

Worship @ Home
Ripon and Lower Dales
Methodist Circuit
Sunday Feb 14th 2021
The Transfiguration

Call to Worship

Psalm 145

*I will exalt you, my God the King;
 I will praise your name for ever and ever.
 Every day I will praise you and extol your
 name for ever and ever.
 Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise;
 his greatness no one can fathom.
 One generation commends your works to
 another; they tell of your mighty acts.
 They speak of the glorious splendour of your
 majesty – and I will meditate on your
 wonderful works.
 They tell of the power of your awesome
 works – and I will proclaim your great deeds.
 They celebrate your abundant goodness
 and joyfully sing of your righteousness*

Hymn SoF 939

Name of all majesty,
 fathomless mystery,
 King of the ages
 by angels adored;
 power and authority,
 splendour and dignity,
 bow to his mastery,
 Jesus is Lord!

Child of our destiny,
 God from eternity,
 love of the Father
 on sinners outpoured;
 see now what God has done
 sending his only Son,
 Christ the beloved One,
 Jesus is Lord!

Saviour of Calvary,
 costliest victory,
 darkness defeated
 and Eden restored;
 born as a man to die,
 nailed to a cross on high,
 cold in the grave to lie,
 Jesus is Lord!

Source of all sovereignty,
 light, immortality,
 life everlasting
 and heaven assured;
 so with the ransomed, we
 praise him eternally,
 Christ in his majesty,
 Jesus is Lord!
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Prayer

Dear Lord our Heavenly Father,
 We praise you from our hearts and with a
 deep sense of awe we sing of your
 splendour, your power and your majesty. We
 sing of your grace and your mercy and loving
 kindness.
 As we gather remotely to worship this day,
 wherever we are, we know that you are with
 us.
 Dear Lord, meet us in this place.
 Meet us in our place of need and in our place
 of rejoicing.
 Meet us in our place of doubting and in our
 place of assurance.
 Open our hearts and minds to your will and
 your ways and bless us in your holy purpose.
 Amen

Talk

Pt 1

A number of years ago I was invited to
 contribute to an exhibition of work in
 Southwell Minster. I was asked if I would
 design a Stained Glass window based on the
 theme of the Transfiguration.

I started my preparation by looking up and
 reading the passage in question from Mark
 Ch 9, and what an amazing passage. In just
 a few verses he paints a picture and tells the
 story of a most dramatic event. Ten thousand
 words couldn't have done it justice, so the
 writer invites us to fill in the details, to enlarge
 our imaginations, to try and take in the drama
 and impact of this amazing story.

I heard a preacher once say that when he
 reads a bible passage he tries to imagine
 being there – sensing what it was like, the
 sounds, the sights and how it felt.
 I'm going to invite us to do that now as we
 read from Mark's gospel Ch 9 v 2-10

Mark 9² After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them.³ His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them.⁴ And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus.⁵ Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah."⁶ (He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.)⁷ Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!"⁸ Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus.⁹ As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.¹⁰ They kept the matter to themselves, discussing what "rising from the dead" meant.

For the three disciples present – Peter, James and John, this was a moment they would never forget. As I mentioned last time, Peter refers to it in his first epistle as being a key moment in cementing for him who Jesus really is. It will have made a deep impression on John too as it is evident from his writings that he has a deep understanding of the divinity of Jesus.

There are several things that jump out as we read this story. The dazzling appearance of Jesus as he is changed before them; The affirming voice from the cloud and the appearance of the patriarchs; the effect that it has on the three disciples, and also the conversation coming down the mountain – "what did "rising from the dead" mean?", why did Jesus tell them not to say anything?

Many words have been written and spoken about this passage, The symbolism and the transitional place in the gospel storyline as Jesus turns to Jerusalem to move from one Glory to a very different kind of glory.

What I would like us to think about just for a few minutes, is not the story itself, but what comes before and after it. Admittedly the Gospels are not necessarily written chronologically, but the placing is significant,

as Mark flanks the stupendous transfiguring of Jesus by two very ordinary events.

As they come down the mountain they are greeted by a scene of some turmoil. Teachers of the Law are disputing with the remaining disciples. A man had brought his son to be healed and they had been unsuccessful in their attempts. It was all rather messy and a PR nightmare, "O unbelieving generation" says Jesus "how long shall I stay with you?"

On the other side of the mountain top experience is another low moment. Jesus has just told them he must suffer and die and Peter tells him "No Lord that won't happen", and Jesus has to rebuke Peter in no uncertain terms.

All a bit messy really. The glorious mountain top affirmation of Christ is sandwiched by two miserable failings.

But maybe that's the point. The disciples were just ordinary, largely uneducated men, and they had a lot to learn. We have the benefit of hindsight but we still make the same mistakes time and time again. The glory of Jesus was displayed amongst the ordinariness of failure. And that is not to judge, that is the reality.

