



# Sermon Transcript

2 Kings 2:1-12 and Mark 9:2-9 | Transfiguration Sunday | February 11, 2024 |

Pastor John Klawiter, preaching

Grace and peace to you my friends in Christ,

It's about passing the torch. It happens. One person is ready to move aside and let the other shine.

It's exciting to witness and it often brings about different opinions and reactions on what we can do to acknowledge how special the moment is.

When someone has been the star, yet the one taking over could become an even BIGGER star, you can understand why we'd want to memorialize it. It's kind of our way of saying "I was there!!!!"

It's interesting though—there isn't always universal agreement. Some people might not be thrilled by what's happening. They want to live in the past. Nobody can be as good as the predecessor. Or, it's too soon to anoint someone else.

But, I think it's time.

Clearly, the GOAT—Tom Brady, who has 7 Super Bowl wins in his career—might need to create space for the Kansas City Chiefs quarterback, Patrick Mahomes, who could win his 3rd Super Bowl later today and is only 28.

You don't have to agree, but the topic of Greatest of All Time is officially up for discussion. Is that fair?

Thanks Taylor.

But, now that I got the football references out of my system, the idea of passing the torch—or passing the mantle—does have a strong Biblical precedent.

It happens ALL the time. The next leader is often prepped, even if they feel unprepared to assume the new role.

Moses doesn't enter the promised land (Mount Nebo), but stares from atop Mount Nebo with Joshua, who is prepared and ready to take on this leadership.

King David is not able to build the temple, (KING David and Solomon) but his son Solomon takes over and does.

And of course Elijah and Elisha.

Elijah is the GOAT. He's known for performing 8 miracles during his life. Who can forget the widow of Zarephath and how the flour and oil kept replenishing despite a drought. Then, when her son dies, Elijah raises him from the dead.

Or, when put to the test by the prophets of Baal, it's Elijah who calls upon God to reign fire down from heaven and THEN, it's Elijah who calls upon God to bring rain to end the drought.

## Sermon Transcript

And at the end of his life, right before getting taken up in a chariot of fire, Elijah pulls a Moses and parts the waters of the sea. With Elisha beside him, they walk across the Jordan.

In the lore of the Israelites, Moses and Elijah are the top.

Elisha has huge sandals to fill—and he knows that. So, when Elijah is preparing to leave, it's Elisha who asks for a double portion of his spirit.

He's not asking to be twice as good. Twice as famous. Twice as powerful.

He wants the Spirit of God that fills Elijah to come double so that Elisha can serve and be as impactful as his predecessor. It's not done out of selfish means—but a request like "I know it's gonna be hard to carry on with you gone, can the Spirit work overtime to help me???"

And so, as Elisha is a witness to the ascension to heaven by Elijah, he receives it. With it, comes that double-helping—that blessing of the Spirit is upon Elisha.

In his lifetime, he's credited with 16 miracles—twice as many as Elijah (slide of the 16)! It's because he trusted the Spirit, but also, he asked a lot of questions and gleaned everything he could from Elijah before it was too late.

Learning how to take over for the GOAT must have been daunting.

Learning how to do anything can be a challenge.

Ron Berger is a teacher who is known for rethinking how to learn by testing and experimenting. Adam Grant, in his book *Rethinking*, described his teaching style as one that saw confusion with materials as the ripe time for learning—because there is new territory to explore and a puzzle to be solved.

What does that look like in a classroom? Berger would see a confused student and instead of handing them the answer, he'd hand them more tools to help them solve the answer.

Grant described his encounter with Berger by saying that:

***“Education is more than the information we accumulate in our heads, it's the habits we develop as we keep revising and the skills we build to keep learning.”***

Berger talks about what the process looks like when we learn a new task or prepare for a new role.

Elisha doesn't take anything for granted—he wants to glean as much as he can from Elijah. You wanna know what's the FIRST thing that Elisha does after Elijah is gone?

He picks up the mantle and then returns to the Jordan where Elijah had just parted the waters—and guess what Elisha does?

He does the SAME thing!!!!

In so doing, the prophets recognize him. He is seen as having the spirit of Elijah. He's learned from the best and he knew what to do because he paid attention and learned.

## Sermon Transcript

Jesus does the same thing while training his disciples for the ministry after he's gone.

The Transfiguration strangely enough happens in the middle of his ministry—it's not the time for Jesus to be taken up to heaven—it's a moment of revelation to three of his disciples about what they're truly dealing with as they follow Jesus.

Do you think Jesus wants them to be prepared?

You bet he does.

Peter responds that they should prepare a booth—maybe we could compare this to building a Hall of Fame where people could come and see the greatness of what was just here!

Jesus, at least in Mark's version of the story, waits until they go down the mountain to continue the teaching—don't say anything. No booth, no Hall of Fame plaque. Don't even tell the others—even the other disciples.

Yet.

There will be a time and a place.

Jesus is a teacher. Constantly giving feedback and critique—not because he's upset or patronizing the disciples for not getting it—but because he wants the best out of them.

Jesus wants the best from us.

The truth is, it's not always easy to know what exactly Jesus wants from us. It's not always clear what we're supposed to do or what we're supposed to say.

Guess what, that's ok. We're in a safe place—this sanctuary is more than just a place of worship, this is a place to learn.

Like I talked about with the kids, I share that same message with you.

Give our hearts for God.

I don't have chocolate hearts for everyone, but I think we tend to hoard the good stuff. We are too scared to share what God gives us because we fear it will run out. We saw this play out with the kids—what if I give this away, what if I'm left with nothing???

I promise you won't.

Faith is a participatory activity. When we learn about God, we are in motion, we are doing something. We pray, we serve, we share, we care for others, we are mindful of our bodies and our actions, we live with purpose and intentionality. How else do you participate?

Faith is ongoing. It doesn't stop... like on the day you're baptized, or confirmed, or when you've achieved life goals and think we can put faith on the shelf.



## Sermon Transcript

Faith is alive. And guess what, the true GOAT, Jesus, the greatest of all time, has passed the mantle to you and me. It's our turn to be curious learners. To be leaders for a world in search of hope and peace.

Give our hearts for God... and the reward is sweeter than a piece of chocolate. The reward is a life with Christ, the great teacher, with us every step of the way. Amen