St. Aidan’s Episcopal Church

Proper 13

[2 Samuel 18:5-9, 15, 31-33](https://www.lectionarypage.net/YearB_RCL/Pentecost/BProp14_RCL.html#ot1)[Psalm 130](https://www.lectionarypage.net/YearB_RCL/Pentecost/BProp14_RCL.html#ps1)[Ephesians 4:25-5:2](https://www.lectionarypage.net/YearB_RCL/Pentecost/BProp14_RCL.html#nt1)[John 6:35, 41-51](https://www.lectionarypage.net/YearB_RCL/Pentecost/BProp14_RCL.html#gsp1)

Honor and Glory

I found myself with a bit of dilemma this week. Transfiguration Day was on Friday the 6th and, because it is one of my favorite feast days, one of the ways I love to imagine Jesus, I really wanted it to be today….

But then we’d be out of context with our lectionary for Pentecost and the beautiful Ephesians message from Paul, which contains a phrase that we all know: “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”

Or the lovely description of Elijah receiving strength for the journey. Sustenance from God to keep on keeping on.

So, of course, we will miss the,Exodus story of Moses coming down from mountain Sinai, carrying the tablets with the law, his face shining so brightly that he shielded it with a veil whenever anyone came close. only taking it off when he went back up the mountain to talk to God.

But that’s not all. Most of all we will miss the main story….the story that seems so mysterious that it’s hard to grasp. The story about Jesus, taking Peter, James and John up to the top of a mountain, about where the snow starts to show up, and how the disciples were getting tired and sleepy, but for once stayed awake when they saw Elijah and Moses talking to Jesus who was light itself. Jesus was transfigured by light. Peter tried to make sense of it by calling for some earthly reality, but as soon he’d made his offer to build dwelling places for the holy ones, a great cloud came and the voice of God rang out again, just as they had heard it before…. “This is my beloved Son, listen to Him.”

It’s all just too good to pass up. And why should we. Because in those scripture readings for Transfiguration Day are some of the most profound we’ll ever hear from the heart of Peter himself. Listen to this from Peter’s second letter to the world:

**2 Peter 1:13-21**

“I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to refresh your memory, since I know that my death will come soon, as indeed our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things.

For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received honor and glory from God the Father when that voice was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory, saying, “This is my Son, my Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.” We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven, while we were with him on the holy mountain.

So we have the prophetic message more fully confirmed. You will do well to be attentive to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”

If you want to try to understand scriptures, here is a lesson from a first hand witness of the life and times of Jesus Christ. Peter, who seemed to sense his end was coming, wanted to be sure we hear the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. In short, he’s saying, “I was there, along with a couple of the others, and we made nothing up.

“We saw His glory and heard the voice of God. So we can confirm the prophecy.

“So, pay attention, and keep thinking about this during your entire life. And remember, none of the scriptures comes from some human’s imagination. No prophecy every came into being that way. It came to those who wrote down the scripture who knew what they were talking about and were moved by the Holy Spirit to write it down as the Spirit dictated.”

It is clear that Peter wanted to be sure we understand that what happened on the mountain that day, really did happen. That they weren’t kidding. Because, let’s face it, he was human, too, just like us. He knows that trying to explain something as incredible as what happened to Jesus is a tough sell. It may have happened 2,000 years ago, but life is life, and humanity is humanity, and Peter was no intellectual giant, nor was he stupid. He was like most of us. And any of us can think of a time when we needed to convince somebody else of the truth, no matter how far-fetched it sounded.

There they were on the mountain with Jesus, one minute just walking and talking, perhaps wondering where they would end up, especially since they were getting tired and their feet hurt. But then, there was the same Jesus in glorious light, in such a light that none of them had ever witnessed before. They suddenly realized the holiness of the moment, the holiness of the man, the rabbi, the teacher they had been following and with whom they’d been walking day and night from town to town. The light was so blindingly bright, that they had to peer into it to be sure of what they were seeing. There was no mistaking it. Jesus was transformed before them.

Which leads us to what we’ve heard today and what we know about Jesus and bread and the giving up of himself as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. As usual people are complaining about something, and even Jesus has to put up with explaining the difference between real bread and the metaphor of faith. Whoever is drawn by the Father who sent me, will be raised up on the last day, just as the prophets foretold, “And they shall all be taught by God.”

In other words, Jesus is setting everyone straight. If you have faith in God, you have faith in me. If you know me, you know God. Even if you haven’t seen me but know me and know God you will have eternal life. How do you get that? Take the living bread and live. Don’t merely exist. Don’t exist just to complain or think that all there is to life is to wait for it to happen. Take, eat…..take me in….live…. and be transformed, transfigured, changed from who you are without me, to who you are with me.

Every now and then, we get it, just like Peter. We see it happening to others and, if we’re watching for it, we see it happening in ourselves as well. We see it in the faces of new parents as their child takes his first steps. We see it in the faces of families and friends out picking peaches on a Saturday afternoon, with a little tell-tale juice running down the face of the 6-year old. Sometimes we can see it in the face of a known grump, as the face suddenly softens into a soft smile, as beautiful music to his ears rises up around him. Or, you see it in yourself, watching your feet sink into the sand, the ankle-deep wave leaving you on the beach as it rushes back from where it came, and you try to see it, but it changes before your eyes, and you can never be sure it is the same one that felt so cool and refreshing on your feet. Or maybe you saw it when your team won the cup and you were there with everyone else and you just couldn’t believe it because you were certain your team would lose. The list goes on and you can fill in plenty of blanks. Do you remember when…. It was unbelievable. It was a magic moment I’ll never forget. It was a moment when all the points toward holy peace, joy and love came together. It was a transfiguring, transforming moment. It was so deeply felt, to transcendent, so filled with the breath of life, that it was impossible to sustain. And we wish we could be in that moment for ever.

Yet those moments come and go so quickly, that sometimes we scarcely notice them for what they are. Holy, transfiguring moments.

Like the moment we receive a small wafer….. this is my body…..or a sip of wine….this is my blood. Know me. Know my Father. Know that I am the bread of life, the bread that will transform you from all that you were into shining possibilities that people will hardly be able to believe,

So maybe the scriptures of Transfiguration Sunday and the Eleventh Sunday of Pentecost really do to speak to each other. In our bible studies we often speak about connecting the dots. Perhaps it is a good exercise for us all as we say our prayers, sing our hymns, listen to the lessons, hear the word of Jesus, and as we listen to the words of the Eucharistic prayers….take, eat.

To really walk with Jesus, not just loping along behind him, is to seek out God, see God and be made radiant by God’s honor and glory. Psalm 34 emphasizes the message and connects a dot for us….

Psalm 34

5 Look upon him and be radiant, \*
and let not your faces be ashamed.

Let not your faces be ashamed. Let them be filled with honor and glory, too. Let them radiate joy. Come to God’s table today and look upon Christ. Take in his radiance so that it may be your radiance, too. Taste and see that the Lord is good, happy are those who trust in him.

Let the joy of your encounter with Christ, and the words of one man, Peter, who wants you to know the truth, and witness from the heart of another man, John who wants to convey just who Jesus was, permeate your spirit, so that you might become transformed and transfigured, too.

To experience transformation, allow yourself to be led to the mountain top to encounter Jesus in his Glory. You need only your heart, mind and soul to get you there. But don’t hesitate, the moment will be fleeting, playing tag with your clear thinking, and you will hardly believe what your mortal eyes clearly saw was true.

Amen

Written to the Glory of God

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August 8, 2021