

2/15/26

Transfiguration

For Group Meetings from February 8th – February 14th

OUR MISSION: As a missional congregation we *celebrate* Christ's presence, *invite* people into a growing relationship with Jesus, and *equip* them to *serve* in a broken world.

Prayer of the Day: O God, in the transfiguration of your Son you confirmed the mysteries of the faith by the witness of Moses and Elijah, and in the voice declaring Jesus your beloved Son, you foreshadowed our adoption as your children. Make us heirs with Christ, and bring us to enjoy its fullness, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

BIBLICAL EQUIPPING TOGETHER:

Share: How did last week's scripture (Matthew 5:13-20) work in your life this week?

Mission:

- What was most satisfying about your ministry last week?
- Where do you see God at work?
- How did you participate in God's missional activity?
- How did inviting go last Sunday?

Hear: Matthew 17:1-9

Explore Questions: (Use these or develop your own.)

1. How did the disciples respond to seeing Moses and Elijah? How did they respond to God's voice?
2. What changes about Jesus' appearance? What details does Matthew emphasize?
3. What was Jesus telling the disciples not to be afraid of?

Connect Questions: (Use these or develop your own.)

1. When have you experienced an awe-inspiring moment?
2. When have you been transformed? What or who helped your transformation?
3. What is your most intense experience of God's presence in your life?

Memorize this verse: "But Jesus came and touched them, saying, 'Get up and do not be afraid.'" (Matthew 17:7) What fear do you need to leave behind?

BIBLICAL EQUIPPING APART:

Obey: During this week follow through on your intentions.

Meditate: Meditate on Psalm 2. How does this speak into your life?

Reflect: What have I learned in my week of living with this text? What can I share with my group when we next meet?

Notes for ChristCare leaders:

Just to set the scene: six days after Peter’s confession that Jesus is the Messiah, Jesus takes Peter, James, and John up a mountain and is transfigured. That is, his appearance is literally changed right in front of them, so that while they recognize their Lord, they also perceive his heavenly glory in a way they had not before. Moreover, he is joined by Old Testament heroes Moses and Elijah. It has been an emotionally charged time. I suspect that Peter has alternately felt thrilled by the reception of his confession, hurt by Jesus’ rebuke, confused by what Jesus is saying, and uncertain about the future. And now, dazzled, perplexed, probably more than a little overwhelmed, but also, perhaps, excited to be at this place and time and witness this event, Peter harkens back to the Feast of Tabernacles and, wishing to pay appropriate homage to these guests, offers to make dwelling places for them.

It’s a confusing time, a heady time, an exciting time, an uncertain time. I’m not sure Peter knew entirely what to make of it. I’m pretty sure that I don’t either. The whole Transfiguration event can be a little hard to interpret. In Matthew’s narrative, it is a turning point, the time when Jesus – confessed as Messiah, revealed in glory – now turns steadfastly toward Jerusalem to offer a different picture of the Messiah than anyone expected. Moreover, when placed at this point in the church year, this reading links to three seasons simultaneously, concluding the season of light and revelation we call Epiphany, signaling the descent down the mountain and the road to Jerusalem we travel in Lent, and anticipating the glory of the Easter resurrection. For all these reasons, we may, like Peter, not know quite what to make of it all.

Right now, the world we live in is filled with a variety of confusing events, divisive rhetoric, increased tension, and an unclear picture of the future. And amid all this, I find myself regularly drawn back to these three words of instruction, command, and promise. First the instruction: “Listen to him.” When everything around us is confusing, it makes sense to try to hear what God is saying to us. And while we may disagree on just what we hear both as individuals and as a community of faith, we agree that the best way to understand God is to look to Jesus and listen to him. To pay attention to what Jesus says and does, to whom he reaches out, to those he gives attention and help. Second, the command: “Get up.” Except it’s not just “get up,” as the Greek verb Matthew uses here is the same one the angels declare to the women at the empty tomb: “He is not here; he has been raised!” (28:6). So really, it’s “be raised up.” Or even, “be resurrected.” We might also hear in Jesus’ words a call to action that actually gives us the energy and will to act, to make a difference, to be about the works of mercy and compassion to which God always calls us. Third, the promise: “Do not be afraid.” This is the hallmark of the Gospel, words perhaps never more needed than now. The fears we experience may be different from those of Peter and his crew but fear is a part of the common fabric of our lives even though it manifests itself differently. And no matter the fears, the Gospel reply is the same: Because God is God of the past, present, and future, we need not fear. This is not the same as saying that we will have no problems, or that we will avoid all harm and hardship. Rather, it is recognizing that when we trust God for our individual and communal good and believe God is with us always, we need not fear.

Listen. Be raised up. Do not fear. It’s important to remember that these words are said about and by our Lord as he refuses to linger on the mountain top but comes back down again into the realities of the world as he makes his way to Jerusalem. There he will be tried, condemned, and crucified, for the world has no place for the encouragement and hope he offers. But the story does not end with only the courage of one man defying the world. It continues with the promise that God raised this One from the dead so that all of us might have hope that there is more to this life than we can see. That God will be with us every step of our way, and that love and life are stronger than hate and death.

Thanks be to God,
Pastor Thadd (tbook@desertcross.org)

Traditional version:
Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come,
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from
evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power,
And the glory, forever and ever. Amen

Contemporary version:
Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,
your will be done on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those
Who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial
And deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the
power, and the glory are yours,
Now and forever. Amen