

## ***PRAISE INTERNATIONAL***

### ***TRANSFIGURATION THAT TRANSFORMS.***

#### ***MARK 9:2-9***

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##### **Good Morning**

##### **Prayer Needs - Palm Sunday Offering**

It had been a topic of discussion at our family reunion the summer of 1987 having been told that I would indeed need to have my entire colon removed - a potentially life altering surgery that would have to happen sometime in the next year. After returning from our time holiday I returned to my daily work as a Chaplain at Parkview and was confronted by my surgeon - why have you not scheduled this surgery? He asked emphatically - and suddenly I was hit with the sobering realization that what he said by soon and what we hear were two very different things. Within days on August 23, 1987 I was in surgery that initially went well - now when I awoke from the surgery the day before I felt not just pain but almost a dread of what had just experienced - something did not feel right. Less than 24 hours later while Denise was home attempting to rest I was rushed back into emergency surgery. My doctor saying later 'Ben I have done surgery on hemophiliac's that did not bleed as much as you - come to think of it I have never had anyone bleed out as much as you', that was funny later but not in the late afternoon hours of August 24, 1987 - it was not so funny.

I felt optimistic and confident as I was wheeled to surgery but as soon as the doors of the elevator opened I was greeted by the director of OR nursing - my supervisors daughter who rushed to grab my hand she was unable to speak as she wept. That is when I realized I was getting more and more light headed - after being transferred to the operating table the last thing I recall was seeing my surgeon waiting impatiently and asking 'can we start' while my anesthesiologist forcefully replied something like 'no he is not stable'. As I felt myself floating off from that moment I realized oh my goodness - I may not wake from this but almost immediately felt a profound peace to the core of my being that I cannot describe with words - it was OK. When I awoke from surgery that day I saw the bright fluorescent lights above me and felt something that is almost too deep to put into words - I awoke knowing without any doubt that God had spared my physical life but I knew God's hand had touched me - my body yes but even more profoundly my spirit. I had known about and to the best of my knowledge tried to serve God all of my life but this was a moment of profound grace that I knew then and to this day still know.

- **It was Transforming - I was more than blinded by those blazing bright lights above me that evening - I was deeply aware of God's activity.**

In reflecting on that story it strikes me that I had grown up in and around church - my life had no shortage of **words about God but that moment was not about words** - yet it was profoundly transforming. You might say in that moment I was with Peter, James and John - on the mount of Transfiguration.

- **A moment that was not about words but the Word becoming flesh in my life.**

##### **Its Transfiguration Sunday - Mark 9:2-9.**

In all the words that can be said about these disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration - what sticks out to me as we look at the text describe this almost indescribable moment. Transfiguration did NOT change Jesus.

He begins His journey up the mountain after some incredible exchanges - who do people say I am? You are the Christ - awesome Peter. Then Jesus began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, be rejected, killed and raised up after three days....

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***And the secret is simply this Christ in you!***

***Yes, Christ in you bringing with Him the hope of all the glorious things to come.***

***Col 1:27b JB Phillips***

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This is when Peter certain of his conviction ( I mean he was just commended) comes to **rebuke** Jesus that He is not being 'optimistic' and certainly the Messiah is not going to let their world reel out of control - after all doesn't a King bring control to a Kingdom?

And there it is the **worn out expressions of religion - certainty, optimism and control.**

- Yet Jesus not only corrects Peter but continues to reveal that this Kingdom leads to a cross - anyone who wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. His Kingdom is revealed by faith, is anchored in hope and sustained in love.

*We can have certitude about God or faith in God. There's a subtle but vital difference. Certitude breeds rigidity, faith welcomes surrender. Certitude puffs up, faith builds up.*

*We can be optimistic about the future or we can have hope. Optimism too often has no place for doubt, lament, fear; Hope welcomes all of it. Optimism ignores unwanted data, bypassing the negative or painful; hope befriends unwanted data and faces pain in the promise of redemption.*

*We can control people or we can love them. We can have a God of control or a God of love. Love works differently than control. Love frees while control constrains. Love empowers while control overpowers. Love doesn't insist on having its own way, control must get what it wants.*

*Certainty, optimism, and control are the forces of the world. Common, appreciated, sought, welcomed but they are fading away, impermanent, part of the old order. Ultimately they are incapable of providing life abundant.*

***But the forces of New Creation are faith, hope, and love. These are the three that remain.-***  
*Matt Tebbe*

This brings us to our text - 6 days after Peter relied on the power of his words....

**Jesus reveals Himself as the living word** - and that friends is what Transfiguration is all about.

**Transfiguration the place where the disciples words about Jesus were revealed as incomplete.**

**Transfiguration is the place where our words surrender to the living Word.**

**Transfiguration is the place where we meet God in ways that words simply cannot express and the good news of today's gospel is that He did and He still does.**

This is the moment where Peter, James and John encounter more than words but the Living Word:

- This is very likely the moment that inspires John's opening of his gospel - *we beheld Him the one full of Grace and Truth - the Word became flesh and dwelt among us!*
- **Jesus there is more to You than we had ever imagined!** I had no idea! How do we describe what goes beyond our ability to describe - Transfiguration...
- Yes. It does not change Jesus - **but oh how it changes his disciples** - a moment that was not so much about the description but a revelation of the the Living Word.

