

Worship At Home

11th February 2024

Taken from 'Spill the beans' issue 2 page 80

*From seashore to mountain top,
from lonely place to hillside,
from touching lepers to touching glory,
this has been the reign of God.
From baptism's water
to mountain top glory,
from calling disciples
to the healing of many,
from synagogue exorcism
to transfiguration,
we have moved in the glory of God.
The revealing,
the making known,
the unfolding,
the manifesting,
the unveiling,
the unmasking,
of Jesus.*



*From the Jordan to the present, from the beginning to here,
from the Galilee to this place, let us gather in the transfigured light of God.*

Listen or sing or read the words of this hymn - CH4 356 Meekness and Majesty,

¹ Meekness and majesty. Manhood and deity in perfect harmony, the Man who is God
Lord of eternity, dwells in humanity, kneels in humility and washes our feet.

*Oh, what a mystery. Meekness and majesty bow down and worship,
For this is your God. This is your God*

² Father's pure radiance. Perfect in innocence. Yet loves obedience,
to death on a cross. Suffering to give us life. Conquering through sacrifice
And as they crucified, prays "Father forgive".

*Oh, what a mystery. Meekness and majesty bow down and worship,
For this is your God. This is your God*

³ Wisdom unsearchable. God the invisible. Love indestructible. In frailty appears.
Lord of infinity. Stopping so tenderly. Lifts our humanity to the heights of His
throne

https://youtu.be/uhCzezC4CxU?si=UahFd5_fu8_-mocV

CCL15044394

Let us pray,

In recent weeks we have found you standing in the river Jordan and heard your call to be baptised. We found you wandering along the beach and heard your call to follow. We found you healing in the local synagogue and heard you call the man a friend. We found you at night alone and praying and heard you call on God for help.

May we find you again Jesus among us now and hear you call our names spoken silently. As we reach to the mountaintop today as we meet you in 'a thin place' may we be humbled by your welcome and blessed by your presence.

May our senses be alive to the tangible touch of your silent presence with us as well as through the loud knocking on the door of our hearts. May we feel your presence with us.

Forgive our ears when we miss you speaking to us when we are busy. Forgive our eyes for ignoring those who lives are hard and we don't see the hardships. Find a way Lord, through our selfishness and our stubborn-ness so that we do not miss your voice, your gentle hand, the sights of your kingdom as it touches our world. Come to us in the silent places of our lives, to the thin places.

Forgive our faith for imagining this glory cannot be shared, cannot be opened up in others, through compassion and kindness, support and company towards folk, pulling away the brokenness, and setting free all that still lives. May our living reveal the light that is filled with hope of what is possible and longs to be made real, transfigured and renewed. Not as some flame glowing in the dark, but the light in which to see each other anew. Hear us, God of light and God of glory. Amen.

Listen or sing or read the words of this hymn -CH4 97 O God, you search me CCLI5044394

O God, you search me, and you know me, All my thoughts lie open to your gaze
When I walk or lie down, you are before me 'Ever the maker and keeper of my days

You know my resting and my rising. You discern my purpose from afar
And with love everlasting, you besiege me. In ev'ry moment of life or death, you are

Before a word is on my tongue, Lord. You have known its meaning through and through
You are with me beyond my understanding. God of my present, my past and future, too

Although your Spirit is upon me. Still, I search for shelter from your light
There is nowhere on Earth I can escape you. Even the darkness is radiant in your sight

For you created me and shaped me. Gave me life within my mother's womb.
For the wonder of who I am, I praise you. Safe in your hands, all creation is made new.

https://youtu.be/mEGc3_D19Vo?si=dO1DSYUHJtUzFhHX

Reading: Mark 9:2-9

Reflection: Six days before this, at Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asked, 'Who do people say I am?' And Peter confessed, 'You are the Messiah'.

Trumpets? Banners?

Publicity? No. Jesus began to teach that the Son of Man must be rejected, put to death and rise to life (Mark 8).

This Jesus, soon to be killed Messiah, is seen transfigured by Peter, James and John on a mountaintop. Jesus is often Called a teacher. Yet his teaching is wrapped in disturbing talk of his dying and rising.

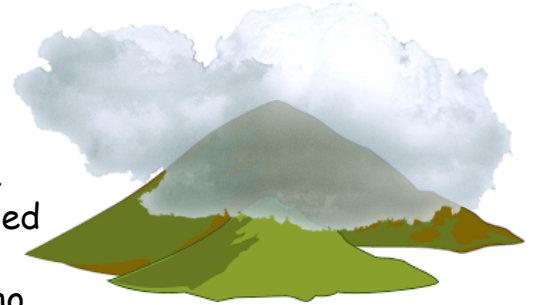


Is this a warning or a promise? Both? Follow me to Jerusalem, to my death, like people returning from exile, like the Lord returning to Zion. Evil and death will be overcome, through the apparent victory of evil and death. This is kingdom business.

It has to do with chief priests, death sentences, crowds and crosses. Mark's account of the transfiguration is full of biblical typology: Moses, Elijah, a mountain, light, a cloud. Moses and Elijah, represent the Law and the Prophets.

Both had mountaintop epiphanies. Both, discouraged, afraid, met the ineffable God on mountaintops and were sent back to face their conflicted situations. There is some mystery about what happened to each of them after their death (2 Kings 2:9ff and Deuteronomy 34:1ff).

