

2 Kings 2:1-12

Mark 9:2-9

2 Corinthians 4:3-6

“The heavens declare God’s righteousness;
for God is judge and does not keep silent.” AMEN!

(Sing!)

“Well, my Savior, he’s alright
Well, my Savior, he’s clean out of sight

Don’t you know that he is,
he’s some kind of wonderful?

He’s some kind of wonderful, yes he is, he’s

Some kind of wonderful, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah

Now is there anybody,
got a sweet little savior like mine?

There’s got to be somebody, got a,
got a sweet little savior like mine

Can I get a witness?
Can I get a witness?”

Mmm!

I know you’ve been wondering,
when’s Pastor Tom ever
gonna sing some “Grand Funk Railroad?”

Today's the day!

Well, sort of... I did alter
the lyrics just a little,
to make the point.

Yes, the point that Jesus is some
kind of savior is true, but so also it is true
that the song call for a witness.

“Can I get a witness?” Amen! And Amen!

The familiar gospel call of preachers
to recognize the power of the witness.

It makes the heart swell and the ears tingle.

This Transfiguration Sunday is our clarion call.

“Loud and clear,” we fall on our knees
at the majesty and awe of Jesus on
the mountain called Tabor.

Today, we bask in that glory.

Today we, like Peter, “don't know what to say”
at this familiar story of awe and
“other-worldliness.”

We wonder, what do we do now?

Those followers of Jesus who were there,
were likely never the same again.

A person changes for the better when
they witness a theophany, that is,
a manifestation of God to humankind.

This text tempts us to explain what
happened and why, but today
we are simply called to be amazed and

not ashamed to **Not** know
what it all meant or means.

They didn't know.

The text said, "They were terrified."

Verse 10, just outside of this assigned reading says,
"They kept the matter to themselves,
questioning what this rising from
the dead could mean."

Amazed, but not knowing.

In awe, but not understanding.

Yet, they were witnesses.

Witnesses to a sweet savior
like yours and mine. (Pause)

In the lesson from 2 Kings,
we also find a people who are
in need of a witness.

That role, for a long time, was held by Elijah.

Our reading began with an announcement
that “the Lord was about to take Elijah up
to heaven in a whirlwind.”

The author wrote the witness and
we wonder what fully means.

Then, three times, Elijah tried to send Elisha away
and each time Elisha replied, “I will not leave you.”

He pledged to keep close to Elijah.

In an expression much like Ruth portrayed to Naomi.

“I will not leave you.
Where you go, I will go. (Pause)

There's a sending away practice
that is still done in Judaism.

If you were to turn up at a synagogue and
say you wish to convert to Judaism,
the rabbi is supposed to send you
away three times.

“No, Judaism is hard, go and do something easier,
like not being Jewish.”

Only if you persist past these three
times of being sent away that they
will prepare you to convert.

There's something quite lovely about that, isn't there?

A faithfulness is revealed and
a persistence to be sure you know
what you're getting into. (Pause)

Elisha won't go away from the hard parts, either.

He wanted to be a witness.

Not only a witness of Elijah's whirlwind
ascent to heaven, but a witness
to the people about who God is and
what God is up to. (Pause)

This faithful God did not leave
the Israelites without a witness.

This faithful God will not leave us without one, either.

But, it's hard to be a faithful witness.

These small "g" gods constantly want us
to take the easy path.

We look around and see the way our
economy is built on such desires of
accumulation and comfort.

Author Lynne Twist names the malignant
effects of "buying" things for comfort.

"Money has only the power we assign to it,"
she writes, "and we have assigned it
immense power.

We have given it almost final authority.

If we were to look only at behavior,
it tells us that we have made money
more important than we are,

[we've] given it more meaning

than [even] human life.

Humans have done and
will do terrible things
in the name of money.

[We've] killed for it, enslaved other people for it,
and enslaved [ourselves] to joyless lives
in pursuit of [more] of it.

At one time or another, we have all
demeaned ourselves for it,
sold-out others for it, taken advantage of
other people in order to get or keep it,

or just engaged in actions that we're
not proud of in order to have the power that
we believe we can buy with it.”

Can I get a witness?!?!

This season is the time to recover.

We enter into Lent, now, leaving behind Epiphany
and we recognize our failings.

But, we also recognize that God does not
leave us without a witness.

In ancient Israel it was Elisha.

On Mt. Tabor, it was Jesus.

Then later it will be Peter and James and John.

Who will be next? (Pause)

Who will be the witness?

The answer is.... all of you!

We are the witnesses to tell others
what God has done.

Even in our questioning and misunderstandings.

We are witnesses.

Even in our failings and worries about
what to say and do.

We are witnesses.

We've done foolish to keep busy,
like Peter who wanted to make three tents.

The church has done many foolish things
when it didn't really know what to say or do.

Today, all we need to remember and to do is

“listen to Jesus,
listen to Jesus,
listen to Jesus.”

In the end, really, when we look around,
we'll not see anyone with us anymore,
but only Jesus.

AMEN!