

The Cross and the Glory
A Sermon by Rev. Frances Savill
Sunday December 11, 2022

Luke 9:28-44

It was a wondrous day when Jesus, Peter, James and John went up the mountain. They went with Jesus to pray.

Prayer is foundational to our Christian life.

Jesus took these disciples away from the crowds, away from the demands, away from the noise and together they climbed up the mountain.

In contemporary society, our Adversary majors in three things: noise, hurry and crowds. If he can keep us engaged in "muchness" and "manyness", he will be satisfied. Psychiatrist Carl Jung once remarked, "Hurry is not of the Devil; it is the Devil." If we hope to move beyond the superficiality of our culture, including our religious culture, we must be willing to go down into the recreating silences, into the inner world of contemplation." (Richard Foster Celebration of Discipline p. 15)

Jesus went down into the recreating silence of prayer as he climbed up the mountain. Jesus often withdrew, he went out at night, he climbed a mountain, he found a lonely place, away from the noise and demands, to hear the voice of God.

On the mountain there's time to think, time to pray. Some of you need some mountain time, whether it's a walk in Laurier Woods, or close the door to the bathroom and soak in the tub. You need silence, time away, time to hear God.

Jesus' last conversation with his disciples had been a difficult one. Jesus said, "It is necessary that the Son of Man proceed to an ordeal of suffering, be tried and found guilty by the religious leaders, high priests, and religion scholars, be killed and on the third day rise up alive."

Then he spoke of taking up their own crosses daily and following him. And finally, that some of them would see the kingdom of God.

Eight days had passed. Mountains are places of revelation, a place where God is heard, where messages are received for the journey ahead.

While Jesus was in prayer his appearance was transformed. Jesus' glory, the glory that was his from before the beginning of time, the glory that he shared with his heavenly Father, was revealed.

Then suddenly Moses and Elijah were present – glorified also. Moses spent 40 days and nights on the mountain, he came down with the ten commandments.

Elijah, a great prophet of God, had hidden on a mountain once, waiting to hear God's word to him. When God finished speaking to Elijah, God had given him a plan. Elijah went down the mountain with two kings to anoint, a disciple to call. God gave him a plan.

As Jesus was transfigured, as his appearance was changed, the disciples saw the truth that Jesus is the eternal Son of the Father.

But then a cloud came and overshadowed them. The voice from the cloud said: "This is my Son, my Chosen, listen to him!"

When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. Jesus was the message. There was no other plan given, no law or command given, no other utterance to call the people back to God.

The word given on the mountain was Jesus. The revelation given was Jesus. What was revealed was Jesus.

Jesus and disciples walked down the mountain together. Jesus' words of challenge to the disciples down in the valley was for them to take up their

crosses and follow him. He called them to a new way of life – where giving up your life is the path to finding it.

This won't be a path we'll walk in our own strength, and it won't be our natural inclination. If we seek to walk in a way that is right in our own eyes, we'll surely miss the path of the cross and the way of our Saviour.

This morning we are in the third Sunday of Advent.

We are getting ready to celebrate Christmas, that Jesus was born Emmanuel, God with us. As we read the gospel, we contemplate all that meant, that Jesus came to enter all of who we are, He enters our darkness and the worst of who we are, to redeem and change and transform us - to bring light and life.

If we are going to take up our crosses and follow Jesus, we need to be people of prayer – people who retreat with Jesus to the mountain top – and see His glory revealed.

Where do you glimpse God's glory?

Christmas services, worship week by week, times away in prayer, are some of the places I consistently catch a glimpse of our Lord's glory.

And finally, we need to *listen to Him*.

We must be deeply attentive to Jesus - to learn His ways, to be led by His Holy Spirit, to fix our eyes firmly on Him.

Let us pray:

Holy God, as Christmas approaches, we thank you that Jesus came to enter the darkness of our world to bring light.

Thank you that you transform us as we come to you in prayer. We praise you that Jesus is the message we are to listen to. May we catch a glimpse of Jesus' glory that we might have the courage to walk with Him towards the cross and may He be glorified and worshipped on the mountain and in the valleys and in this place. Amen.

Luke 9:28-44 The Message

28 Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray.

29 And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning.

30 Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him.

31 They appeared in glory and were speaking about his exodus, which he was about to fulfill in Jerusalem.

32 Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep, but as they awoke they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him.

33 Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us set up three tents: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah," not realizing what he was saying.

34 While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were terrified as they entered the cloud.

35 Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my Son, my Chosen listen to him!"

36 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.

37 On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd met him. **38** Just then a man from the crowd shouted, "Teacher, I beg you to look at my son; he is my only child.

39 Suddenly a spirit seizes him, and all at once shrieks. It convulses him until he foams at the mouth; it mauls him and will scarcely leave him.

40 I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not." **41** Jesus answered, "You faithless and perverse generation, how much longer must I be with you and put up with you? Bring your son here."

42 While he was being brought forward, the demon dashed him to the ground in convulsions. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. **43** And all were astounded at the greatness of God.

While everyone was amazed at all that he was doing, he said to his disciples,

44 "Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into human hands."

This is the word of the Lord.