

The Transfiguration. We have seen our future, and we should live according to it in the present.

2 Peter 1:10-19 Aug 6/19, 2019

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, amen.

S prazdnikom!¹ This word basically means “on the feast”, and it is such a beautiful feast. It is the “Pascha” in the summertime. It is one of my favorite feasts, because it is our future.

In this world there’s a lot of light, but there is also a lot of darkness - much darkness. We are always surrounded by darkness. Even in our church right now, in the daylight, there is light and yet there is shadow all over the room, because we are surrounded by darkness in this world. But in the next world there will be no darkness, there were only be light.

This feast is the feast of light, where God showed He is light. He showed His light to His apostles, three of them, to strengthen them before the ordeal that they would go through in only 40 more days, exactly 40 days, when the Lord would be crucified². And they would have much darkness during that time, much confusion, much fear, but they would remember the light.

At the end of his days Peter remembered that light. Now, when he experienced it that first time, he was overwhelmed by it. He was confused by it. He was frightened by it. The icon shows them falling down the mountain, sort of falling away from the light, and Peter was saying nonsense: “Let’s build tabernacles, let’s stay up here forever”³, because he was so confused by this light, but that’s because he wasn’t ready for it yet. We are not ready for it either. That’s why we do not see it right now. The Divine light is present right now. It’s blindingly bright, but we don’t see it. The Lord God guards us from it because we don’t have the capacity to see it yet.

I would like to give you **one rule of life**. This is the way I have lived my life. I have not always lived it well, because I’m a sinner, but there’s been this thread throughout it, and you can find many passages of Scripture that contain this thread, but particularly, the Transfiguration is very indicative of this thread.

This world is going away. What we are right now is not what we will be. All the darkness in this world, all the sadness in this world, all the sin in this world - will be gone. There will not be confusion, there will not be pain, there will only be life everlasting in the light, where God illuminates us with His light, and the light will no longer confuse us, or make us ashamed. We will be in the light in eternity, and God will be showing us evermore of Himself eternally.

This is something worth living for. In the midst of the darkest times that you have in your life, this is something worth living for. And I would submit to you that if you are a Christian, you feel the darkness every day and you rail against it, and you pray against it. That’s really what prayer of the heart is, at least a component of it. There must be sadness in your life in order for there to be gladness. There must be a recognition that this world is not as it should be, neither are you as you should be, nor your loved ones, nor anyone you meet. None of us are as we should be, as we were born to be, because we were born to be creatures completely of the light with no darkness and no shadow.

There was no darkness and no shadow on Mount Tabor, and that is our future. And as I said before, it is worth living for this. If you are a Christian this will energize you.

Peter speaks about it. He is at the end of his life. He knows that he is going to be killed soon, probably in a very painful way (it turns out that he was crucified). And as he knew that he was going to put off his tabernacle, he was concerned for those who were still going to be in the partial light and the partial darkness. He was going to where there was only light, but they, the ones he loved, were still in darkness, or at least partial darkness. He was telling them how much he cared for them, and how much he even would after his decease care for them. If you read carefully what he says, and if you read it with eyes



that are opened and understand what happened on Mount Tabor, then it is very clear that Peter is saying that even after his death he will take care of them⁴. But he says these words that when I hear them, I just wonder – what his state of mind is? It's something that I really can't comprehend. I can kind of understand it in a way, but this is a man who saw Jesus Christ showing him who He was. And it stuck with Peter for the rest of his life. And it was the power behind everything he did. So, he said this:

“For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.”⁵

Then he goes on to apply this. This is why he lives. This is what he cares about. This is all that matters to him - nothing else. All he cares about is this! He has dedicated his entire life since knowing Jesus Christ, and especially since knowing Him on the mountain, even though there were some big mistakes before the resurrection. He has dedicated his entire life to this and so should we. This is all we should care about. He says, because he saw Jesus in light, because he saw what his future would be, what the future of his loved ones would be, that with there would no longer be darkness, no longer be sadness, no longer be confusion, or sin, or passion, but only light, illuminating him from within. He saw this, and believed it. And so, as he reminisces to his flock, he tells them:

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts”⁶.

This is what Transfiguration is. Our future. We should live for our future now. God bless you.

Priest Seraphim Holland

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¹ This is a typical greeting Slavic peoples give to each other on any festive day. The audio has a mistake, saying that S prazdnikom means “greetings on the feast”. The meaning is close to that, as our Russian Translator, Natalia H explains: "Prazdnik" (n.) = feast, holiday. "S prazdnikom" - literally, "*with the feast*", as in, "congratulations on the feast day".

² The feast of the Transfiguration occurs exactly 40 days before the feast of the Exultation of the Holy Cross. In historical time, it occurred exactly 40 days before our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified, but the church wanted to celebrate this feast with more festivity, so it was moved outside of great Lent, and to keep the connection of the Transfiguration with the Cross, the feast occurs 40 days before the Exultation of the Holy Cross

³ For example, see Matthew 17:1-9

⁴ 2Peter 1:13-15 KJV Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; (14) Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. (15) Moreover, I will endeavor that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.

⁵ 2 Peter 1:16-18

⁶ 2 Peter 1:19