

A Sermon by The Reverend Deacon Cecily Sawyer Harmon

St. Thomas's Church, Newark Delaware 19711

Transfiguration Sunday Epiphany Year B, February 11, 2018

2 Kings 2:1-12; Psalm 50:1-6; 2 Corinthians 4:3-6, Mark 9:2-9

May the Words of my Mouth and the Mediations of my heart be acceptable to you Lord Christ my Rock and My Redeemer?

The Transfiguration is always read on the last Sunday of Epiphany, preparing us for Lent and Jesus ministry as he journeys to Jerusalem and the cross.

Our Lord understands he is to be rejected, denounced and that he will be put to death, but what about the disciples? Will they understand what is to come, and how will they continue, how will they move on?

Jesus knows that he must make them ready, he must prepare them for the eventuality and reality that there is a glory that death can surpass.

As we heard in Mark Jesus takes Peter, John and James to a high mountain where they can be alone, as he will reveal to them what is to come.

A high mountain will provide them with privacy and it also symbolizes a closeness to God as mountains are places of divine revelation. We recall Moses would go into the mountain to speak with god and it was on the mountain where he received the Ten Commandments. The mountains and its beauty and the views which one can see speak to many of us in a special way.

I remember my eldest son telling me when I asked him about attending church that when he went skiing and was on top of the mountain that he was with God. (he lives in Colorado) He now has Shabbat every Friday and belongs to a Torah and beer group and continues regularly to be with God at the top of a mountain.

For Peter, John and James on this mountain they were to witness a miracle. They look at Jesus and see a light brighter than anything they have ever seen as Jesus is transfigured before them. They can't believe what they are seeing, Elijah and Moses are there also, and they are talking with Jesus. What do you think these three are thinking? they must be dumb struck, frightened, not believing what they are seeing, they are so taken by the display of God's glory

Our brother peter in his zest and inability not to say something suggest that they build three booths for Jesus, Elijah and Moses. These booths are built

during the harvest festival. Peter is thinking he can prolong this experience. He is not ready or able to accept the Lord's suffering which is to come. We folks of today wanting to capture this moment might have run to get our cell phones for a quick selfie with the three or taken a video on our cell phone for prosperity.

For some of us we have come to the realization that there are experiences in life that are the most significant cannot be preserved through pictures or shrines, deep experiences are lived in the moment and are cherished in our hearts and our souls.

Jesus tells the three as they come down the mountain not to disclose what they have witnessed until after his death and resurrection, it is then they will be able to realize what they have witnessed on the mountain.

As children of Christ who came down from the mountain transfigured we like the disciples are to pick up the mantle as Elisha picked up Elijah's and go into our broken world, go to our communities, go out of these pews and out our two red doors into the valleys of a suffering world, where there is hunger a world where there is greed, war indifference and intolerance of one another and be the face of God to our brothers and sisters.

Yes, Jesus expectations are that as his followers we like the disciples are transfigured to continue and do his ministry.

I would like to take a minute to share my thoughts about the celebration for the Eagles and how a team of 52 plus individuals came together against adversity and skepticism to make it to their mountain top, not only for themselves but for many others, and the City of Philadelphia. These men prayed together, supported and loved one another as family. We heard most of them who spoke say, that “All the glory goes to God” The Eagles brought together over two million people in a positive, loving, caring manner for a celebration. God’s children, all ages, religions, races, and ethnicities. We so needed this sign of togetherness. We know that several of the players have spent time and shared and will share their resources with those who are in need, they have decided to follow Jesus.

There is so much work for us to do to live into Becoming a Beloved Community. This is what our Presiding Bishop Michael Curry has asked of all of us, as we are followers of Jesus. Becoming a Beloved Community is a journey, a set of interrelated commitments around which Episcopalians may organize our efforts

to respond to racial injustice and grow a community of reconcilers, justice makers and healers.

We will discuss this at General convention and you can read more about this and how you might participate on the Episcopal Church Website.

We come to here to this place to be with family to hear the word of Jesus to his people in the reading of the Gospel. We come here for the sacraments of his body and blood to strengthen us to fortify us to be his feet, his eyes his hands a to a hurting world. We have decided to follow Jesus.

I have decided to follow Jesus I have decided to follow Jesus, I have decided to follow Jesus, No turning back no turning back. 3X

Amen