

“The wise still seek Him”

A sermon by the Rev. Frances Savill
Sunday February 23, 2020

Matthew 5:38-48

2 Peter 1:16-21

When I was a young person I went to camp, and I had a casual belief in God, a general generic god, but then I met God face to face, through the power of the Holy Spirit and my life was transformed.

In three months I will celebrate 28th anniversary of my ordination.

I was ordained on May 24, 1992.

And so it has been about 33 since I was struggling with my call to ministry.

My plan was to become a better educated lay person.

I wanted to learn more about the Bible, lead youth groups, teach Bible studies; help in the church.

But God called me – I didn’t hear God the way I hear you, but as I prayed, as I listened, as circumstances around me changed, God gave me a desire and opened doors, and made the path clear to Mark and to me.

And over my life there have been times, moments, when the power and glory and presence of God has

touched me and overwhelmed me, and I have known God more fully.

These moments are gifts, I can't make them happen, I can't manipulate them to be at my command or request, but as I worship, as I come humbly, honestly, usually in brokenness to God, Jesus reveals himself to me.

And I am remade.

This book, this Bible, is filled with accounts much more powerful and significant than mine.

Our passage from 2 Peter has Peter remembering Jesus' transfiguration on the mountain.

He says; ***“We saw it with our own eyes; Jesus resplendent with light from God the Father as the voice of Majestic Glory spoke: “This is my Son, marked by my love, focus of all my delight.” We were there on the holy mountain with him. We heard the voice out of heaven with our very own ears. We couldn't be more sure of what we saw and heard- God's glory, God's voice.”***

Peter tells those he is writing to that the event on the mountain was a preview of what is to come; Jesus' return in power.

Jesus' transfiguration on the mountain, when for a moment his eternal glory was revealed, is a

preview of the day that is still to come when Jesus will return in power.

Can you imagine being Peter, having been on the mountain with Jesus, seeing his glory, hearing the voice of God speak, just for a moment?

And Peter says that is just a preview of what is to come when Jesus returns – his glory forever on display.

Peter, held on to that day and it became a light for his path, it became a touchstone during the trials and difficulties, and he urges his people saying: “You’ll do well to keep focusing on this prophetic Word of God written in the Bible and confirmed by first hand witnesses. You’ll do well to keep focusing on it.

It’s the one light you have in a dark time as you wait for daybreak and the rising of the Morning Star in your hearts.”

Keep focused on Jesus, keep focused on the witness of the Bible, it is the one light you have in a dark time.

Those are also the words God spoke to Peter on the mountain top.

“This is my beloved Son, focus of my delight. Listen to him.”

Listen to Jesus.

Have you ever noticed that our spiritual growth generally doesn't happen in a straight line?

Most of what we learn spiritually happens as a result of life putting us in a need to know or a need to grow situation.

Need to know moments happen when we find ourselves in a predicament where we need to know God's viewpoint on an issue we've never dealt with before.

Need to grow moments are often accompanied by a tough trial or a stretching experience.

Whatever the trial or difficulty it calls for a deeper and more obedient walk with God.

What was once just theory or an interesting word of God, becomes part of our lives.

How do grow in patience?

Have many difficult situations where your patience is tested.

Often we have to fail, or reach the end of our patience – and then God teaches us again another day, a different situation.

Focusing on Jesus, dwelling on his word, thinking deeply about his life, his death, his resurrection and his return in glory, his teachings, and his actions, allows these words to become part of us.

Then the Holy Spirit can work, calling these words to mind, teaching us how to live them today in those ***Need to know or need to grow moments.***

When do you finish with the lesson of growing in patience? (never- or at least not until you are perfect like Jesus).

And until that day comes we need to be anchored to Jesus, to his word, and to remember those moments when he has spoken to you, when your faith has been increased, when the Holy Spirit touched your life until that day when Jesus returns in glory.

Jesus said to Peter:

“Anyone who intends to come with me has to let me lead. You’re not in the driver’s seat; I am.

Don’t run from suffering; embrace it.

Follow me and I’ll show you how.

Self-help is no help at all.

Self-sacrifice is the way, my way to finding yourself, your true self.

What kind of deal is it to get everything you want but lose yourself? What could you ever trade your soul for?

Don’t be in such a hurry to go into business for yourself. Before you know it the Son of Man will

arrive with all the splendor of his Father, accompanied by an army of angels. You'll get everything you have coming to you, a personal gift. This isn't pie in the sky by and by . Some of you standing here are going to see it take place, see the Son of Man in kingdom glory.

Six days later, three of them Peter, James and John saw that glory as they marched up the mountain with Jesus and he was transfigured before them.

Hold fast to these words, hold fast to the faith that has been given you.

Prayer:

God of grace, we live in a world of darkness; we live in a confusing world where many voices call to us. But help us to hold fast to you. Anchor us to those times when you have touched our lives and revealed yourself to us and we have glimpsed your glory. Help us to listen to Jesus, to cling to his words and his ways that bring life. Bring his word and actions and example to life in front of us that we would listen deeply to him.

We pray in Jesus' name who is returning soon.

Amen