

How's That Workin' for You?
Transfiguration Sunday
February 11, 2018
Mark 9:2-9
Pastor Dea Sharp, Pikes Peak UMC

Mark 9:2-9 (NRSV)

The Transfiguration

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, 3 and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one[a] on earth could bleach them. 4 And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. 5 Then Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings,[b] one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." 6 He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. 7 Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, "This is my Son, the Beloved;[c] listen to him!" 8 Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.

The Coming of Elijah

9 As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

This is the Sunday that we remember that awesome moment on the mountain top. Jesus has taken Peter, James and John with him, to "be apart" – and remember from last Sunday, how Jesus gets away to have "Sabbath time" to pray and be alone with God.

So, Jesus and the boys are getting away.

And they are having a "mountain top" experience, that's for sure!

Do you ever wonder what it might have been like to BE there!

To the see GLORY really shine through the envelope of Jesus' skin.

Peter and James and John got to see Jesus talking with Moses and Elijah AND witness the divinity of Christ peeking through.

His clothes became whiter than any detergent could make happen.

The GLORY WAS busting out!

The verses that Gretchen read say "his face and clothes" changed....I'm thinking the whole mountain top was aglow!

And then for those disciples to HEAR God's voice, through a cloud saying, "This is my Son, my chosen; listen to him!"

Truly, even after last Sunday's Super Bowl half time show, we can't make enough fireworks and video playback of someone who is dead or sound effects to create such an extravagant scene like the Transfiguration.

The Transfiguration has some throwback to when Moses encountered God on Mount Sinai.

God revealed Himself to Moses and Moses' appearance was changed, remember?

But THIS?

It's not JUST the transformation of a man (named Jesus;) it was the moment when the divinity and glory of God's Son, was exposed.

It was also the revelation of how Jesus ties together (symbolized by Moses and Elijah's presence) the law and the prophets.

Peter, James and John walked up that mountain with Jesus and experienced God in a "YOU can't make this up" way.

How would **you** react if you experienced God in such a way?

Would you be scared? Or excited?

Would you be willing to take a risk that meant changing the course of your life?

And to letting it transform the way YOU are living?

Sometimes I wonder if, because the Transfiguration was SO over-the-top and so unbelievable in the world we're living in, that we just see it as a mysterious story and don't think about the meaning it has in our lives today.

One of my morning devotionals focused, this week, on deliberately watching for the ways God reveals God's self in the course of the day.

See, I believe that God is ALWAYS seeking to do that; to reveal Himself to us and to make his glory known. But, too often, we don't see it.

Friday, Gene and I took our lunch to Mueller state park and took a hike.

As we hiked I was deliberately looking for God to be OH SO apparent.

We stopped in a sun puddle after coming out of the shadows and there was a bird sitting on a branch above my head. I said, "Look at that" and Gene look, but from his

position couldn't find the bird. I used my walking stick to point more accurately and that bird flew over and landed on Gene's arm!

You don't think I was rewarded!?

You don't think I accepted that moment's gift as God revealing God's self to me?!
Breathless and mouth hanging open, YOU GOTTA BELIEVE I DID!

Through time God has revealed Himself to his people.
And the Transfiguration moments were just that, **an encounter** with God.

Peter, James and John walked up to the mountain with Jesus; but once they got there they experienced God in what seemed a mysterious, but very real way.

When Moses came down his mountain, his face was evidence that he'd experienced God in a supernatural, but **also** very real way.

Have you ever experienced God in a real way?

Encounters with God don't always have to seem magical; but they **are** always real.
They don't always have to happen on a mountain top; but THEY DO happen in our everyday lives.

Encounters with God aren't going to always involve ancient Jewish prophets; but they will involve our friends and families and even strangers.

None of us are too old or too young <ARE YOU LISTENING> for an encounter with God to happen!

Encounters with God happen where we're living.

In whatever stage our life is in.

We encounter God random acts of kindness (at times we least expect) from friends **and** strangers.

They're the smile of a child, the ministries of a little church, in laughter **and** in tears.

Whether we recognize it or not, encounters with God happen when we feel that indescribable nudge that is God calling us to be part of something bigger than ourselves.

We are so blessed to have a rich Christian history and tradition.

We can't forget our heritage but we also must embrace that we are Christians who should be living out our faith in the best ways possible.

I think that means we need to be careful not to miss out on opportunities of experiencing God right in front of us.

How would you react if you experienced God that way?

In this new year, it has become ABUNDANTLY apparent to me that God is right here. All through the Epiphany season our Scripture readings have been pointing out to us God's Presence.

It's also abundantly apparent that God is pointing out ways for us to BE church and share our faith in the One who continues to seek us out and love us even when we're not obedient or loveable.

It's not always easy to act out our Christian faith in today's world, but today's world desperately needs us to do just that!

You've been raised up as God's modern day prophets to share about Him!

You don't have to be a "card-carryin'" pastor to be IN ministry!

God has called each of us ordinary people to do extraordinary things every single day.

How does that make you feel?

To know that YOUR life and YOUR ministry is a part of God's Kingdom work and YOU are enabling others to encounter God...not on a mountain top, but right here, right now?

I think we are ripe for MORE; we're *ABSOLUTELY AND ABUNDANTLY* ready for APPARENT encounters that ARE God.

We're going to enter the season of Lent this week.

Our Ash Wednesday service begins the 40 days of being "transformed."

Historically, Lent was the time of preparation of folks who wanted to be baptized into the church.

They went through a transformation.

And we can, too.

Are you willing, as I asked earlier, to take a risk that means change in your life, recognizing that those changes will probably transform the way YOU live.

Let's challenge each other, this Lent, to be transformed by encounters with God.

Let's deliberately pause. Often.

Let's listen more intentionally.

And let's share with each other, AND DARE TO CROSS GENERATIONAL LINES TO talk with each other about the places and times that you have been aware (sometimes breathlessly) "I've just had an encounter God and this is how I felt and what I think God is saying to me."

Today, as we remember the historic moment of the Transfiguration on the mountain top, when the Divine Glory showed through the humanity of Jesus...

When the Law of Moses and the Prophecy of Elijah stood in active participation with the Living Christ...

And the voice of God SPOKE...

And Peter and James and John KNEW that they were part of (even if just by observation) something powerful....

That we remember that God comes and is IN our midst and in very REAL ways.

How will we react when God appears among us?

Maybe the better question is: What's going to happen next?

Thanks be to God!

Amen.