

February 14, 2010 Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Hermosa, SD

Exodus 34:29-35; Psalm 99; 2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2; Luke 9:28-43

Transfiguration Sunday

People on vacation, to get away, retreats to find solitude/prayer

Story @ my solitude retreat – I went w/a whole bag of things to do to help me relax, etc.: knitting, books to read, ministry ideas to work on . . .

What did I end up doing? I napped. I read a bit (a novel). I napped. I knitted (well, I only learned how to cast-on). I napped. I walked. I napped. I relaxed (napped). And I did a tiny bit of ministry work.

I went to the woods to get away from things (well, and we were also weaning Corban), to relax, to have solitude, to hopefully have an amazing transformation experience in the cabin in the woods by my self. I arrived on a Sunday evening and by Monday morning I was lonely, so I ventured to the retreat center's lodge to talk with someone.

I went to the woods with a plan of how I wanted God to approach me and how I should spend my time. Instead, I ended up doing what my body needed – resting, and what I needed to be reminded of by God – it's good to go away alone to rest/pray, but you finally have to leave the woods and get back to life.

Jesus was forever making people go places with him that nobody much wanted to go. This is different. Mountains are good, quiet, restorative places for Sabbath, retreat, rest and renewal. Their ministry had been so hectic lately and now it was time for them to head to the hills. On the mountain, everything changes. If they went up the mtn to find themselves, forget it. If they had thought that they were going up to pray and prayer was a good way to get away from it all – they were mistaken. The disciples' solitude is intruded by two dead people!

For an hour every week, we disengage from our daily routines and we come hoping to meet Jesus. But whose Jesus do we get? The Jesus we get, from our wonderings, is too often the Jesus we want before we even began our quest to answer the question, "Who is Jesus?"

There's got to be a distinction between the Jesus we want and the Jesus we need. The Jesus we need is the one who's able to stand vs. us in order to stand w/us, the one who is enough like us to be w/us, enough unlike us to redeem us.

So here we are, on the mtn. This is where the confrontation occurs between the Jesus we WANT and the Jesus We NEED. Jesus is dramatically transfigured before them. Dazzling white. For a moment on the mtn, the veil is pulled back and the disciples see Jesus' glory. And this mountain is just a moment on a journey. He's on his way to different places. Are we ready to listen to him?

We stand on the edge of the season of Lent, when Jesus resumes his journey to the cross. On the way there will be opposition, betrayal, resistance, cruelty and death. Are we willing to listen to THAT Jesus for the next 40 days? Are we willing to follow THAT Jesus down the mtn? On the mtn, Jesus was transfigured. Yet, he hadn't really changed,; who he was finally was revealed in a new way to his disciples. On the mtn Jesus was transfigured. Yet, in a strange way, so were those disciples. They saw who they were as Jesus' followers. The glory we see in Jesus is the glory reflected in his disciples. That means that glory is reflected in you.

“This is my Son, my chosen. Listen to him.”

That listening transforms us. We see not only that Jesus is God's own son, but that we are his disciples that listen to him.

Can you hear him?

Helpful Resources

- *After the Transfiguration* – poem by Kathy Coffey
- *Dazzling Darkness* – a sermon by Barbara Brown Taylor
- *Come on down* – a sermon by William H. Willimon
- Background material and exegetical work – Brian Stoffregen