

SUNDAY, March 2, 2025 Transfiguration "Shine in Us Jesus"

Exodus 34: 29-35 2Corinthians 3:12 to 4:2 Luke 9: 28-36

Have you ever been in a place that is so totally amazing that you wonder how it came to be? What had happened to enable the natural beauty of the earth to be seen in your eyes? Maybe it was the first time you saw the tip-- the Southern most part of Canada at Point Pelee; or the untouched parks of trees and forests in northern Ontario or even the Rockies out west... or even sitting down at the Detroit River and looking at that water source for what it is. How did each of those moments come into being? For you? Many of them are not 'a mountain top' experience of looking down from high; but the emotional impact is filled with a high that cannot be altered. This is because it was a meant in time that was captured in your memory for specific reasons known to you and to God! Those are moments that you can recall as captured in time.

Our stories from Exodus and Luke capture specific historic moments of Moses and Jesus which reveal to us even now many hundreds of years later God's glory and holy and sacred moments captured in time. Moses carried the tablets of the law of God down from the mountain after talking with God. His face shone brightly and the people were afraid. They realized it was all right to talk with Moses. Moses' face shone brightly each time he came from talking with God so he veiled himself in the presence of the people. Moses' face shone brightly because he was in God's presence.

Sometimes after praying or reading scripture one might feel enlightened, lifted up, able to breathe in new air to feel something new within. This too is an experience of a captured moment of time spent with God's Spirit which brings about a change in you. Has this occurred lately for you?

Our reading from Luke describes what is known as the "transfiguration" of Jesus. It is one of the very few incidents within Jesus' life and ministry that is tied chronologically to another event. Jesus asked Peter and the disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" The disciples replied, "Some say You are John the Baptist; others Elijah and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets. But then Jesus asked a more pointed question, "Who do you say that I am?"

It was Peter who demonstrated the strongest faith that day for without hesitating he said, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God." Jesus was probably relieved that at least one of the disciples finally got the message that he is the Son of God. And he wanted to talk about this and teach them even more. This was because Jesus knew what was going to happen. He was aware that people were against what he was doing; He knew that he would be arrested,

beaten, tried, and killed. He knew that the faith of his disciples needed to be challenged like never before. He wanted to do everything He could to prepare them for what was to come.

Jesus tells them about his death and that they would be tested for being his followers. And so about 8 days later Jesus takes Peter, James and John up the mountain to pray. They probably thought it was just Jesus needing to get away from all the people and they would be watching and waiting for him to finish up what he was praying to God about. But this is not what occurs.

While Jesus is praying-- we are not told if he was kneeling, sitting, standing but he was praying when the appearance of his face changed and his clothes became dazzling white. They saw two men with Jesus and they were talking about what was to come in Jerusalem. The disciples were tired but were awed at what they saw. Peter, not fully understanding what was happening, wanted to capture the moment, build shelters on Jesus and the two prophets Moses and Elijah. He wanted to continue this moment as it was truly something to experience. But then a cloud came and overshadowed them and they were terrified.

Wouldn't you be? You see Jesus whom you followed for @3 years glowing brightly, two people Moses and Elijah, whom you've learned about all your life and then a cloud covers you. But what occurs is amazing because they hear the voice of God speak "This is my Son, my Chosen, listen to him." These are words similarly spoken at Jesus' baptism when he came up out of the water and the voice of God from the heavens introduced him as His Son.

Soon after, the voice stopped and Jesus was alone. The disciples then descended the mountain in silence. What could they say? What had they experienced? A true moment captured in their hearts. Imagine being in the sandals of the disciples- how would you have responded? You probably would have wanted to tell everyone about it- using any which way you could. You would have been so filled with joy that you were overwhelmed. But Jesus told them- tell no one. Not until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.

Jesus did receive strength and reassurance in this experience on the mountain. But the main reason he exposed Peter, James and John, his closest disciples, was to strengthen their faith. Jesus needed them to be fully aware of who he was before they faced the dark days ahead. It was crucial for them to know that there would come a bright, glorious moment after his death. They needed to know that this was a part of God's plan of redemption. This experience on the mountain was for them to be strengthened in faith. And just as it happened to last only a few minutes, it was time to go home to daily routine and carry on with their mission.

What does this Transfiguration Story teach us over 2000 years later? What is it that God is telling us as we look to the future times of worshiping God and begin the season of Lent? In these past weeks we have heard messages of the mission of Jesus. We have heard messages about being called to serve, forgiving others, loving others and building up each other in faith. We have also experienced moments when God has revealed himself as we have shared with others what it means to be a part of this church family and the responsibilities we each have as a family in faith. And through these stories and times of learning we have come to know again our mission is to serve Jesus Christ. We have also strengthened our faith for what is to come even though we believe and know the full Gospel story, we will be hearing it again and immersing ourselves in knowing Jesus as the One who will nurture and nourish us along the way to the cross and tomb.

As we look forward in faith our Lenten focus will be on the Bread of Life and how Jesus nurtures us to walk His way, through Lent, Holy Week and to celebrating Easter. But we all need this mountain top experience where we come to the reality that Jesus is the Christ, Saviour and the One through whom our salvation is assured. A part of that mountain experience is doing what Jesus did- praying and for us it is to read God's word each day. By learning about Jesus you will see him as the Son of God and will experience his love and healing power for you. And whether it happens suddenly or gradually there will come a time when you will see Jesus in a new way-- not just the man who taught but the Saviour of all.

This is a mountain worth climbing one step at a time. As we begin Lent this week, let us also look to God to see who we are and might be as we search for Christ the Bread of life.

PRAYER

God of love and light we pray that your glory will shine upon us as we learn and grow in faith of Jesus. We pray that Christ's light will come from within us to shine in the hearts of others who seek his peace and love. Hear us O God we pray in this moment captured by grace SILENCE. Amen.

