

Sermon For Transfiguration – 2021

Exodus 34:29-35, Psalm 50:1-6, 2 Corinthians 3:12-13, 4:1-6, Mark 9:2-9

Transfiguration: Hope in the Journey

Grace, peace, and mercy from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

What word do you like to hear from Jesus? How about these?

- +You are my child.
- +I love you.
- +I Am with you always.
- +You are forgiven.
- +You the light of the world.
- +You salt.
- +With God all things are possible.

What about this word?

- +If anyone come after me, he must deny himself and take his cross and follow me.
- +Whoever wants to save his life will lose it; whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel. will save it.

Now there is word of challenge from Jesus. And maybe we might want to react the way Peter did when Jesus told Peter to “Get behind me Satan, for your mind is on the things of man, not on the things of God.” Peter did not like what he heard from Jesus about the way He would carry mission as the Christ. That the Son of Man must go to Jerusalem and be handed over to sinners, the chief priests, and the elders, and be killed, and on the third day rise from the dead. Hard words indeed. Peter, and for that matter none of the disciples knew how Jesus' mission to save mankind would be carried out. Jesus' words just did not appear to be a winning way!

So six days later Jesus led Peter, James and John up a high mountain. Literally the Greek for led could be translated, “Took,” or even, “Bore.” It is as if Jesus carried these three up the mountain. Of course the going is always easier when Jesus is with you. He bears your burden and makes the journey possible. He is like the Eagle teaching her eaglet to fly by throwing them out of the nest. If the eaglet does not use his wings, mother eagle comes swooping down and catches her eaglet on her wings, thus bearing him up on eagles' wings. Jesus bears these three disciples who have not yet learned to go on their own, but even then as Jesus follower we are never alone.

At the top of the mountain Jesus is transfigured. His clothes become Radiant-dazzling white. Out of this world white. Speaking of out of this world, two shining stars of Israel's past come from heaven to join Jesus on this mountain top. Peter sees all this and says, “It is good that we are here. Let us build three dwelling places, one for you, one for Elijah, and one for Moses.” Peter's reaction is terrified in the midst of this glory. Peter doesn't really know what to say but he feels like he must say something. All this glory is sure better than all the “death talk” that Jesus had been telling them. The dwellings may be a way to preserve this experience in some way. Maybe they memorialize these dwellings and invite others to see for themselves, kind of like a holy theme park. We humans have the tendency to do such things like building a biblical model of Noah's Ark near Covington, KY so many may come to experience the wonder of the ark.

But that idea of Peter never gets off the ground. Then comes the cloud. Oh-oh! Clouds can't be a good thing. You see clouds moving in and that means that a storm is approaching. But this is not a storm

cloud, it is a God Cloud. A God cloud like on top of Mt. Sinai when Moses received the law. When Moses came down his face was glowing like had been from another world. So Moses has to wear a veil over his face until the glow vanishes. Like the cloud that filled the Tent of Meeting and Moses would go in and talk to God. Then there is a the pillar of cloud by day that led God's People through the wilderness to the Promised Land. You see God was hidden in these clouds to protect the people. Because one could not look at God face to face and survive. But Moses is the one who face God personally and lived. The God cloud communicated God's presence.

This Cloud that overshadows the Mountain of Transfiguration is really no different. God is Here. And the next thing, the disciples hear is the voice of God in the cloud. "This is my Son, the beloved, listen to Him." The cloud withdraws and the disciples find themselves with only Jesus.

On the way down Jesus tells the three disciples to not share this experience with anyone until after the Son of Man is rises from the dead. Then the verse tells the three disciples did not know what Jesus meant when said "until the Son of Man rises from the dead." So it appears that the disciples have to listen to Jesus. That they will. As they continue to journey to Jerusalem Jesus will many lessons for them to listen to, like one greatness and humility. Two more times Jesus share with them His prediction of His death and resurrection, but they keep silent because they were afraid to say anything. Finally they will arrive in Jerusalem and Jesus will be handed over to the chief priests and the elders and then he go up a hill, this time not bearing Peter and James and John, but their sins and our sins, past, present , and future.

Why so that we may be change, or transformed, or better yet, transfigured from the old sinful life the new life in Christ. Christ our sins and receive His glorious life-changing forgiveness. And three day later Jesus is risen from the dead and walking and appearing in His resurrected glorious body like on the Mountain top with Moses and Elijah. Through Jesus death and resurrection you now have access to God. You can listen to Jesus is the words of holy Scripture, you can come to him in prayer and speak to him as if he your Father and friend. You do not need to go through Moses. You can listen to Jesus directly, one to one and even better in the community of faith in the church. Where we hear the words of Jesus speaking, "You are forgiven, You are my child, I am with you..."

Today is the Last before we enter into the Lenten season. This year we will hear Jesus speak of what I just said, but there will also be words of challenge. Words about service, words of humility, of denying yourself. Words that might hit too close to home. Even so the crucified and risen Jesus is with you also bearing you up to make the journey giving you strength for the journey. The Holy Spirit working teaching you all things and bringing Jesus' words to light.

May God bless you in these coming days as we journey to the cross.

Now may the peace of God which passes all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.