

TRANSFIGURATION

YEAR A

EXODUS 24:12-18

2 PETER 1:16-21

MATTHEW 17:1-9

FEBRUARY 25, 26, 2017

We come to the end of the season of Epiphany. During Epiphany we received revelation of who Jesus is. We heard his teachings and learned what he says about discipleship and our relationship with each other. We heard difficult teachings from Jesus as he told about the intent of the Law and that he is the fulfillment of the Law and the prophets. As we come to the Transfiguration of our Lord we are present to experience the glory of God as Jesus shines brighter than the sun and his clothes became dazzling white. As we look at Jesus we have the assurance that even in the midst of the difficult parts of our lives Jesus is present. When we are afraid we receive the touch from our Lord saying, **“Do not be afraid.”** We also have our hope restored. You and I fall short of our Lord’s expectations in keeping the Law, loving God and loving neighbor. In the Transfiguration we have the assurance that Jesus provides forgiveness of sins and that God’s grace is sufficient for us.

Matthew 17:1-3 Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him.

The inner circle of disciples went with Jesus as he retreated to the mountain. They were there with Jesus as Moses and Elijah appeared with him. Moses was the great law giver and Elijah was the prophet that did not experience death. Jesus is the fulfillment of the law and prophets meeting with those that represented the law and the prophets but there is more involved than Jesus meeting with Moses and Elijah. They were there and the disciples witnessed the event. God’s glory was revealed on Jesus giving assurance that he is the one that is to come. He is worth following and he is the one they should worship.

You and I also get to see Jesus as he meets with Moses and Elijah. We get to see Jesus as he is glorified. In the transfiguration of our Lord we have the assurance that our faith is not misguided and that our hope is in the Lord. We heard difficult words of Jesus these last couple of weeks. This vision of Jesus's glory assures us that his words are truth, that his grace is real and that he will be with us in all of our battles.

Matthew 17:5 While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!"

One of the most difficult disciplines for many is that of listening. Many of us have a difficult time listening. One reason for our listening problems is that we don't stop talking long enough to listen to others, which was often the case with Peter. When we fail to listen to others it may be implied that the person is not important enough for us to listen to. Listening requires patience and it requires that we respect the person in front of us. Good listening requires that we value those we are in conversations with. Good listening has been one of my strengths along the way even though there are times my mind wanders so that I lose part of the conversation. It is embarrassing when I have been in a conversation with another person when I have not been listening. The other person might want to know my thoughts about what was being said. If I was not listening I cannot respond or I might respond in a way that makes no sense to what was spoken. When we do not listen well others feel not important. They might feel they are not worth the time and effort to be taken seriously.

Peter, James and John went with Jesus to the mountain. They would be with Jesus at other times of great importance for the Lord. The disciples were often not sure of who Jesus is. They had seen and heard many things but they still wondered. Six days earlier Peter declared that Jesus is the Christ. Jesus is the one promised by the prophets. In Matthew 16 Peter declared that Jesus is the

Christ but he did not truly understand what it means for Jesus to be the Christ. Peter did not know what it meant for Jesus to go to Jerusalem and to a cross. He wanted to building dwelling places for Moses, Jesus and Elijah but that is not what the Lord required. What was required was they they should listen to Jesus. They must learn all that Jesus had to teach them about discipleship and their Christian relationships.

Being a follower of our Lord Jesus means we listen to him. You and I do not always like what our Lord says. We do not always like his honesty or his direction. We do not like having to live by faith. We like to see where we are going. In the church we live and walk by faith. We do not always have the ability to see what lies ahead of us but we must simply trust in the wisdom of our Lord. We trust that God will lead in the right direction and that God will never lead us into a dead end. The Lord works through God's people as the people are in faith. When we insist on seeing everything before we act we miss out on the good ministry the Lord has for us to do. Once the Lord gives us direction it is good to see and know what we are doing. This comes through reading the Bible and through prayer and meditation.

Matthew 17:6-9 When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Get up and do not be afraid." And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone. As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, "Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

The next time you and I come together for worship it will be the beginning of Lent. We go from this mountaintop glory into the time of self-examination and self-denial. We begin to prepare ourselves for the crucifixion of our Lord. We might not want to go there. We like the good times when we see the glory of the Lord. The cloud overshadowed the three disciples and Jesus. The voice told Peter, James and John to listen to Jesus. When Jesus teaches about the first being last and the last being first they must listen. When he teaches them the

ways to greatness is through being the servant they must seek to understand. When Jesus says they are going to Jerusalem they must listen and not rebuke. When Jesus reveals that he will die at the hands of Gentiles and sinners but will be raised on the third day they must listen.

You and I are also called to listen to Jesus. We listen to every word because we know that Jesus has the words of eternal life. We know that he is the Lord and he has all power and all authority. We listen because we trust in his promise. We might not like the message but we listen because it is from the Lord. We might be tempted to try another way but we will walk the Lord's way because God's ways are higher than our ways and God's wisdom is higher than our wisdom. Because we listen to the Lord we also will go with Jesus to Jerusalem. We see the glory of the Lord but we know we cannot stay on the mountain but we must return to the place where people are hurting and to where teaching needs to be done. Because we have seen the glory of our Lord we have courage to listen to the voice of God and to the teachings of the Lord.

Matthew 17:5 While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!"