Transfiguration Sunday 2022 – Region 9

The Gospel Word for this Transfiguration Sunday

“This is my Son, my Chosen, LISTEN TO HIM.”

Let us Pray…

O Lord, may the words of my mouth

and the meditations in our hearts be acceptable in your sight,

Our Strength and our Redeemer. AMEN

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Today our gospel account takes us on a Mountaintop Experience.

Have you ever gone on a long hike through the fog and come through to the place where you get to see the sun shining with an amazing view of God’s beautiful creation?

Have you ever been at Camp and felt the warmth of fellowship and friends singing, chatting, catching up with one another around a campfire?

Have you ever walked on the sands of a beachfront and seen the sun sparkle like diamonds scattered across the ocean?

Or

Perhaps you have been to a wonderful wedding and caught a glimpse of God’s presence in the love shared in celebration.

Lately, our family has been mesmerized by the sheer wonder of new life when we look into the eyes of our granddaughter.

Mountaintop experiences vary from person to person and from time to time, but what they all hold in common is an awe-inspiring beauty and the breathtaking wonder of the Lord, present in our midst.

Mountaintop experiences are the places and situations that leave us wishing we could just stay in that moment forever!

These are experiences that shed new light;

They make us stop and ponder meaning;

They give us a different perspective.

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When Peter and John and James went up the mountain with Jesus to pray it probably started like any other ordinary day, and the hike tired them out.

They could have never imagined what they were about to see or experience!

They could have never predicted an encounter with the glory of Moses and Elijah, such heroes of the faith standing there with Jesus!

Moses, who once stood on Mt. Sinai in the presence of God and then brought the 10 Commandments down the mountain to God’s people.

Elijah, who endured contests on Mt. Carmel;

Had confrontations with Kings and Queens and appointments with Angels, and a mountain meeting with God that featured earthquakes, wind and fire, not to mention his upward glory ride in chariots of fire.

Now, they stand together with THEIR Jesus!

With OUR Jesus!

For the first disciples, Jesus was still something of a mystery.

Perhaps we could say the same is true for disciples of Jesus even today.

Disciples don’t really understand.

They can’t clearly see who Jesus is.

Certainly, Jesus had some incredible moments, some profound teachings, some miraculous healings.

Jesus’ words and actions make people squirm.

He offends those in power.

And now, here we have Jesus standing shoulder to shoulder with Moses and Elijah, the movers and shakers of the faith!

Jesus is Transfigured.

This is the word we use to describe how Jesus’ true nature shines through and his glorious presence is revealed.

Thank goodness those sleepy disciples were able to stay awake for the glorious vision and a truly inspiring, life-changing Mountaintop experience.

In fact, they are awake enough to recognize how good it is to be there in that moment that they offer to build dwelling places so they can stay right there with Moses, Elijah and Jesus.

Then into the midst of their glory-filled Mountaintop moment they are covered in a cloud and the voice of God comes to them to say:

“This is my Son, My Chosen, LISTEN TO HIM.”

Jesus is glorified; Transfigured.

The disciples are Transformed; commissioned

In a moment,

In a glimpse,

Everything is different.

The cloud is pulled back, and in the Transfiguration of Jesus, the Disciples are changed too.

Their lives are made new.

They are commissioned to listen.

They may have kept silent and in those days told no one, BUT

the impression of the vision they saw would not be erased or forgotten.

In fact, the Transfiguration event made such an impression that later it was recorded by Matthew, Mark and Luke in their gospel accounts of Jesus life and ministry.

The call to listen to Jesus changes everything for disciples.

Keep in mind that just before this Transfiguration story is the declaration by Peter that Jesus IS Messiah, and then we have the Mountaintop experience.

All the glory that the disciples experience on that mountain that day is set within the context and the decision by Jesus to come back down the mountain to follow through on what it means to be Messiah.

And when Jesus comes down, what will he do?

Well, Jesus sets his face toward Jerusalem.

The proclamation of the life of Christ is that God is with us in all things; in the highest and most glorious moments of life as well as in the places where we are found feeling low and facing the challenges that life inevitably throws our way.

Jesus shows the disciples that following him means taking up the cross.

Glory and suffering are wrapped together.

So here we stand, at a pivotal moment between the stunning beauty and light of the Epiphany season and the onset of our journey through Lent.

What does listening to Jesus mean for us, or look like today in our own discipleship?

At the Transfiguration the disciples see Jesus hanging out with the movers and shakers of the faith.

Jesus, the one who feeds the hungry and heals the sick and aggravates the power brokers;

The one who shines with a light of God’s glory but teaches about suffering, death and new life.

The One who shows us that Our God desires life for us.

That Our God loves all the children of God more than we can even begin to imagine.

And our God will do anything to communicate that love and to accomplish our salvation.

Listening to Jesus includes hearing, seeing and experiencing God’s love for US anew;

A love that is willing to walk to the cross, and through death to bring us new life.

Listening to Jesus, is being Transformed by God’s Word; living changed lives that reflects the light of love and God’s grace to the world.

Listening to Jesus means seeing each and every other person through the eyes of God’s love and recognizing one another as sister and brother in Christ.

May our Mountaintop experiences create our hearts and lives anew; and inspire a faith so strong that it reaches straight through us to shine the light of Christ into the darkest corners of pain and hurt, and to bring real hope to the world that so desperately needs the good news of Jesus Christ today.

Amen.