

SERMON: *"It is good for us to be here."*

Rev. Geoff Ross, Sunday, February 27, 2022, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

[LW:Thnx to Rev W. J. Baswick – Much needed break! TS:Not just a trick/light show – about seeing Jesus/ourselves/others/world clearly/differently/way God wants us to?]

In the Luke account of the Transfiguration, Peter, John, and James are with Jesus on Mount Tabor to pray and to be alone and to recharge – at least that's what the disciples thought. As soon as they got to the top – “suddenly” – something happens that changed everything: how they saw Jesus/they understood the world/they would live out their lives. See this way, Transfiguration Sunday allows us to focus on/celebrate the God who is the same today/yesterday/tomorrow, while recognizing/understanding/identifying/ accepting/admitting that we're the ones who are called to undergo a transformation of faith. Today's Psalm invites us to do just this: to proclaim God's reign means the we/you/me must reevaluate/transform our loyalties/practices/lives in new ways.

[Ever wondered what Jesus/face looked like? News Flash:Jesus wasn't blonde haired/blue-eyed (painting in the main stairwell!) Interestingly His external/physical appearance wasn't important/didn't matter:it's what's on the inside/what we do/our faith that is.]

Whatever Jesus looked like, we're told that while He was praying His face changed – His appearance shone like the sun and His clothes turned dazzling white: and that He was no longer alone. In the midst of the light, two men who looked like Moses and Elijah appeared and started talking to Jesus “of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.” *[Background:Exodus Reading – Moses' mountain-top experience w/God! God's glory/revealed in the glow on Moses' face – So bright/needed sunglasses/veil! Terrified the PofG.... God's glory shines/terrifies, beauty/disconcerts:G's glory silences our 'chatter'/stuns us leaving us blinking/confused...]* Stunned/“terrified” Peter, the “act/talk-first-think-later-disciple” does what he does best; he jumps up/fumbles about/blurts out that “it is good for us to be here” and offers to ‘do/make something’ (A very human reaction to God/Holy/Sacred!), only to be cut off by God who pronounces (for the 2nd time in Luke – this time so others/us/you/me can hear Him) – that “*This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!*”

Just as sudden as it happens – it's over/silent, except it wasn't, not for the disciples. Once ‘blind’ to Jesus' true nature, in response to this unexpected/ecstatic experience the way the disciples saw Jesus changed – He went from being 'one of them,'/a mere 'Rabbi,'/a pretender for the title of Messiah, to seeing Him as He truly was: the living Son of God. Despite the disciple's strange/“questioning” silence (as Mark describes it Mk 9:9) Transfiguration is about revelations – and faith/how we respond to our encounter/experience with God/Jesus. On the mountain Jesus us revealed for who/what He was/is: God personified/Emmanuel:God with us, God's beloved Son whom we should listen to/follow, the fulfillment of the Law/Prophets. In this encounter/experience, He didn't change, but the disciples/us/we who saw Him for who He is were. And this Good News:once we come to see/accept Jesus for who He is – He has the power to transform our lives.

[Optical Illusion/2Faces-IVase/Old Woman-Young Girl/Rabbit-Duck = Either see or you don't:once you do –OI caused by “Cognitive Illusions” based on our assumptions/conception

about the world/how it works. In other words:Conditioned to be blinded to alternative interpretations/understanding of how world is/works – like seeing God in human form – but, once you see it differently/Changed!!]

The Transfiguration reminds us that things look different when one not only stands in God's presence but also when we chose to see the world as God sees it/to see beyond the surface of things – to overcome the default of despair – and to see the signs of hope and of God's presence in everything. The good news is, through Jesus, we can. Paul, in the 2 Corinthians reading tells us that, through God's grace/Holy Spirit we are given access to God in/through Jesus – who, without a veil gives us access to God's grace/gives us our hope: Jesus with-us/as-us is our advocate who wins us our "*freedom.*" This allows us to receive/experience His/God's love that alone can transform our despair/fear into joy/hope – our isolation/into belonging. By seeing Jesus for who He is - we, too, can live lives changed; transformed. We, too, can live lives of glory/grace/forgiveness/love - and hope that, having been changed into His likeness, God will proclaim that we, too, are His children and that He is well pleased with us. Amen.