Song StF 331

King of kings, Majesty
 God of Heaven living in me
 Gentle Saviour, closest friend
 Strong Deliverer, beginning and end
 All within me falls at Your throne

*Your Majesty, I can but bow
 I lay my all before You now
 In royal robes I don't deserve
 I live to serve Your Majesty*

Earth and Heaven worship You
 Love eternal, Faithful and True
 Who bought the nations, ransomed souls
 Brought this sinner near to Your throne
 All within me cries out in praise.

Your majesty ...
 Jarrod Cooper ©1996 Sovereign Lifestyle
 Music

Talk part 2

One of the most common misconceptions about the Christian faith and church, amongst non-believers, is that they are not "good enough" to be a Christian. Maybe that's the impression we give, and if we do maybe we need to learn from that.

We are all flawed and we all mess up. We all "fall short of the glory of God" as Paul reminds us, but he also tells us that "while we were still sinners Christ died for us".

We don't deserve, and under normal circumstances would even hope, to be honoured by the presence of God, but here we are.

In Brazil, towering above the city of Rio de Janeiro high on a rocky outcrop is a colossal figure of Christ.

In it, Jesus stands in his Glory a massive 30 meters tall, and with his arms outstretched 28 meters wide. It dominates the city. No doubt the sceptical will have their own interpretation of the image, but for me I see the glory and magnificence of Christ over the ordinariness of human life. Jesus is present in the hustle and bustle and everyday life of the trading port of Rio de Janeiro, the daily grind, the joys and sorrows, the poverty. And he is very visible and present and he is - the Glorious Christ.

We often say that Jesus accepts us as we are, and we can accept that because he came as a man and shared in our sorrows and disappointments. But we tend to forget, that he also comes to us "as He is". And he is the Glorious Christ.

He doesn't come to us in a watered down version. He isn't a fun sized Jesus. He is no less than he always is. He can be no other. He is the Glorious Christ. The same Christ that was revealed in Glory on that mountain top to his Disciples, is the same Christ who comes and invites us to live with him. He is the same Christ who dwells with us, and in us.

He is the same Christ who transforms us into his likeness.
*2 Corinthians 3:18 says, "And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's **glory**, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing **glory**, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."*

Christ comes complete and uncompromising, Glorious and Suffering, and we share in his Glory as we also share in his suffering. As Paul says in Romans ch8 v17

"Now if we are children, then we are heirs - heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory".

So as we step into Lent this year, let's remember that it is the Glorious Christ we follow, who steps down into our messiness. He is unchanging throughout it all, and he calls us to follow and to be like him in all things.

Poem Transfiguration

*For that one moment, 'in and out of time',
 On that one mountain where all moments meet,
 The daily veil that covers the sublime
 In darkling glass fell dazzled at his feet.
 There were no angels full of eyes and wings
 Just living glory full of truth and grace.
 The Love that dances at the heart of things
 Shone out upon us from a human face
 And to that light the light in us leaped up,
 We felt it quicken somewhere deep within,
 A sudden blaze of long-extinguished hope
 Trembled and tingled through the tender skin.
 Nor can this blackened sky, this darkened scar
 Eclipse that glimpse of how things really are.*
 Malcolm Guite

Prayer

Lord in the quietness of our hearts, open up to us today the reality of your glory.
 A Glory that reflects on the faces of those who turn to you.

Hear our prayer as we turn our thoughts to the needs of the world.
 On this Valentine's day we pray for relationships.

For those who are separated from loved ones in whatever way, though lockdown, through hospitalisation and through bereavement.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

We pray for those who's relationships have suffered though lockdown pressures of finance, self-worth and unemployment.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

We pray for young people, their friendships and relationships under pressure and the natural desire to be together. We pray for their mental health, their self esteem and their plans for the future.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer.**

Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.

Amen.

Song SoF 1542

There is a hope so sure

There is a hope so sure
A promise so secure
The mystery of God
At last made known
Treasures so vast appear
All wisdom, knowledge here
It's Christ in us
The hope of glory!

*And the life that I now live
No longer is my own
Jesus lives in me
The hope of glory
And each day I live
No longer is my own
Jesus lives in me
The hope of glory*

There is a life so true
A life of love so pure
For all our sin
A perfect sacrifice
And when that life was nailed
On cruel cross impaled
Our sinful flesh
With him was crucified

And the life that I now live ...

There is a life so strong
That a whole world of wrong
And all the powers of hell
Could not defeat
For Jesus rose again
And if we died with him
With him we'll rise
To share his endless life

And the life that I now live ...

Graham Kendrick

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Blessing

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you
Wherever he may send you.
May he guide you through the wilderness,
Protect you through the storm.
May he bring you home rejoicing
At the wonders he has shown you.
May he bring you home rejoicing
Once again into our doors.

Graham Pentelow