

Mark 9: 2-8

2 Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, ³and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. ⁴And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. ⁵Then Peter said to Jesus, 'Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.' ⁶He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. ⁷Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!' ⁸Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.

Commentary: From a very everyday environment in which Jesus is teaching and healing we are suddenly transplanted onto a mountain where Jesus is 'transfigured' - his appearance dramatically changed - and his clothes become dazzling white. This testifies to Jesus' righteousness, purity, and heavenly stature. But then even more impressive is the appearance of Moses (representing the law) and Elijah (representing the prophets) who speak to Jesus as to a divine being. Jesus' own mission and ministry is the fulfillment of the law and the prophets. Finally, God's own voice is heard declaring Jesus to be the beloved Son to whom the disciples must listen. What a certificate of authenticity. This event is one of those rare, and therefore significant, occasions in this gospel where Jesus' divinity is confessed. But it is not something everyone witnesses. Only three of the closest disciples are with Jesus and even they don't know what to make of it all. They are overwhelmed and dumbfounded.

It is also no accident that this transfiguration follows upon the turning point in the gospel story where Jesus speaks of his suffering and death. It is telling us that God/Jesus is very intentional in the path being undertaken and that the cross is the path through which genuine liberation toward wholeness (salvation means wholeness) will be opened up.

Have you ever felt awed, even overwhelmed by the presence or movement of God in your life? When has this happened for you? What are the occasions when such experiences are inspired to take place for you?

This time of Covid-19 when we are feeling extra vulnerable, perhaps passing through a kind of cross/death experience of some kind, may be the exact kind of time where the presence and movement of God can become manifest for us and within us. This may be the exact kind of time where we may become that much more attentive and open because things are more urgent, needful and uncertain as we look into the future.

Prayer: You are speaking to us all the time, O God, so why is it that when times are happy and bustling we don't hear you as we do when times are more fearful and uncertain? May we hear what it is you are telling us in this time of our lives, O God and may we commit ourselves to following your beloved one as we pass through this time of cross/death, trusting that new life is on the other side; Amen.