

“Be-Dazzled”

Pastor Barb Edema, Bridge Pastor
Sunday, March 3, 2019 (Transfiguration Sunday)

Luke 9:28-36

What does it look like to be a transformed person? How can you tell when you are with someone who has experienced a change in their life to the degree that their physical appearance seems to have altered? Perhaps it is someone who has just experienced the death of someone they dearly loved. The ache of their heart is transparent on their face. Or how about a mother holding her baby for the first time? Her eyes deep with new love, her face glowing with in the light of her little miracle.

Transformed is the meaning if the word “Transfigured.”

I believe that being transformed goes beyond new life and death experiences. To be transformed is a realization that life is bigger than our individual lives. To be transformed is to live beyond ourselves.

On this Transfiguration Sunday, the last Sunday of Epiphany, we read the familiar story of Jesus and three of his disciples climbing the mountain from the plain.

In Luke, Jesus preaches plainly on the plain, and climbs the mountain to pray and be near God. But this climb up the mountain is not going to be like any old prayer meeting.

Jesus knows his mission. His purpose. He climbs the mountain to be near God and encounters a prophet party.

His exhausted disciples are stunned awake by his dazzling, bright white, face and clothes. They saw him talking with two others.

It’s a dramatic scene with dead prophets alive and kicking and talking with Jesus about prophet stuff. There is a cloud and then God’s gorgeous voice blessing and commissioning Jesus once again. And Jesus is bedazzled with light. WOW!

Peter does what he is famous for, misses the significance of the moment by wanting to build three huts for Jesus and the prophets. Poor Peter.

But what did the disciples think? They were tired, could barely stay awake. They had been following Jesus as he taught and healed and blessed. They saw the crowds, day in and day out. They were not used to this kind of life. Sitting on a fishing boat had been a little different way of putting in their days.

But in their exhaustion, God spoke and told them to “Listen to him!” Meaning Jesus.

We look at this story as Jesus being transfigured into a fluorescent billboard. He did shine. He did dazzle. But who else was transfigured? Who else was changed? Who else came down from the mountain with a little brightness and excitement smudged on their faces? Who was ready to bless others?

For us, being transfigured means being transformed for the glory of God. Jesus was transfigured in front of his three closest disciples. His glory and identity were revealed again to those who would carry out his mission of good news, equity, inclusiveness and wholeness for all. The disciples were reminded that to be followers of Christ meant they would carry on the Good News. They were dazzled, then it was time to live beyond themselves.

The previous days may have been hard on the disciples. Following Jesus was wearing them down. The constant crowds that pushed and shoved and screamed and pleaded for the touch of Christ rang in their ears.

The mountain was a reminder of how important it is to stop and get to a place of quiet. A place to un-plug all the noise and plug-in our souls to be recharged. