

Mark 9:2-9 Transfiguration

Before we begin Lent this week, we consider the account of Jesus' **transfiguration**.

This amazing experience, as if the curtains of heaven were opened for a moment and Jesus' true nature was revealed, had deep meaning for Jesus and for the disciples.

Perhaps try and imagine this dramatic scene in your mind.

It was a glimpse of what was to come, Jesus' body is transformed, as it would be in his resurrection. It is also a glimpse of Jesus' Passion, the same three disciples would again pray with Jesus in Gethsemane, Jesus would be crucified on a hill top, at the centre of three figures, and the earth would be covered by cloud.

The **Transfiguration** set Jesus face towards his **Passion at Jerusalem**, his suffering, death on the cross, and his resurrection. It offered him reassurance for what was to come:

- Jesus was assured of **God's purposes**, as Moses and Elijah appear with him. Jesus was to fulfil all the Law and the prophets, which they represented.
- Jesus was assured of **God's presence** as he was transfigured in glory, and enveloped in the cloud. The cloud represented the presence of God, as it did in the Exodus journey and the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai.
- Jesus was assured of **God's approval and love** by his Father's voice from heaven.

These are all things that we also need. For Jesus and his disciples, it was a glimpse of the end of the story, which would help carry them through the struggles to come.

Unlike us today, 2,000 years later, the disciples didn't know how Jesus' life and mission would turn out, as we don't know how **our own** lives and futures will turn out.

As God gave this glimpse of reassurance to carry Jesus through the turmoil to come, God sometimes gives us glimpses of glory to carry us through difficult times.

The disciples experienced the brightness of God's glory, the excitement of the hope of fulfilment of long-awaited promises, and heard the voice of God, and **they were terrified!**

The other gospels tell us Jesus spoke those words which would become familiar, '*Do not be afraid*'. Jesus was there for them when they were facing new experiences and were fearful. Jesus is always there for us, especially when we are fearful or afraid.

As I re-read this familiar story, I noticed Peter's words to Jesus, in his shock at what he was seeing and experiencing, '*Rabbi, it is good for us to be here*' (v5) Maybe it is in times when we can say, '*I am glad to be here*' that we catch a **glimpse of God's glory**,

wherever that might be. It may be in worship, in silent prayer, in a holy place, in the selfless love of another, in the care of a friend or family member, or in the beauty of creation or music. Or it may be, also like Peter, that we are really terrified, **under the cloud**, we cannot see or sense God's loving presence, God seems far away, and we want to run and hide. Yet Jesus was still there with his disciples, and he is always here with us.

Lent is a time to seek God, when we might experience both these, which are equally intended to draw us closer to God, as we set aside time to be with our Father.

How will you use Lent this year?

Will you spend time each day reading **Scripture** and meditating on it, turning what you read into prayer?

Will you **fast** from some activity or food, to remind yourself of this season of restraint and self-examination?

Will you read a Lent **book**, to learn and reflect on your life?

Will you set aside **money**, to give to those who have so little, to enable God's love to be made known? As we are not able to meet together at the moment, I suggest you support a cause which you personally value, rather than joining together to support an appeal.

As we do these things, I pray that, like the disciples, whether we experience the revelation of God or the hiddenness of God, we may be drawn closer to him.

In the words of the service for Ash Wed, '*let us keep a holy Lent*' this year.