

From the Rector's Study, the Rev. Bryce Sangster
Sunday, August 6th, 2023, Transfiguration
Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14 Psalm 99 2 Peter 1:16-19 Luke 9:28-36

There are various ways of approaching the theme of the transfiguration. All of them can offer interesting insights.

Although God's voice calls Jesus the chosen one and to listen to him, we are all chosen. And this is a 2-fold approach. I remember asking in a sermon once, I don't remember whether it was for transfiguration or the baptism of Jesus as to whether anyone felt beloved or chosen by God. One person put their hand up and my feeling was they felt especially beloved or chosen as opposed to others. Thus, the two-fold sense. It means taking it into our hearts for ourselves to recognize that we are beloved and chosen, but so are others. This means living out our lives recognizing this in ourselves but also encouraging others to see themselves as beloved and chosen by God as well.

What does it mean to be loved or chosen by God? That means we don't have to keep trying to prove ourselves, it means we've already succeeded, and we don't have to spend our time trying to justify our existence and build up a reputation. Because we don't have to do that we can focus on others. This means God's love is non-transactional and unconditional.

We can look at the metaphor of the mountain top. We can experience mountaintop experiences but cannot stay on the mountain. Because more of our learning comes in the valleys and ordinary times of life than on the mountain. So perhaps like Peter we would like to stay on the mountain top but also like Peter we have to come down from the mountain.

Then the question comes to mind; is this mountain top experience a one-time event or more than one? I would suggest that those whose faith is really certainty about God and their relationship, then they only need one, even if they may feel they have more than one. But those of us who live by faith and have questions, may need more than one to keep going. The mountains we experience along the way may not be as large as the first time, but the encouragement continues, if we are only willing to look.

Now I am going to move away from the metaphor of the mountain.

Last week we heard from Matthew:

13:33 Jesus told them another parable:

13:44 "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

*13:45 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls;
13:46 on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.*

The hidden aspect of the treasure in a field and pearl. If we aren't looking for it or figure it is even possible, we will miss it, the presence of the Spirit in our lives at that moment. And even if we do, we may need to be reminded more than once we are chosen and beloved, because it may not fully take the first time. After a while we may not feel as beloved, as we deal with the issues we face in life.

And the last verse. Do you ever wonder why they didn't tell anyone about what they experienced?

It would be and feel very personal.

And not always easy to describe.

And may stretch credibility and we think others will not believe us.

But that doesn't mean it didn't happen and isn't real.

Amen

Blessing

Go forth into the world in peace;
be of good courage;
hold fast that which is good;
render to no one evil for evil;
strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak;
help the afflicted; honour everyone;
love and serve the Lord,
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit;
and the blessing ...