

SERMON ON MARK 9:2-10

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Saturday, February 13, 2021

MARK 9:2-9 (NRSV)

²Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, ³and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. ⁴And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus.

⁵Then Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." ⁶He did not know what to say, for they were terrified.

⁷Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!" ⁸Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.

⁹As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead. ¹⁰So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead could mean.

UPSET: What is the point of the Transfiguration? I've struggled with that question throughout my time as a preacher. What did it accomplish, what difference did it make?

It was a great display of God's glory and power in Jesus Christ. It was a wonderful experience for the disciples, but what concrete result did it bring about?

DEEPENING: Then, this week, one of the commentaries I read about this passage pointed out that a lot of people ask the same question about worship.

My default answers to the question "why worship" are practical: it inspires and energized me, it's a time of fellowship, a time to rest and reset, it anchors/orientates my week. On top of all that it's a good way to follow the command that we find in this passage—"This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!"

But there's something else, something less "useful" but no less important.

GOSPEL AND SUDDEN SHIFT: Worship is a time to revel in God's presence, to bask in God's glory, to soak up God's love AND to show our love for God.

UNPACKING: When we love someone, when we care about someone, whether a spouse, a child, a parent, a grandparent, or a friend, we spend time with them and in doing so we demonstrate our love for them, we make that love tangible and real. We grow closer and strengthen the bonds of love and family and friendship in the process.

And it means the most to the other person when we go out of our way to do so.
It means the most when we set time aside precious time for them.

At the transfiguration the disciples experienced God's glory through the presence of Jesus Christ. In worship we may or may not get a glimpse of God's glory on any given Sunday, but by purposely putting ourselves in God's presence we up our chances.

But even when we don't get a glimpse of God's glory, our presence in worship strengthens the relationship with God that both is and is becoming our salvation. It's an opportunity to respond to God's love for us by showing our love for God. We do that by taking one hour a week to worship the God who is there for us 24/7.

To quote Peter, "It is good for us to be here." Amen.

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