**Transfiguration that is Transforming** - for a moment a veil is lifted...and Peter, James and John are encountering something beyond words.

- Jesus so fully human that He glows with the Light of God.
- Jesus walking among the Law and the Prophets - the highest authority they had ever known.
- Jesus more than they had imagined....

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Then Peter speaks... *"It is good (beautiful) for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles..."*

- don't miss what Mark points out in verse 6 they were terrified...
- That word terrified is only used one other time in the book of Hebrews to describe Moses shaking before the presence of God - the word means **'scared literally to death'**...

Peter is saying *'its good...'* but he is terrified of what and his friends are all encountering something beyond their control... **he is actually trying to get a handle on the moment a fix.**

- Peter's words are actually another religious reach for something he has known...
- He knows enough scripture to know the story of God's deliverance that is celebrated by building tabernacles... he knows something is happening and so he is reaching for a response....
- Remember that description of religion - **Certainty - optimism and control...**...that is exactly what Peter is reaching for...
- Then the cloud envelopes them and the Voice proclaims *this is my Son - Listen to Him!*

#### **What are they supposed to listen to?**

- The sermon on the mount, the sermon by the sea....in that moment the point to Peter, James and John - was clear.
- You are convinced of a deliverance that can only come by the power of the sword or by punishing your oppressors...
- In fact you are so convinced that you are 'rebuking' Jesus words about death and resurrection.
- The point is not **'another deliverance'** like in Egypt...
- Peter, James, John - listen to Him who is the Deliverer...
- There is more going on than you can see - more than you have known.

#### **Transfiguration that Transforms their thinking...that invites us to change our mind!**

- Beauty, presence, glory that are not the consequence of their certainty of the law and prophets...Jesus like I had never seen - light, beauty, glory...
- You are the Christ but my goodness more than my greatest imagination of the great military deliverer...
- Walking with Moses and Elijah - Dude - times suspended, this is not how life works...

#### **Listen to Him.... transfiguration that transforms...**

- Maybe this is a bit of what Paul meant when he said we need to be transformed by the renewing of our mind in Romans 12 or 2 Cor 3:18  
*We can all draw close to him with the veil removed from our faces. And with no veil we all become like mirrors who brightly reflect the glory of the Lord Jesus. We are being transfigured into his very image as we move from one brighter level of glory to another. And this glorious transfiguration comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

**So they are instructed not to talk about what they had 'seen' until the Son of Man rose from the dead - the point.**

#### **Listen to Him...interesting if you take a look at each of their epistles...**

- **James 1:25 TPT**  
*But those who set their gaze deeply into the perfecting law of liberty are fascinated by and respond to the truth they hear and are strengthened by it—they experience God's blessing in all that they do!*

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- Peter - 2 Peter 1:16-19 NASV  
*For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such a declaration as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory: "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well pleased"— and we ourselves heard this declaration made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. And so we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the **morning star arises in your hearts.***
- **John** - 1 John 1:1-2  
*What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life— and the life was revealed, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was revealed to us*  
1 John 4:15  
*We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who remains in love remains in God, and God remains in him.*

**Listen to Him...**

And that may not come easy – for Peter, or for us.

- We are people of words. Our tradition is one grounded in the words of Scripture, our worship and our prayers are full of words – good words.

I agree with what Pastor Scott Clark described what I am calling Transfiguration moments;

*You may have experienced times like that in your life, those moments, when there are no words. Moments of awe at a sunset more beautiful than you have ever seen. Moments of loss too deep to speak. Moment of tenderness – a hand to hold when you need it most. Those places where the words run out.*

*There are deep traditions – Christian traditions and beyond Christian traditions – that include in our experience of God and the Holy – space for silence and reverence and awe. The silence beyond words. Prayer beyond our knowing – only our intention to be present with God in response to God's intention to be present with us.*

**Listen to Him...Jesus**

Truth that is bigger than words can convey  
Love that is deeper than our knowing  
Life that is stronger than death...

Listen - and let it transform...how you see everything...  
In that moment there is nothing left to say  
and everything left to live.

**Amen and amen**

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**Transfiguration that Transforms...**

- **Transfiguration the place where our words about Jesus were revealed as incomplete.**
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**Closing Prayer and Communion**

Holy God, mighty and immortal,  
you are beyond our knowing,  
yet we see your glory in the face of Jesus Christ,  
whose compassion illumines the world.  
Transform us into the likeness of the love of Christ,  
who renewed our humanity so that we may share in his divinity,  
the same Jesus Christ, our Lord,  
who live and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit. Amen.