

Daily Discipleship

Transfiguration of Our Lord (A) – Matthew 17:1-9

Discipleship: *Following God's Beloved*

Focus Question: *How can a person show love towards God's Beloved?*

word of life

“While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, ‘This is my Son, the Beloved, with him I am well pleased; listen to him!’”

Matthew 17:5 (NRSV)

Read Matthew 17:1-9

The text for Transfiguration Sunday describes the transformation of the human figure of Jesus while on the mountaintop. Jesus is not alone when this happens. He has taken the inner core of his disciples – Peter, James, and John.

Mountains in the Old Testament are the place where people encounter the presence of God. Perhaps the best known example is Moses receiving the Ten Commandments on Mt. Sinai. (Exodus 24:12-18) Thus, for Peter, James, and John to be taken along with Jesus to the mountain is quite impressive. They witness Jesus being transfigured. His face shines like the sun and his clothing becomes white. But more than that, Moses and Elijah appear.

1. *Describe this scene in your own words.*
2. *What would it have been like to be with Peter, James, and John to witness this?*

Moses and Elijah are two of the most well-known persons from the Old Testament, representing the law and the prophets. Peter does not know what to do, so he speaks. It might have been a better option to be quiet and humbly witness this scene. But Peter is known for jumping into a situation and blurting out his first thoughts. He states how good it is for all of them to be there and proposes to make shelters for Moses, Elijah and Jesus. Peter thinks they will remain on the mountaintop for a while.

Instead, the situation builds to a greater climax as God's voice is heard. The words are similar to those spoken at the baptism of Jesus. (Matthew 3:13-17) Jesus affirms the identity of Jesus as God's own Son and the Beloved. God is still well-pleased with Jesus, but God adds something new. God instructs those disciples on the mountain and disciples of all times to listen to Jesus.

3. *How does repeating these words reinforce the words spoken at baptism?*
4. *What is the impact of adding new words?*

It is not surprising for the disciples to be overcome with fear, but Jesus attempts to calm them by offering these words, “Get up and do not be afraid.” (Matthew 17:7 NRSV) By the time they look around, they see only Jesus. It is unclear how much time the disciples spent prostrate on the ground.

5. *What might have gone through the minds and hearts of the disciples?*
6. *How did fear block their experience?*
7. *Is there anything the disciples could have done once they were filled with fear?*

When they came down from the mountain, Jesus instructs the disciples not to tell anyone about the events they witnessed until after the Son of Man has been resurrected. That is quite a request. Some people need to talk about their experiences to find meaning and a certain level of understanding, yet Jesus knows none of these events will make sense until after he has been crucified and raised from the dead.

word among us

Timmy never thought he would get married. He would date someone and find himself bored in the relationship. It made him quite sad, but Timmy realized it was his own problem. He knew these women were fantastic. At some point, he gave up searching for the perfect love of his life and devoted himself to his work. He knew his work would never fail to intrigue him.

Then one day he met Claire. She seemed to sparkle. They began to date and to build a relationship. This time Timmy made more of an effort, but one day he realized being with Claire took no effort. He waited for that awful feeling of boredom to descend, but it never came. Timmy knew he had found something very special and would not take their relationship for granted. He treated their relationship with tender care and acknowledged Claire as a rare gift in his life. In fact, he often referred to Claire as “my beloved” and continuously sought ways to share his love with her.

1. *What does it feel like to be the object of someone’s love?*
2. *Is it comfortable for you to be the object of someone’s love? How so?*

As long as Suzie could remember, she always wanted a Mustang convertible. Finally, she could afford to buy one. That car became “her beloved.” She hung pictures of the car in her office and spent most of Saturday keeping it cleaned and polished.

3. *What other objects can become the focus of love?*
4. *What would you want to say to Suzie?*

God makes it clear about the object of God’s love. God loves Jesus, regarding him as God’s Beloved. Simply put, God is well pleased with Jesus. God wants people to know Jesus and especially to listen to him. God is quite direct. “Listen to him!” (Matthew 17:5 NRSV) Those direct words spoken by God become an important reminder about setting priorities. God desires people to know Jesus, the one whom God loves and with whom God is well-pleased. In a world filled with distractions, it is helpful to be reminded of this One worth listening to.

5. *How might we listen to Jesus through worship?*
6. *How might we listen to Jesus in our personal devotions and prayer?*
7. *How might we listen to Jesus through the conversations with others?*

It is not always easy for a parent to let go of a beloved child as the child encounters new experiences such as first grade, high school, or college. Hopefully the parent’s love grounds their beloved child and helps guide them in making wise decisions. As a loving parent, God sent Jesus into our world, knowing it would be a difficult journey. God supported Jesus as he lived among us, encountered rejection, and even as he faced death on the cross. God’s love for Jesus did not waver. Through God’s love for Jesus, we encounter God’s love for us.

8. *How do you show love towards God’s Beloved?*
9. *How else might you do so?*

Prayer

Christ, help me to listen to you. Continue to claim me and keep me close. Help me to show my love toward you in all that I do and am. Amen

Dig Deeper

Exodus 24:12-18

last word

Today, find a way to show your love towards God’s Beloved.



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