

February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Last Sunday after Epiphany, Year C; Transfiguration

Exodus 34: 29-35

Psalm 99

Luke 9: 28-36

***Luke 9:28-36***

*Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah"--not knowing what he said. While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" 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.*

***In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.***

**Today is our last Sunday in the season of Epiphany. This season began on January 6<sup>th</sup>, 12 days after Christmas, the day we remembered the arrival of the Wise Men to visit the Christ Child, and that day we could still feel Christmas close by.**

**At our house, our poinsettias were still thriving, our wreath still held the fragrance of pine forests, and our tree was still up, the lights shining out our living room window into the early dusk, and fast gathering twilight.**

**Today, on the last Sunday of Epiphany, when we remember the Transfiguration, Christmas seems a distant memory, our poinsettias and**

wreath are long gone, the tree packed away, and despite still chilly days, the scents of spring have begun, the smell of damp earth, the sound of the peepers singing, and the soft sunlight lingering a little longer into the evening.

Time is such a funny thing. We know there are 24 hours in a day, and yet some days seem to pass so swiftly, and others drag so long.

In our lessons from Exodus and Luke, we see time leaping across centuries, space converging from mountaintop to mountaintop with first Moses and then Jesus, their faces changed, shining with the light of God.

And we find Peter and John and James, so like us, always deeply human, spending most of their lives in linear time, one day after the next; days weeks months years.

But they are suddenly drawn in to unknown space as Jesus is transfigured—a word meaning “*a complete change of form or appearance into a more beautiful or spiritual state*”.

Ordinary human Jesus, tired, hungry, his feet dusty, is transfigured, changed for a moment, a foretaste of Jesus in the resurrection, gloriously seen, full of God’s light.

And Peter and the others are overwhelmed by this glimpse ahead, out of linear time, seeing their friend Jesus, so clearly now, with Elijah and Moses, so fully standing in the light of God, far beyond our ordinary, day by day, time.

And understandably it is too much to take in, we of our linear days, one following the next, and Peter reacts by, of course being Peter, speaking up, blurting out his idea, to build booths to contain this moment to enclose God’s glory, to save it, to tame it.

And before Peter can finish his sentence, a voice comes again from heaven, the voice heard at Jesus’ baptism, the voice of God, clearly vetoing Peter’s idea.

Don’t focus on boxing up the holy, saving it, worshipping it, coveting it, restricting who can come close, sinking into our sinful selves, trying to

control the holy.

No, God, perhaps with a little tone to make Peter hear, maybe this time?

SAYS:

*"This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!"*

Be in this moment and listen, simply listen to Jesus, God says. Don't get to work, don't give in to our yearning to be in charge, to control the holy. Stop and wait and simply listen, listen to Jesus.

And then just as quickly, Peter and the others find themselves back in linear time, it is the same day as they went up the mountain, perhaps only a few minutes have passed, and they are alone with Jesus now, human tired, hungry Jesus, his feet dusty, his eyes weary.

I first heard the words, "God's time and our time are not the same", when I was sitting at my mother's bedside as she was dying.

I was a new Christian and I nodded solemnly when these words were said, but I did not actually have any idea what they meant.

How could the time we live in not be God's time? Time from the turning of the earth, the rising sun and setting of the moon, weren't these all of God?

I pay a lot of attention to time. I have always worn a watch, I still can picture my first watch, a Cinderella watch when I was 6-years-old.

I am devoted to my calendar, I keep time by measuring how many weeks/months until events; 2 weeks until I visit a friend; 4 months until the family reunion.

Covid wrecked havoc with our sense of time, erasing landmarks like holidays and birthdays, leaving us floundering to remember how long ago something was.

I am an avid fan of our linear time, and am still learning to understand and notice, tune in to God's time.

One caveat before I go any farther: We can fall into the trap of a God who plays chess with us, a God not of love, but of manipulation. God was not toying with me as I sat with my mother, causing her to live longer or die

quickly.

No, God's time, does not play with us. God's time invites us, upon occasion, to break out of our linear time, to move beyond the edge of our calendar pages, and to glimpse the holy.

To stand on a mountain top and sense the presence of God, to find dazzling light even in our darkness. To sit at a bedside and let go of when, and sit in now. To settle into peace that truly passes all understanding.

We are not in charge of God's time, hence the name. We cannot conjure it or demand it, or schedule it in our calendars. All we can do is ok, I'm willing not to count the seconds, at least for a moment, and to simply breathe in and out, and maybe in that moment, to smell the damp earth, to see the light linger, and to hear the frogs sing with the undefeatable joy of new life again.

Amen.