

Gospel lesson

We just heard from Peter how he had heard (on the mountain) God affirming Jesus as God's Son.

In the Gospel shortly prior to today's reading, Peter had professed Jesus to be the Messiah, son of the living God. Jesus then told His disciples that He was to be killed in Jerusalem and raised three days later.

Peter tried to say, "No way!" and Jesus rebuked him, telling the disciples to give themselves to God, not to worldly things. That brought them to:



picture from MMMS collection

Matthew 17:1-9

NRSV

¹Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves.

²And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white.

³Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him.

⁴Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings

here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

⁵While 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!**"

⁶When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear.

⁷But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Get up and do not be afraid."

⁸And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone.

⁹As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, "Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

The Word of God for the people of God

<Children's/Interactive time>

Take a look at these glass things. What do you think of them? <Let them respond>

Do you know what they were made from?

<Let them respond>

At the Corning Museum of Glass, they have little workshops in which attendees can make things out of colored sand. How does sand become glass?

<Let them respond>

How do glassmakers form particular shapes from the glass? <Let them respond>

Glassmakers have to use great heat, special tools, and {blowing or pulling} the hot material to transform the sand into the glass shapes that they want. Starting with different additives in the sand lets them create items of different colors.

Once they are in the right shape, are they immediately ready for use? <Let them respond>

Glass pieces need to cool evenly or they will shatter. This is done in a slow-cooling kiln. As the glass cools, its final color comes out.

Do you think someone who does not do glassmaking is likely to know what the final piece will look like when viewing it mid-process? What might happen if they try “helping” the glassmaker? <Let them respond>

In the Gospel lesson we just heard, Jesus had been teaching the disciples about the process He would go through for our salvation. Do you think Peter, James, and John understood what that really involved or meant for the world? <Let them respond>

Do you understand what God is doing in your life today, how the Holy Spirit is shaping you and what you will eventually become? <Let them respond>

What about other people, do you know what God has in mind for them? <Let them respond>

Many a person has been badly hurt by church goers who insist they know best how the person should be “fixed” rather than showing kindness and nurturing care for the person. When they show cruelty instead of love, it can cause a person to reject God completely.

When Peter tried to tell Jesus what he would do, what did the voice on the mountain say to do? Why do you think God spoke up then? <Let them respond>

How did the disciples respond? Why?
<Let them respond>

What do you think the Lord speaking to us today is like? Where and how do we encounter God’s voice?
<Let them respond>

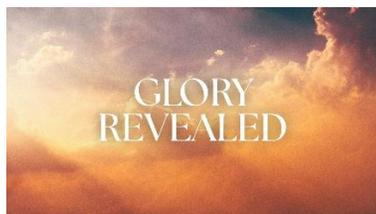
How do we respond to it? <Let them respond>

May we always recognize the divine presence in our midst, listen to Jesus, go where the Spirit leads us, and share God’s love with all the world.

<Hymn “Open My Eyes, That I May See”

UMH #454>

Message: Glory Revealed



picture from

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/glory-revealed/transfiguration-sunday-year-a-lectionary-planning-notes/transfiguration-sunday-year-a-graphics>

Please pray with me?

Awesome God of glory, as we take time now to further

consider today's scriptures, please

- speak Your words through my mouth,
- open our ears to hear Your message, and
- abide in our hearts,

That we may see Your holiness, heed well Your Word, and live with others in Christian community filled with Your grace. Amen.

Today we come to the end of the "Glory Revealed" series:

"The Transfiguration is a foretaste of the glory of Resurrection, a revelation of Jesus' divinity that has been hidden, yet is no less real."



picture from MMMS collection

The sun shone brightly on icicles this week. For me, it was a reminder that Spring is coming. It is natural law that as the seasons change from Winter to Spring, it gets warmer, the snow that I enjoy so much melts, and icicles form from wherever the melting snow drips. God created nature and the natural law.

When God's law is followed, we are blessed with amazing beauty. And the earth responds: the running water triggers new growth, seeds begin to sprout, and new life comes because the glory of the Lord is revealed through the following of God's law, even when it meant deep cold blanketed the land.

God called Moses up to the mountaintop to give law to the people. Much of the Mosaic law was specific to their cultural situation, much like icicle formation is specific to the season of melting snow and does not normally happen outside during summer heat waves.



background picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/bs-ten-commandments/>; credit: Jeremy Park, Bible-Scenes.com

The ten commandments, however, are universal, like the sun shining year round. They are fundamental for human society to thrive. To emphasize the importance and permanence of God's law, it was set in stone and God allowed the people to see the glory of the Lord atop the mountain while Moses went to get it.

The people needed the law to survive and thrive. God's presence terrified the people, so God used Moses to bring it to them.

Humans need a relationship with the source of all life to survive and thrive. Left to our own devices, humanity keeps breaking our relationship with God and one another:

- Eve & Adam in the garden,
- the Israelites on Sinai with the gold calf,
- the crucifixion of Jesus,
- wars and imperialism in the name of Christ,
- the Holocaust,
- even today, with the cruelty we see being perpetrated against the vulnerable.

Violence in our streets, environmental protections being removed, and pedophiles being protected? We

need God's law as a minimum, and the means back to a loving relationship with God as a way to live.

God had a plan to provide salvation to the world. Judging by the disciples' response to God's voice on the mountaintop, the almighty presence terrified them even though they had been walking around with Jesus's holy presence and had even declared Him to be the Son of God. So, God told them to listen to Jesus - they were not terrified of God's human presence.

Like Peter wrote, we are not following "cleverly devised myths." Our faith is real; Peter and company were able to attest to this from their mountaintop experience. Paul attested to it from his experience on the road to Damascus. The rest of the Apostles could attest to it when they saw Jesus alive after the crucifixion, and when the Holy Spirit filled them as described in the book of Acts.



picture from personal creation

What does it take for us to attest to the truth of our faith? If the daily miracles of nature are not enough, what about the fruits for humanity of following God's law? Those who study history can tell you that cultures thrive when people work together in peace, when differences are used in collaboration, when nurture of all their citizens matters.

Arts, sciences - all kinds of creativity and willingness to develop new things come about when people are not struggling merely to survive,

defensive in the face of the unknown, fearful rather than curious. But, we live in a broken world...and that is where God's love comes in.

God's presence is made known to us through the kind and courageous actions of one another (as well as through nature). Fred Rogers talked about his heroes being those who help in times of tragedy. I've talked a lot recently about the need for us to bring the light of God into our troubled world.

Do we know what kinds of trouble or tragedies the people we encounter are enduring, or do we make assumptions about them because there is just too much know about everyone? We cannot know everything, so what do we do? We listen to what Jesus taught, we listen to the Holy Spirit in our hearts, and we act accordingly.



picture from

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/glory-revealed/transfiguration-sunday-year-a-lectionary-planning-notes/transfiguration-sunday-year-a-graphics>

If we are listening to God, those actions will always involve love and kindness, the opportunity for a better way forward. That does not mean everyone is free from the consequences of choices – sin always hurts someone. Some things cannot be fixed, others require work to repair, and some will bear scars.

With the glory of God revealed (through the love of Jesus, by power of the Holy Spirit) – whether working via our actions or someone else's – there is hope for the future. Like a master crafter who picks up shards of broken glass and uses them for something

beautiful, God is at work with and in our world. If we look, we will see God's glory sparking brighter than sunlight on icicles, revealed in acts of love throughout this world.