

## **GOSPEL MESSAGE**

**February 15, 2026**

### **TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD**

#### **What Goes Up**

The law of gravity dictates that whatever goes up must come down. Even with its dazzling mountaintop revelation, the transfiguration story quickly reminds us that if Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us, then not even God's beloved can escape death's inevitable pull. Jesus leads Peter, James, and John up the mountain, but very soon they will be on their way down again. Suddenly, Jesus is gloriously transformed before the three disciples; then, just as suddenly, Jesus speaks of his impending death.

The transfiguration is a story of both fulfillment and foretaste. The appearance of Moses and Elijah reminds us of Jesus' promise to fulfill the Law and the Prophets, during his sermon on another mountain (Matthew 5:17). The startling turn toward talk of his suffering and death gives us a foretaste of the "mountain" at Golgotha he has yet to climb.

For the church, coming down the Mount of Transfiguration leads directly into the season of Lent and a journey that draws out more fully for us the implications of baptism. For Jesus, his baptism by John at the Jordan was just the start of a journey to be fulfilled in all the ups and downs to come. This is how transformation tends to happen—not when we insist on playing it safe, but when we dare to enter more fully into life as it is. So, too, our baptism can be fulfilled only in the light of our mortality. God's voice on the mountaintop calls us not simply to behold God's beloved Son but also to follow where Jesus leads.

All this, however, is not meant to bring us down. Jesus' transfiguration offers a glimpse of an even bigger picture that includes both gravity and grace. It foreshadows what is to come: death—and resurrection. This promise of new life is a bright cloud that leads the church now, as it did the ancient Israelites, through the wilderness ahead.

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