

“Lord help us to see you and listen to you.” Amen

“I can see clearly now the rain is gone.
I can see all obstacles in my way.
Gone are the dark clouds that had me blind.
It’s gonna be a bright (bright),
bright (bright) sun-shiny day.”

That song written, and performed,
by Johnny Nash achieved success in
the US and the UK in 1972.

It’s ironic that the song came to mind during study of
the Transfiguration of Our Lord.

During a supernatural event that must
have been extremely confusing for
the three disciples who were present with Jesus.

They couldn’t see clearly on the mountain,
when a thick cloud overshadowed them.

They couldn’t see clearly,
but they heard it loud and clear.

They heard from the cloud a voice, and
Peter, James, and John fell to the ground and
were overcome with fear.

If you're like me, when I'm overcome with fear,
I don't see clearly; I don't think clearly.

I'm pretty much in fight or flight mode.

Here's what specifically frightened them:

The two figures, Elijah and Moses,
Old Testament writings told them
that these two encountered God face to face
and lived to tell about it.

Peter, James, and John would have known
that the reappearance of these two meant
that the world was about to undergo
a significant change.

Some OT writings were interpreted that
the end of the world, as it was known,
would be upon them when Elijah returned.

That would have caused fear.

The bright cloud that overshadowed them
while on a mountain would have reminded
them of the time when Moses

met God on the mountain top to receive
the Ten Commandments, as read in Exodus today.

In that event, the appearance of the glory of the Lord

was like “a devouring fire on top of the mountain.”

That would bring fear.

And finally, God’s command in saying
“Listen to Him.”

Reminds me of all the times that
I relied on my own rules or my own selfish
desires and forgot to listen to Jesus.

You know, times when we’d drown his voice with louder,
more attractive voices.

See, we love making decisions that make us happy
and comfortable, while neglecting others.

I might ask for forgiveness but neglect to forgive.

I often pray for God to be generous to me
without being generous to others around me.

So, I’d be afraid of God seeing my unwillingness
to listen to Jesus.

But what would happen if we adjusted our
lives to listen and follow his voice? Hmmm...

Today, marks the end of epiphany season and
next week begins Lent.

The Lenten season lasts 40 days and then it's Holy Week.

So, it's an "epiphany event" in today's reading
that helps us to see, realize, by enlightened by,
just what Jesus is calling us to do.

This event happened on a mountain.

There was fear, but then
Jesus touched them and spoke to them
in a way that gave them confidence.

On Good Friday, the event at the other end of Lent,
we will find Jesus again on a hill.

He will be with two others this time,
he'll be between two thieves/bandits.

And at his death, there'll be an earthquake,
and witnesses of the event will think
Jesus called for Elijah as tombs opened
and stone split.

And then a centurion will say,
"Truly this man was God's Son."

I choke up to think of the power of the moment
and the testimony.

My point is, bookending the season of
Epiphany and Lent is the profession that Jesus

is God's Son, the beloved.

We can trust that his words will direct us
toward living the best life.

A life that connects and benefits others and
in times when we fall down in fear,

Jesus will be there to speak to and for us
and give us confidence. (Pause)

If you've been blessed to be able to go into
the wilderness and lookout
from on top of a mountain,
then you know.

You know it's a place that connects one to God,
but you also know that the time always comes
when you gotta go back down.

Jesus, Peter, James, and John all came
back down from the mountain top experience
to take what happened and then
share it with the world.

We do, too.

We get to stand in awe of God, and
share it with others because we see clearly now
and the obstacles we think are
too big to overcome,

well those obstacles are molehills for God.

God bless those who come down
from the mountain top and spread God's love
to those who couldn't be there.

AMEN!