It was also on a mountaintop that Abraham almost sacrificed Isaac (Genesis 22). Cloud and light signify God's presence, the thin space, hidden and yet revealed. These may also allude to worship in the Temple. Is this a vision of a new cleansed Temple not built of stone? And on top of all that, White robes are the dress of martyrs (for example Revelation 3:5).



Mark 1:1 asserted that Jesus is the Son of God and a voice attested this at his baptism (1:11). Unclean spirits also spilled the beans about Jesus. In Mark 8 a blind man came step-by-step to enlightenment, Peter saw and didn't see who and what a Messiah is. Now we come to a disclosure point, as we are all let in on the secret. Jesus, is the crucified Messiah, the victor who seems to be the vanquished. Later, a Roman centurion will say, 'Truly this man was the son of God' (Mark 16).

This confronts us with Mark's provocative mysticism of discipleship. Mystical. Spiritual. Enlightenment. How do those words sound? It can be all too tempting to seek an easy life and let what passes for 'spiritual' to be more about a warm glow, a cocoon. But mountains are hard to climb.

The way is hard, the air is rarefied and going back down has its own challenges. What if the way back is the narrow way that leads to life? What if there are oppressed, possessed people, crowds and crosses waiting at the bottom? Mark's story both hides and reveals who Jesus is and the nature of true power and glory. Isaiah 45:15: "Truly you are a God who has been hiding himself, the God and Saviour of Israel."

We could ask ourselves, what bedazzles us and holds our attention? Which powers influence our decision-making, exercise us and take up our time? What gets results? What or whom do we really follow and worship?

The inner core of disciples are afraid. Peter is dumfounded, confused, lost for words. "Let's stay here" he says in effect. "Build shrines for Jesus, Moses and Elijah. Catch the moment." Before they ascend to heaven?

We might use a mobile phone today and upload the resultant video to YouTube within minutes. Instant memories. Is Peter reflecting our need to worship here, not there, in this place not that place? "Listen to him" says the voice. Listen to the anointed one who will be executed.

This mystical experience creates disciples. This dazzling, visionary moment sends us back into the world. The transfiguration is not a trophy for divine souvenir hunters, or a meaningless mystery, it is rather a motivator for action.

As we move into the period of Lent - find your own 'thin place' where you can meet and talk to God. Share with Him your worries and concerns. Allow yourself to be embraced by God's presence.

Take some-time this week to read the passage from Mark's gospel again. First listen to the story with 'literal ears' on and ask any questions you have about what is happening. If you are not sure about the responses to some of their questions, don't be afraid to admit it. When this has been explored for a few minutes, then read it again with 'meaning ears' on to think about what this story might mean. Whether or not the events happened just like this, what is the purpose of the story? Finally, ask God what lesson He wants you to learn.

Creating God, hear our prayer for a world transfigured in the light of justice and peace. And give us eyes to see that glory in the works we do, the truth we speak, and the hope we bring.

Hear us for all conflict: O that it could be transfigured into something else, in a moment of glory; yet ours is to pray on our feet, changing things one touch at a time, that duller glory, yet more real.

Hear us. Hear us for our community, our neighbourhoods and streets, for those isolated and those lonely, those ostracised and those ignored. Transfigured in a moment into the richness of life yet the glory is piece-meal, bit by bit, word by word, effort by effort, more tangible, more human, yet more real.

Hear us. Hear us for our families and friends, those we live life through, and for those we know who are stressed and anxious, ill or recovering, lost or grieving. If only to be transfigured by a single word, yet transfigured by love instead, moment by moment, breath by breath.

Hear us. Grant us the hope and the chance to be the means of transfiguration, the opportunities to bring life, to enrich and fulfil living, unbreak and renew life in those around us, transfiguring the world, word by word, moment by moment, breath by breath. Hear us as we pray. Amen.

Listen or sing or read the words of this hymn - MP482: Nearer my God to thee

- ¹ Nearer, my God, to Thee, nearer to Thee: e'en though it be a cross that raiseth me,
still all my song would be nearer, my God, to Thee, nearer to Thee, nearer to Thee.
- ² Though, like the wanderer, the sun gone down, darkness be over me, my rest a stone,
yet in my dreams I'd be nearer, my God, to Thee, nearer to Thee, nearer to Thee.
- ³ There let the way appear, steps up to heaven; all that Thou sendest me,
in mercy given; angels to beckon me nearer, my God, to Thee,
nearer to Thee, nearer to Thee.
- ⁴ Then, with my waking thoughts bright with Thy praise, out of my stony griefs
Bethel I'll raise; so by my woes to be nearer, my God, to Thee,
nearer to Thee, nearer to Thee.
- ⁵ Or, if on joyful wing cleaving the sky, sun, moon, and stars forgot, upwards I fly,
still all my song shall be, nearer, my God, to Thee,
nearer to Thee, nearer to Thee.

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<https://youtu.be/YPKAyQDMWMc?si=5XMyio8-VY7FvnOT>

Go into this week radiant with the holiness of God

transfigured by the glory of Jesus Christ

glowing with the exuberance of the Holy Spirit

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all evermore. **Amen.**

Thank you to those who have taken the time to contact me. Take care out there this week. May the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you this day and each day.

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If you choose to email me, please can you tell me who you are and where you live. Thank you.