

## Sermon The Transfiguration Luke 9:28-36 (37-43) Feb 14, 2010

It's been nearly three years and Jesus has pretty much shown the disciples all-he's-got (except for the Resurrection, of course, which is just around the corner). He's healed and raised people from the dead. He has spoken words that could have only come from God, and he has empowered the disciples to go and do the same. He has loved them, been frustrated with them, and has forgiven them. He has given the disciples nearly every evidence that He, Jesus, is the Son of God, the chosen Messiah to reconcile, not only the Israelites to their God, but all people to God.

So in other words, if we were baking a cake, all the ingredients have now been put in the bowl for the mixing. We simply need the baking to happen and then for the icing on the cake to take place.

Today's Transfiguration story is the baking of the cake. The ingredients of Jesus' ministry have been witnessed and tossed into the bowl ready to be transfigured, read to be baked; changing physically into a new formation (like what liquid to solid would do), transfigured.

Now let's admire for a moment when the Transfiguration actually occurs in the gospel. Strategically, it appears right on time, just shortly before Jesus' death and Resurrection, making the Transfiguration the Advent of the Resurrection. So just like Mary's pregnancy is the Advent of the birth of the Messiah, where only a select few are notified of his coming, the Transfiguration, with only a select few there to witness it, is the Advent of the Resurrection .

Here on this nameless mountain top Jesus along with his three closest disciples, encounters not only just the living spirit of Moses and Elijah, but God Himself, where God arrives in one of God's favorite earthly outfits, a cloud (making quite the fashion statement). Here, Jesus has opened himself to a unique connection. Through prayer, something the disciples have witnessed regularly with Jesus, Jesus is not just connected to the Almighty and some of His greatest servants, but He's connected with them *so* spiritually that it is visual—seen by the naked eye.

Here the disciples are given a money-back-guarantee just in case they doubted any of their Master's ministry in the last three years. Peter, James, and John, "here you are"...the Divine at its "earthly showy" best, present among you, physically changing the appearance of Jesus (physically changing the ingredients by baking the cake) to confirm, yet another time (first time being at His baptism) God's command "This is my beloved Son, *listen to him.*"

And with that, the cloud disappears as well as the spirit of Moses and Elijah—God said what He had to say and visually vanishes. The cake has been baked, Jesus, transfigured, is now left with his three disciples who no longer seem to want to make reservations to stay the night at Mountain Top Hotel (as they did before) and they all head down the mountain where a great crowd had gathered to meet Jesus, and where Jesus begins his journey now toward Jerusalem where ultimately He will add the icing on the cake with the Resurrection and once again appear transfigured.

So it's back to work for Jesus. He's had a four-day-weekend, transformed and transfigured, and the moment he steps foot back in the office he's found that the disciples who remained at the bottom had not been able to get the job done. Jesus must now step in, although frustrated and impatient, he is quite capable of sending the unclean spirit packing and on a train to nowhere making up for the disciples lack.

For Peter, James, and John who witnessed the Transfiguration, they're now left with a command to follow through with. As the gospel continues into the 10<sup>th</sup> chapter Jesus gathers as many disciples as he can (scripture says 70) and ordains them two-by-two to be sent out as lambs among the wolves taking nothing with them but their faith in God's protection and abundance as they need it.

For them to go *without* NOT having listened to Him would be like a blind person being given directions how to avoid the upcoming cliff via a book or a map, or like a deaf person being led away from the upcoming waterfall via a megaphone. In order for them to have survived as lambs among the wolves they would **had** to have listened to Him.

The answer to the disciples future encounters for potential healing and salvation lied in how they had committed *to* listening to Him. The answer to *our* future encounters for potential healing and salvation lie in how *we* commit ourselves to *listening to Him*. We have the luxury as modern-day Christians to know our Lord *as* glorified, as the Messiah, given the Resurrection. We have the luxury of the Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth in our back pockets, in our hearts every day when we choose.

The disciples here exemplify for us they're *having* listened to him when he sends them out two-by-two, based on *only a glimpse* of Jesus as the Christ transfigured on the mountain top. They went on a glimpse of the “baked cake”—we get to have our cake (frosted) and eat it too. Those three disciples, assured now of Jesus'

Messiah-ship at the mountain top, had way more work to face in their mission field than we. We have the luxury of 2000 years.

Imagine yourself going home or to school or to work to share your story with family or friends of your seeing the living spirits of the two greatest prophets know to your people: “Hey Mom” or “Hey boss, today I was with Jesus and we saw Martin Luther and Martin Luther King, Jr. where we were praying.”

Nor do we have to endure the persecution Paul and his disciples did with their church fights and incarcerations. We have the luxury of 2000 years. We have been handed the transfigured, resurrected Jesus; the manual of how to live, love, and forgive. This manual is not just for flipping through the pages without hearing what is being read, but holding on to what we *do* have in common with the disciples, that we are called to listen to him. In listening to him lies all our answers to life’s stumbling blocks, to our church’s stumbling blocks. When we listen to him we listen to God and we find right within ourselves the ability to unite with our God who unites us with each other.

Let us pray: Great and holy God, ruler of all time and space, we worship you with awe and adoration - your holiness, your glory, and your love are beyond our imagining. So we pray that we too be transfigured, transfigured to believe that in you all things—any thing—is possible as we listen and believe. We pray for the transfiguration of those we hold dear to us in our prayer corner, and those serving our military. We pray for the hearts saddened this week by the death of their loved one...may they find their comfort in You. And we pray for ourselves and our church, that whatever it may be that blocks us from being transfigured and transformed according to your will, that it be gently and mercifully remove from our experience. We ask this in Jesus’ name, the one who taught us to pray...Our Father.