

I think I mentioned before, that the Transfiguration story appears more than any other Bible story in our lectionary. By my count, I preach on this lesson twice a year.

I know that I've mentioned that the story contains something really important about the realities of our daily living as Christians, something that bears repeating – again and again:

It's contained in the last line of today's lesson, a line, which many who are intent on glitter and glory and appearance often overlook. It says that after witnessing this marvelous transformation, after seeing their companion and teacher Jesus glorified with the heroes of Israel -- after they were exposed to the towering majesty of the chosen one of God, the text says, they came back down off the mountain and went to work.

You know what that's like.

That's like coming here to All Saints and sitting quietly in the sanctuary and being lifted up on the wings of inspiration -- your soul being moved by the spirit of God stirring in this place and in your heart -- walking out the door feeling you've encountered the Almighty -- walking out the door getting in your car and finding the battery dead. Or you leave here inspired to be a better Christian all week, you get home and find that the dishwasher you left running while you were gone has flooded the kitchen, and the dog threw up on the living room rug.

Sometimes it's hard when we get bogged down in the mundane detail of living to remember that we have a higher purpose and a greater calling as Christians. Sometimes it's hard as we walk across the flat plain of everyday life to remember that we were once on a mountaintop -- that we may be there again...

Sometimes we imagine that we were put here on earth to get the next in a series of jobs done or to be on time for the next in an endless series of meetings. We imagine our life's purpose to be the transportation of juveniles (*in every sense of the word*) from one location to another or to clean up an unending series of messes which we did not create or to wash the same pile of dirty clothes week after week. That's not all there is.

We have a higher purpose than that. And that purpose is our own transformation into children of God.

Now, the New Testament Greek word for “transfiguration” appears in the Bible four places. Twice in the gospels describing the event and twice in Paul’s letters, where he talks about the changes one undergoes as a follower of Jesus. One of the places Paul uses that word, is in second Corinthians when he calls upon Christians to grow and change into what God has called us to be.

*"And we all... are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another."* There are some who use the word “formation” to refer to that change in knowledge, attitude and reaction to life that characterizes a follower of Christ.

The actual word used in the original text, is the Greek word, “metamorphosis” a word

surprisingly enough, in current use today – to describe for instance the change from a caterpillar to a butterfly – or the change from an adolescent to an adult.

So in the midst of our obligations and ministries as spouses and as parents and as employees or a members of families and congregations, the story of the transfiguration reminds us that we are also here to become children of God. We are here to be transformed into the image of God by whom we were made. We are here to emulate Christ to gaze upon his majesty and to grow into Christ from Glory to glory. To occasionally climb to the mountaintop and see our lives in a different context.

But nothing's new: I've said all that before, and I'm likely to say it again...

Something else is important about this lesson: It's what God says.

*"This is my son, my chosen, Listen to him."* Listen to him.

Not because he is a good teacher - although he is. Or a miracle worker or a good man -- he's that too. The voice says listen to him because he's God's son. Take him seriously. Don't write him off or explain him away.

When he tells you that love is the path to peace -- and weakness is the path to strength, don't write him off as naive and unrealistic. When he tells you to stop striving for the vain riches of the world and seek the riches of heaven, don't write him off as quaint and other-worldly. When he tells you to love even the neediest of your neighbors as yourself, don't write him off as a liberal.

*"If you would gain your life, you must lose it... You must love your enemies and do good to those who hurt you ... You must pick up your cross daily and follow me.. Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and everything else will be yours as well... This is my chosen, my Son: Listen to him!"*

In his name,

Amen