

Transfiguration Sunday

Transfiguration Sunday. The last Sunday of the season of Epiphany. On this day our colors lighten from green to white, we belt out our hallelujahs and celebrate this glimpse of the glory that is yet to come. It is the final Sunday before we begin the journey of Lent, the walk of that long road to Jerusalem. It's a familiar story of Christ's transfiguration on the mountain top, the appearance of Moses and Elijah along side of him, the three disciples seeking to remain there and then God's revelation of who exactly Jesus is. Although it is a fairly straight forward passage, there are many layers involved in it. This morning the layer I wish to peel back is that of the disciples desire to build dwellings on that mountain top and remain there.

I am not exactly sure why it was this that touched me this year, but it has. At first glance this may seem innocent enough. After all, something incredible was happening on that mountain top, why wouldn't they want to remain. But the

desire to remain, the desire to build dwellings, it was completely self-indulgent. Those three disciples did not want to go from that place. Those three disciples felt good and moved right there, felt touched by the divine and felt no need to go elsewhere. Rather they sought to remain and to provide dwellings for them. The text does say that they were terrified, but I think it was more astonishment and wonder at what they were witnessing than terror. Regardless, they did not run but sought to remain.

I believe that on this last Sunday in Epiphany, we have much to learn from this story. For I think that there are many places that we have set up camp in our lives. There are places that we have felt touched in and so never left, places where we have established comfort to such a degree that to leave doesn't even feel like an option. I'm not talking about actual physical locations, although some of us may even have those too. I'm talking about places on our walk with Jesus where we have ended the journey, where we have established a dwelling. I'm

talking about places where we've felt we've had an incredible revelation, like the disciples, and perhaps even felt that we've discovered all we can about God or about ourselves or about our place in the divine plan and so remained. I'm talking about places that we as the church have reached and stayed at.

We all seek comfort out in our lives and so it is little surprise that we would do the same in our spiritual lives in our life as a church. The issue, however, is that true gospel living does not establish a dwelling, does not remain in these places of comfort. Remember, this is the final Sunday before we enter the season of Lent, the walk to Jerusalem, as we journey to the center of our faith. It may be easier, more comfortable to remain here than to have to face what will lie ahead. Perhaps what has touched me this year is that I have felt like Peter, I have become comfortable or sought or have built dwelling places in my life, in my heart, in my faith. And I know that I must move on, come down from the mountain to grow in my relationship with God, with you, with myself.

This church has a long history of both coming to places where it has dwelled as well as continuing the journey. I believe that this year, is the year of movement for us. Perhaps we have started to dwell a little too comfortably and to grow in ministry, to grow in our personal faith we need to listen for the voice of God. But in order to grow, in order to move on we must listen to Jesus. We must listen to the journey he calls us to make, to the ministry he calls us to take.

We've got to unlid the Spirit in this place, in our lives, in our ministry. We've got to bust out of these dwelling places we've built on undoubtedly a great and wonderful mountain top of the divine inspiration if we are to have the rich faith and life that is possible when we continue the journey. It is a life that is committed to the one who was transfigured upon that mountain. It is a life committed to that journey of transformation of ourselves. This transformation is one that opens our eyes, gives us a prophetic imagination.

As we break down our barriers, as we leave the comfort of those

places we've have come to dwell in, we begin to realize that this mundane world can be transformed into holy turf. God can dwell in it all. The community of reconciliation can truly be built within this congregation.

And God knows it is time for us to break out of these dwellings. For our times, our lives are in need of a prophetic vision of hope for our times. Amidst war, corruption, scandal and conflict we have remained too long in the comfort of our dwellings. In an effort to maintain a chosen standard of living, we have sacrificed the priority of home and family—we have remained too long in the comfort of our dwellings. We need a prophetic vision to see the way of Christ—the way to peace, reconciliation, and harmonious family life.

When we visit the mount of transfiguration, we see the beginning and the ending. We are transformed into creatures of hope. As creatures of hope, we are creatures of the journey. So this day hear the voice of God and accept with me the call to move on, the call to continue on the road that leads to life

eternal and God's dwelling in all. This day let us unlid the Spirit and boldly and prophetically go where God is leading so that we are able to respond to the needs of our community and world, of each other. It will be frightening. It will be discomforting. It will mean change. It will mean seeing things, doing things, going to places that we have never imagined or envisioned. But God is with us. God goes with us. God leads us. "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to Him!"