

The Transfiguration. . . may it embolden us for our journey with Christ

Sunday February 11th we celebrate the Transfiguration of our Lord. The Prayer of the Day gives us some insight into what we are celebrating: ***“Almighty God, on the mountain you showed your glory in the transfiguration of your Son. Give us the vision to see beyond the turmoil of our own world and to behold our King in all his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever”.***

What Peter, James and John behold on that mountaintop removes the veil of Jesus’ humanness to reveal his divinity: wondrous, frightening, powerful, unexpected, and rich, connecting all ages (the prophets Elijah and Moses appear with Jesus), giving enlightenment. His external appearance is utterly changed. Jesus’ transfiguration is not to be approached with the assumption that we can understand it. It means to draw us in toward what is abnormal, unnatural—like the burning fire that does not consume the bush (Moses’ first encounter with God) and like the fire Elijah hoped for and received from God on the altar drenched in water to win the wager against the prophets of Baal . The Transfiguration gives the disciples the experience of witnessing a most amazing and unspeakable vision that draws them to want to stay there, dwell in that place of wonder; and then the voice of God tells them "This is my beloved Son; listen to him." and they went down from the mountain following Jesus.

It is one thing to have had a “a mountaintop” experience with Jesus up in the clouds where everything is brilliant, but it is not the be-all-and-end-all. The reason for the identification of Jesus with Moses and Elijah is for the church, the disciples, **for us** to realize their crucial work in the world: to accompany Jesus to the cross, to take up our crosses, to die in order to live, to be last in order to be first, to refuse the temptations to turn away from God’s laws.

Jesus was “transfigured”, not “transformed”. To be transfigured is to be changed in outward form or appearance. Jesus’ transfiguration does not alter who he is but gives to those who see the changed visage a new understanding of him because they see him outwardly in a different light. When we speak of transformation we tend to mean “changed inwardly—in composition or structure”. Jesus is not transformed (changed inwardly) but transfigured before his disciples (shown to be other than assumed).

The power of the Transfiguration is that it plants in our hearts and minds the brilliance of eternity and emboldens us for the journey together as the body of Christ. We must listen to God’s Son; not simply remaining on that mountaintop where the air is pure and the view is stunning. We, as disciples must listen to the voice of God’s Word in our midst so that we follow in a way that leads to the cross.

**Come to the mountaintop this Sunday.
Behold the miracle of Christ’s transfiguration**

Come down from that mountain, renewed and transformed to follow His path to the cross and eternal life.

Sunday worship service 10 AM