

Shine!
2.26.17

Matthew 17:1-9 New Living Translation (NLT)

17 Six days later Jesus took Peter and the two brothers, James and John, and led them up a high mountain to be alone.² As the men watched, Jesus' appearance was transformed so that his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as light.³ Suddenly, Moses and Elijah appeared and began talking with Jesus.

4 Peter exclaimed, *"Lord, it's wonderful for us to be here! If you want, I'll make three shelters as memorials—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."*

5 But even as he spoke, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, *"This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy. Listen to him."*

6 The disciples were terrified and fell face down on the ground.

7 Then Jesus came over and touched them. *"Get up,"* he said. *"Don't be afraid."*

8 And when they looked up, Moses and Elijah were gone, and they saw only Jesus.

9 As they went back down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, *"Don't tell anyone what you have seen until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."*

Leader: The Word of God for the People of God.

People: Thanks be to God.

Shine!

Passage begins..."Six days later..." what happened a week earlier?

Chapter 16 - important events, conversations between Jesus and Disciples.

- 1) Jesus and Disciples were at Caesarea Philippi. *"Who do people say I am? What's the word about Me?" "John the Baptist" "Elijah" "Jeremiah" "one of the prophets" "Who do YOU say that I am?"* Silence. Didn't know. Afraid of being incorrect. Peter replied. *"You are the Messiah. The Christ. The son of the loving God."* Jesus: *"You are right, Simon! From now on you will be called the Rock. and on this Rock I will build My church."* (Matthew 16.13-16) And from that point on, Jesus began to prepare His followers for the coming suffering, death and resurrection. He clearly tells them that "he would suffer... be killed, ..(and) be raised from the dead." (Matthew 16.21)
- 2) Jesus talks with Disciples about the Cost of Discipleship. *"If any want to be My followers, deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Me."* (Matthew 16.24) Cost of following Jesus. Price to pay for being a Disciple. Wasn't like joining a club.

Matthew 17 - Six days later....Jesus takes PJJ up the mountain. Not sure why He didn't anyone else. He took PJJ. no known reaction. No big deal. He often went up mountain to pray. Part of Jesus' routine.

Notice something amazing. Jesus' face, clothes - bright as sun. dazzling white.

Exciting, amazing, frightening. Puzzling.

Notices two others. Moses and Elijah. Law and Prophets. Talking.

Peter blurts: *I have great idea. Build three shrines, shelters, tents...one for each of you. You can stay and visit and catch up.*

Jesus does not respond.

CLOUD envelopes mountain.

VOICE. *"This is My son. IN Him I am Well pleased. Listen to Him."*

Frightened Disciples. Hid in fear. They had just experienced the Hall of Fame and felt like they were in the Field of Dreams. Suddenly the Field of Dreams turned to your Worst nightmare. Terrifying to them.

Hid faces. Hope to wake up from nightmare. Then they Felt someone touching them. Nudging them.

"Get up. Don't be afraid. Can't stay. Go to where the people are. We have work to do."

They opened eyes. And only Jesus was there. Moses and Elijah were gone. Deathly silent. Jesus broke silence (and spoke) on the way down mountain.

"Say nothing about what you have seen until after Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

"There He goes again, talking about death. And rising from the dead. Why is He talking such nonsense."

When they go to the valley, Jesus was greeted by throng of people in need. Healing, touch, miracles. Went from mountain of glory to valley of despair, pain, suffering, sin and evil. Mountaintop to reality.

Purpose? Meaning?

One idea:

Significance of the Transfiguration -

"The transfiguration is ... a focal point in the revelation of the kingdom of God...it looks back to the OT and shows how Christ fulfills it, and it looks on to the great events of the cross, resurrection, ascension and parousia." (New Bible Dictionary, 2nd edition, © 1962, The Inter-Varsity Fellowship; Inter-Varsity Press, Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, Wheaton, IL, Editor, JD Douglas; Transfiguration, p. 1212,)

Another idea:

This happened to be what Jesus wanted to reveal to these disciples at this time. Their lives could be touched and transformed as well.

Purpose -

“The purpose of the transfiguration is primarily for the three disciples.”

Whereas at Jesus’ baptism, the Voice spoke words of affirmation to Jesus (“You are My beloved Son, in You I am well pleased.” - Matt 3.13-17), the Voice at the Transfiguration spoke to the three disciples (“This is My Son, listen to Him.” - Mark 9.7). (Harper’s Bible Dictionary, Paul J. Achtemeier, General Editor, © 1985, The Society of Biblical Literature, Harper Collins Publishers, NY. Transfiguration, p. 1092)

Still another perspective:

What Happened -

Two basic understandings of the Transfiguration of Jesus:

- 1) It is the Son of God (Jesus’ Divinity) breaking through Son of Man (Jesus’ humanity) “The Word became Flesh”. (John 1.14)
- 2) “It is a glimpse of the glory of the Son of God at His parousia (return).” (II Peter 1.16-18) (Harper’s Bible Dictionary, Paul J. Achtemeier, General Editor, © 1985, The Society of Biblical Literature, Harper Collins Publishers, NY. Transfiguration, p. 1092)

One more thought:

Not to focus on Transfiguration or transformation at all, but what happened later.

Disciples freaked out at all of this.

They hid their faces.

Jesus: *“Get up. Don’t be afraid. We can’t stay here. Need to go back to valley. Where people are. Valley of sin, suffering, pain, evil.”*

Have you ever been Paralyzed by Fear?

moments when you could barely think, move or make a decision.

Maybe the transfiguration is a time when you are receiving a call a new direction in life or ministry. Maybe some personal Transformation? New opportunities awaits?

Maybe, like the disciples, you are experiencing, pain of self doubt?

May you need to hear Jesus’ words: *“Get up. Don’t be afraid. Go where the people are.”*

What is God calling us as a congregation to do and be?

Maybe we need to experience transformation.

We’ve been here for over 100 years. At this point, we may be Tempted to hide our faces and cover our eyes and not notice the needs around us.

Homelessness, joblessness, drug, substance abuse, addictions, crime, injustice, oppression, prostitution...

Things going on that we don’t want to know about. Want to close eyes, hide faces. We may be tempted to Avoid leaving mountain top and going to the valley.

In church, we experience Glory of God.

We worship Lord in beauty of Holiness.

Love singing our praises to God.
Hearing great music lifting us up to presence of God.
Joy of baptism and communion. We love it.

But We can't stay here.
We Need to go where people are.
It's like a mountaintop experience.
We don't want to leave the mountain. But we can't stay here.

Where is God calling us?

Great Invitation -

Respond to be disciples

Invites others.

Share faith with others.

Are you willing to accept invitation of our Lord to follow from the mountaintop to valley?

Willing to enter the places where people are > sin, suffering, pain, evil.

Where it is dark, dreary, hopeless.?

I Invite you to join us for Holy Lent.

We will explore the vows of baptism.

Explore our calling as baptized believers.

"Get up. Do not be afraid. Can't stay here. Go to the valley where people are. Work to be done!"

Come and See. Come and follow.

Be Salty. Be bright. Be the presence of Christ wherever you go. Be a disciple who brings out the best in others.

Live differently because you follow the Spirit of the law.

Live in such a way that you invite others to be disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Wherever you go, Shine! Shine the light of Christ wherever you are!

Bring hope, peace. Light. Love. And SHINE! AMen.