldview shows wisdom. The value of family (as Scripture teaches) is crucial to society. The golden rule. The importance of hope. The importance of love and the fulfillment of the law.

Christianity gave rise to modern science, to hospitals, orphanages, and other institutions of mercy in society. It led to the end of chattel slavery (which sadly is still practiced among the wicked). It gave rise to the high Christian culture of both the east and the west.

These are the reasons that many would give you for becoming and remaining a Christian. But Peter doesn’t.

He leads up to our text pointing to the real object of our faith, escaping the corruption of this world through the resurrection; we have an other-worldly goal. He urges us to cling to the faith, to “make every effort to confirm your calling and election,” (1:10), not because Christianity is useful, but ...

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### **I. Attested by Historical Fact**

At a time when many cannot recognize the difference between truth and untruth, the reasons to believe or disbelieve something are emotional ones. That’s why it’s easy to believe any evil thing about someone we despise, and to disbelieve any evil thing about someone we like.

The devil is good at such lies. He lied to Eve with emotional arguments contradicting God’s threats of death and implying that God was selfish with His wisdom. Because of his lies, “***The woman saw that the tree was good for food and delightful to look at, and that it was desirable for obtaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; ...*** (Genesis 3:6, CSB)

The great lie in this age of the world -since the resurrection of Christ- is to deny Christ as God and Lord

So it is now, as it was when John wrote, ***“Who is the liar, if not the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This one is the antichrist: the one who denies the Father and the Son.”*** (1 John 2:22, CSB)

So Peter tells us to keep the faith, not based on some emotional reason or other, but because it is true. ***16 For we did not follow cleverly contrived myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; instead, we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.*** [referring to the transfiguration] ... ***18 We ourselves heard this voice [the voice of God] when it came from heaven while we were with him on the holy mountain.*** Peter saw the glory of Christ revealed. To this is added the eyewitnesses of the resurrection, as Paul wrote of Christ, ***“that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas [Peter, whom we have been reading], then to the Twelve. Then he appeared to over five hundred brothers and sisters at one time; most of them are still alive, but some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one born at the wrong time, he also appeared to me.”*** (1 Corinthians 15:4–8, CSB)

There are many who call our faith foolish and reject it because they don't believe it. They don't believe it because it convicts us of sin, or it contradicts their humanistic assumptions. But we have the eyewitness accounts of the historical facts.

## **II. Confirmed by Divine Revelation**

Not only did Peter see, but Peter also heard the divine revelation and explanation about the things he saw. ***17 For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased!”***

This is the kind of thing that one never forgets, as Peter clearly shows. Finally we have to deal with the reality that God has revealed truth to mankind that we could not otherwise know. The words here speak of the two natures of Christ, the Jesus is both God and man. They speak of the divine righteousness of Christ, that as God He was without sin, pleasing to God. They speak to the active obedience of Christ, that taking our place as human beings He lived our righteousness for us. This is the revelation of God, one of many.

Since Adam and Eve sinned and died spiritually – were alienated from God, all people are born with the realization that there is a god, but not knowing Him. We cannot reach up to Him, so He reaches out to us through His word. This Bible is therefore God's word, and therefore to be believed, as John says, ***“...The one who does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony God has given about his Son.”*** (1 John 5:10, CSB)

## **III. Fulfilling Ancient Prophecy**

The revelations of God through His word have proved true. What Peter saw was what God had foretold through His prophets: ***19 We also have the prophetic word strongly confirmed, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.***

The words of Isaiah were confirmed, that the Savior would be “Stricken, smitten of God and afflicted,” that they “looked on Him who they pierced,” that He “would not suffer corruption” because of the resurrection, that “He would ascend the throne of David forever” in His ascension to rule all things for the good of the church.

Add to this His birth in Bethlehem, His descent from David and Judah and Abraham, His birth to a virgin, and all the rest, and it confirms the reliability of the Scriptures from the time Moses first set pen to papyrus.

Talk about believing and disbelieving as a result of emotion, the detractors of Scripture have to twist into pretzels to dismiss the ancient prophecies. And as for us, **you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.**

In this dismal world in which evil masquerades as good, and lies make every kind of emotional appeal to believe them. In this dismal world where people look to death and deceit to achieve their evil ends, where the innocent die in the womb, and the guilty are held up as noble and good. In this dismal world whose hope is only to die and be done, the prophets are like the lights that prefigure the everlasting dawn of the resurrection, and in the meantime illumine our hearts like the morning star.

#### **IV. Inspired by God**

We believe the Christian faith, the faith we confess in the creeds because it is true, and because it is drawn from the Bible, which from the time of the ancient prophets is inspired by God. We call this the doctrine of inspiration: The Bible is all inspired (plenary inspiration) down to the very words (verbal inspiration). Peter's words are just one place where the Bible itself makes this claim. <sup>20</sup> **Above all, you know this: No prophecy of Scripture comes from the prophet's own interpretation,** <sup>21</sup> **because no prophecy ever came by the will of man; instead, men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.**

The books we have in the Bible aren't here just because the writers thought it would be a good idea, or give their own slant on them. Men spoke from God according to the Holy Spirit.

So the faith that we believe, that Jesus Christ "was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there He shall come to judge the living and the dead," yes, that faith is **I. Attested by Historical Fact, II. Confirmed by Divine Revelation, III. Fulfilling Ancient Prophecy, and IV. Inspired by God** .

That is why you have hope. It's TRUE!

I know at times we sinfully doubt, our faith is weak and we question what God clearly says. At times we are discouraged at the unbelief in the world and may flirt with despair. This, too is forgiven!

Jesus DID live a life of righteousness for you. He DID die your death for you. He DID rise everlasting and immortal from the grave. And so He forgives your sins, gives you His righteousness, and you share in His resurrection.

Wonder and glory and joy eternal! ***"Though you have not seen him, you love him; though not seeing him now, you believe in him, and you rejoice with inexpressible and glorious joy,"*** (1 Peter 1:8, CSB)

Finally, you have been given faith in Him and you believe in Him ...

BECAUSE IT IS TRUE!

AMEN.