

Sunday 14th February 2021 – Bulwell United Reformed Church

In this Sunday's reading, Mark 9: 2-9 Jesus invites his three closest disciples to go up a mountain with him. The disciples are dazzled by Jesus' altered appearance. In contrast to the voice that spoke to Jesus at his baptism, this time a voice speaks directly to the disciples and tells them to 'listen to him', before they then head back down the mountain. *A short service for personal communion focusing on confessing Jesus is Lord is included. Please have your bread & wine/juice ready.*

A prayer of approach

The Lord, the mighty one, summons his faithful people to approach.

Come, let us tune into his radiance,
allowing his light of glory to shine upon and within us,
as we offer our worship and praise.

Amen.

A prayer of confession

God is our judge, and sees all things.

We have not loved God with all our heart and mind and soul and strength;

we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.

We ask for forgiveness and restoration to grace.

Lord, we are sorry – forgive us.

Lord, you are right to judge us, for we have sinned.

We have done things that have hurt others,

damaged your creation and limited our potential;

we have not done things that build up others.

We ask for forgiveness and restoration to grace.

Lord, we are sorry – forgive us.

Amen.

Our Father who art in heaven...

Song Hosanna: Praise is rising (Paul Baloche)

[\(364\) Hosanna: Praise Is Rising - Paul Baloche - YouTube](#)



Mark 9: 2-9 - The Transfiguration

² After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. ³ His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. ⁴ And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus.

⁵ Peter said to Jesus, 'Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters – one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.' ⁶ (He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.)

⁷ Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: 'This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!'

⁸ Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus.

⁹ As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

(NIVUK)

The Transfiguration

The Transfiguration is a crucial step in the presentation of Jesus' identity. At his baptism, a heavenly voice declares Jesus to be God's Son. This leads us into Jesus' ministry where we witness him at work: healing, dealing with evil spirits, feeding the hungry and controlling nature. At the same time we notice the growing enquiry into who Jesus really is. Jesus' ministry and the question of his identity are brought together just before the transfiguration when Jesus asks the disciples who they think he is.

When Peter proclaims, at Caesarea Philippi, 'You are the Christ' (verse 29), Jesus warns the disciples that he will suffer and die. Peter 'rebukes' him. This is not the expected end for the Messiah. Peter must, however, follow Jesus along the way of the cross (verse 34). The inner group (Peter, James and John) need an epiphany experience. Jesus is revealed in all his glory, talking with Moses and Elijah. Jesus has worried the disciples, talking about his death, but they are shown, at this low moment, his true nature.

The presence of Moses and Elijah, on the mountain, is significant. Moses, whose face shone after he had spoken with God was the great servant of God, who led the people towards the Promised Land. Elijah was the outstanding prophet servant, who constantly feared for his life, and, yet was, miraculously, taken up into heaven. Jesus 'outshines' them and is seen to be the Son, the supreme servant of God. We find Peter, James, and John where their head should not be: dreams of grandeur. Enjoying the mountain view. Pensive about going back to civilisation.

But thank God for our best laid plans failing so that we can gain some perspective. Peter's best laid plans of "Let's build three shelters up here ..." is cut short by The Voice that thunders, "This is my beloved Son, LISTEN TO HIM." Now here is something the disciples, and the church they founded, need to be good at. We are to really listen to Jesus. We must not let our anxieties get in the way. The disciples want to build shelters and Jesus says, "Get up, shut up, stop being afraid, let's go!"

Do we think of an encounter with God a risky business as Peter did? or should we think more about the awe-inspiring power of the Almighty? The Transfiguration asks of us – have we over-domesticated the power of God in our images of 'gentle Jesus' or even Jesus our friend and Jesus our healer? We need to seek God on the mountain tops.

Mountain tops give perspective, the long view. It is here we get the feeling of looking beyond earth's confines and let ourselves look into God's glorious realm. It is where receive

vision and faith. The word transfiguration (literally metamorphosis) means, 'to change the outward so that it matches the inward reality.' As we pray, worship, fellowship together and see God at work among us there will be times when God reveals himself in deep and special ways. We might want to stay in that place but God is never static, God is always moving—on the mountain one moment...and the next moment God wants us to listen on the way back to civilisation. Jesus relies on his friends, disciples, us—to tell our metamorphosis story - telling people of that extraordinary experience and that was passed on to the early church...and to us. Jesus desires to dwell within us. We are the sacred place, and if the law, the prophets and mercy— if righteousness, hope and love are to live anywhere, it must be us. May it be so!

Intercessions

Loving God, You call us down from the mountain of epiphany to notice the broken realities lived and experienced.

Hear our prayers, now, as we lift up all those who are overwhelmed in the valley. For all who are lonely, those whose relationships have been broken or who have never enjoyed the relationships they might have had; those who feel rejected by society and unsure of their worth; those feel hopelessly isolated; the homeless, the exiled, all who have no land to call home; those approaching death and grief.

Give to each one the knowledge that You are with us always, and we pray that You enrich their lives with companionship and friendship.

We lift up those who keep our world going even when plagues ravage our lands. From essential workers and medical staff, to neighbours who check up on us. We pray that lessons will be learned from this pandemic era that will provoke systemic change that will give healing and renewal to the lives of the most vulnerable and exploited, and our environment, for generations to come.

We lift up those who hold the power and wealth of nations upon their shoulders, particularly those who manage new routes for trade, security and services for people in the United Kingdom. We pray that sense, sensibility and righteousness will be the order of the day.

So much to pray for, so we pause to call out to You in silence the concerns of our own hearts...

In Your mercy, Lord, keep us living in hope and never again in fear. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Song **King of kings, majesty**

[\(364\) King of Kings, Majesty - YouTube](#)

HOLY COMMUNION Transfiguration Thanksgiving

We give you all thanks and praise, O God,

for your transfiguring light has overcome us
and is restoring within us the image of your glory.

On a high mountain you pulled back the veil of heaven
and, as Moses and Elijah passed on their mantles
to the one in whom your saving Word is fulfilled,
you allowed the incomparable glory of your Son
to be seen by his terrified disciples.

He was killed by those who would not listen to you,
but after you raised him from the dead,
you sent the winds of heaven upon us
with an extravagant outpouring of your Holy Spirit.



***Therefore, with our hearts lifted high,
we offer you thanks and praise at all times
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.***

Amen.

The Sharing of the Bread and the Wine

We give thanks to you, O God, that you cause the vine to yield fruit.

We bless you for Christ, the true vine, whose blood was poured out for us.

By your Holy Spirit sanctify us and this wine, that the cup which we bless may be to us the communion of the blood of Christ, and that through abiding in him we may bear fruit that shall last.

Eat this bread. It is the bread of life.

Drink this wine. It is the cup of blessing.

Prayer after communion

Loving God, you have fed us generously at this table, as we have remembered Jesus and rejoiced that he is with us today. We are ready now to follow him, and to be your people in the world. May your Holy Spirit show us the way, make us holy and fill us with love.

A sending out prayer

Lord Jesus, raise our expectations
of what it means to encounter God
not just in this place but in every place,
in all the places we shall be in the days ahead.
Help us every day to discover something new
about God's ways, about what God wants of us –
and change the way we see the world,
and the way we act.

Amen.



