



Sermon

The Rev. Emily Williams Guffey, Rector
Last Sunday After the Epiphany
February 14, 2021

Lessons: 2 Kings 2:1-12; 2 Corinthians 4:3-6

Psalm: 50:1-6

Gospel: Mark 9:2-9

As we have approached different seasons of the church year these past 11 months, there have been some it's felt like we experience...every day.

These past 11 months, has it not felt like Lent...every day...waiting for life to revive its brilliant fullness...fasting from going places and from one another's presence and from so much more??

Has it not felt like Holy Saturday...every day...mourning, indefinitely, without family or friends?

Has it not felt like the long season after Pentecost every day, day after day, the same monochrome, without even flair or nominal feast??

Has it not felt like Advent every day...living in darkness, hungry for hope?

Has it not felt like Ash Wednesday every day...viscerally acquainted with our mortality, quite aware of the dust from whence we came and to which we shall return?

But today...

Today — when we hear the story of Jesus being transfigured upon the mountaintop, that we call Transfiguration Sunday.

Today — when Jesus, in the presence of Moses and Elijah, in the fullness of all the Law and all the Prophets, dazzles with shocking brilliance!!

Today — when the unmasked and not-so-distanced eyewitnesses — Peter, James, and John — take in such glorious spectacle as they had never seen nor even thought they could begin to imagine...and were so utterly astonished that they even wanted to confine it all into a cozy little house?

That is not *today*.
That was...at best...*before*.

But not today.

Not today, when our own energy and even brilliance goes into making do without:

Making do...without:

Without...physical presence
Without enough employment
Without enough money
Without enough food,
Without family gatherings or friends nights out
Without sports and playdates and classrooms and childcare

Not today...when we are, at best, “okay,” all things considered.
When we are, at best, “COVID-fine”.

Not today, when we are hanging on, when we’re keeping the faith, when we’re longing for so much more...and yet, maybe emotionally, we can’t let ourselves even look or expect that more... now.

We grieve the loss of so much and so many.

No...glory...glory is not for today.
Glory is for...another day.

Yet...before we look away and we assume that today is not for us, not this year...let us remember that from this one dazzling moment:

Jesus, too, will proceed into interminable wilderness.
Jesus, too, will be faced with innumerable and compounding challenges.
Jesus, too, during his 40 days in the desert, will go without so much!

He, too, will be tired.
He, too, will be tempted,
And he will emerge...clear about what is most important, about who he is, about who God is and about what matters.

And that clarity will propel him on an even longer journey...one that will demand and require *all* of him.

Yet today...glory.
Today, a glimpse of glory.
A glimpse of more.

A glimpse, a word of love...*Beloved*.

Today, a glimpse of that other reality, where — without our seeing or even our knowing — the prophets and the ancestors, the angels and archangels, and all the company of heaven sing love forever.

And we will dwell in that glory one day, too.

“Glory,” says the Preacher Sam Wells, *“is a glimpse of forever...in today.”*

There is another reality happening all around us, though we rarely see it.

There is a far greater dynamic going on in the universe and in history than what we can see going on right now.

Our lives, tucked cozy as we are into our own little homes, are in fact tucked away into something far greater:

Into a story of love.

Into a story in which each one of us is called *“Beloved.”*

Into a story in which each one of us is heard.

Each one of is believed...our dignity upheld and hope gleaming like the sun.

This is the story in which we live.

This is the love in which those we’ve lost now and forever, live.

This is the light — the *true* light — that dazzles not only for a moment, but endures forever.

There are amidst of all of this three forms of prayer, that Sam Wells goes on to explain.

Each of these three forms has their place and their moments and their needs and their truth. They are all necessary and real.

I want to set our gaze today on one of them.

First, explains Wells:

- 1) There is the prayer of resurrection: *“Please make my mother better”*
- 2) Then there is the prayer of incarnation which prays: *“By the power of the Holy Spirit, be with my mother now.”*
- 3) And finally there is the prayer of transfiguration which prays: *“Make today, make this time in my life and my family’s life a revelation of your glory, so we that we feel alive like never before, and we look back on this time when we realized who **you** were, God, and who **we** were...and what matters most in life.”*

Might we dare to pray as such today?

Today, though our lives are paused, our dreams deferred, and our eyes seeing only screens and lots of snow, might we also dare to see God for who God is?

Might we recognize what is most important?

Might we dwell in truth?

Might we shine love to and with one another, and with neighbors we have yet to meet?

Might we hear God's word "*Beloved*" and build beloved community...not waiting for another day?

Might we pray to be healed?

Might we pray to be bold?

Might we pray to be strong?

And, yes, might we pray to be changed from glory into glory...today and every day.

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