

Transformed  
Luke 9:28-36  
Transfiguration Sunday  
March 3, 2019  
Pastor Dea Sharp, Pikes Peak UMC

**Luke 9:28-36 (NRSV) The Transfiguration**

<sup>28</sup> Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus<sup>[a]</sup> took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. <sup>29</sup> And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. <sup>30</sup> Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. <sup>31</sup> They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. <sup>32</sup> Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake,<sup>[b]</sup> they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. <sup>33</sup> Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings,<sup>[c]</sup> one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah”—not knowing what he said. <sup>34</sup> While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. <sup>35</sup> Then from the cloud came a voice that said, “This is my Son, my Chosen;<sup>[d]</sup> listen to him!” <sup>36</sup> When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.

I’ve just finished Father Gregory Boyle’s second book, Barking to the Choir, which is his follow-up to Tattoos on the Heart which several of you have read. Father “G” continues to tell his story about the gang members he’s working with at Homeboy Industries in the heart of gangland Los Angeles. “Barking to the choir” was a homie’s response to being scolded for something the young man already knew he’d goofed up. I like the kid’s scramble of “barking up the wrong tree” and “preaching to the choir” and was blessed that Father “G” had shared it.

The book is about transformation.

It’s about gang members who are, **because of the love** poured out by staff and leadership at Homeboy Industries (in the form of day-to-day interaction and on-the-job training) ...ultimately those dregs of our society transforms the young men and women and they *become* changed from gun and drug toting gangsters to parents with children who WON’T become gang members and leaders in their new lives; examples to others.

Transformation!

Being changed by love.

What do you think Peter and James and John were after the mountain top experience that Chopper just read for us?

To see GOD had to have changed them.

Their “lights” came on.

The Light was bright enough to “get”!

And for them TO HEAR God’s voice...again!

Jesus had come.

We have followed along, through the church season of Epiphany remembering that:

- The lowly shepherds heard the first announcement when the glory of the Lord covered them in the fields
- The Magi witnessed the *real* King after a bright star led them
- The wedding guests got a gift of the finest of wines for their party
- Jesus *revealed* himself WITH THE VERY SCRIPTURE the listeners *knew* – though not many wanted to believe that he was actually the one they’d been waiting for.
- And the disciples, including the “big three” who are with Jesus in the reading, obeyed – to put out into deeper water and to begin “fish for people.”
- And they were witnesses to Jesus turning conventional thinking upside down with “blesseds” and “woes” AND “loving enemies” and all the ways Jesus loves, by “doing to others as you would have them do to you.”

Today’s reading is the back bookend to the day when many saw Jesus be baptized and had seen the heavens open and head THE voice say THE FIRST TIME (and I still wonder if the voice boomed or whispered) “This is my son.”

People were amazed.

Others were angry.

Some held on just to hope while others left *everything*.

There were differences of people’s reaction but ALL OF THEM WERE CHANGED.

How could they not be?

When we've experienced God's Presence – in words we've read, a song we've heard, someone's treatment of us OR how we **on-autopilot** have treated someone else well, WE ARE changed! We are NOT the same.

Frankly, I don't think there's any WAY to UNKNOW anything we've seen or experienced or participated in!

Ignorance is bliss?

Maybe.

Maybe we don't know we HAVE changed.

But we do.

We have.

Those experiences won't let us remain the same.

Our Bible study group is working through the book Becoming a Romans 12 Christian and we have been challenged (again and again) to surrender to God...that when we offer ourselves, God's best, our changed and upgraded lives, are available.

How could we NOT be changed when we come into contact...when we MAKE CONTACT with God?

Paul's words IN Romans say *"do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – God's good, pleasing and perfect will."* (Rom. 12:2)

I take that to mean that if I, if we, "do good unto others" and especially as we enter the season of Lent with a focused intention TO DO good and work at Jesus encounters – for others AND FOR OURSELVES...**CHANGE IS INEVITABLE.**

I get a lot of church-y correspondence. Believe it or not – I GET A LOT MORE THAN I FORWARD TO YOU. 😊 Really! Some of it crashes my soul on the rocks. But praise God, some of it is the opposite. It lifts me up off the rocks and encourages

me to be transformed – yep, it “renews my mind.” It changes me like the warm light of God’s glory must have changed Peter and James and John.

This week’s email from First UMC in Grapevine, Texas came with this challenge: They were looking for Ten Brave Christians who, just for the month of March are going to:

- meet weekly to pray together for one hour.
- will give two hours a week to God in self-surrender
- will stretch to give God 1/10 of their earnings in self-denial
- will commit to spend 5:30- 6:00 every morning in prayer which is self-control
- And then they will witness for God their experience to others

I cannot wait to get NEXT MONTH’S EMAIL that I pray will share what transformation has happened for those 10 people and the 10 people they tell....and so on.

How could change NOT happen – with that list of deliberate intentions that will surely bring those people into contact with God?

Who can see God and remain the same?

Who can see God and not be forever changed?

And DOES “it” still happen in March 2019?

To see God IS to be changed, but does this kind of change still happen for all people?

Could the same kind of transformation that Jesus’ disciples witnessed and HAD happen to them happen to us?

Their eyes were opened in those moments on the mountain top.

Really opened!

They had already given up *everything* to follow Jesus.

They’d heard him teach.

They’d asked questions (of themselves and of him.)

They’d witnessed miracles!

And then, on that day, they “saw his glory.” THAT was their high-impact transformation – when their eyes were opened and they saw Jesus’ true appearance, the Glory of the Divine shined through. They SAW **THE GLORY!**

They couldn’t un-see what they had witnessed.

Reality had been peeled back and they got to see a glimpse of the Kingdom of God. They were changed.

How could they not be?

And you know what’s more?

In the verses right after this experience, when they came down the mountain, but hadn’t had a chance to tell anyone else (let alone process it all for themselves) they were immediately confronted by a man whose son had been seized by an evil spirit and the demon threw the kid to the ground!

But Jesus was unfazed.

He “rebuked the spirit,” Scripture says, healed the young boy, and returned him to his father, “and all were amazed at the greatness of God.” (Lk. 9:42-43)

Now THEY (others) had seen God and their lives were changed.

How could they not be?

To finish up, I’m gonna “bark” to the choir – and since y’all were part of the choir’s introit earlier THAT CHOIR includes YOU....

Think on these things:

Like the “homies” at Homeboy and Homegirl Industries in the book I told you about....

...like the multitudes of people who were witnesses to the Kingdom of God breaking through as Jesus Christ walked on Earth...

...like the disciples who couldn’t quite recognize the true identity of Jesus until he was transfigured before their eyes....

...we too are forever changed when we do the SEEMINGLY unthinkable task of stepping away from the things of the world and seek, instead, to be transformed by God.

Changed forever.  
How could we not be?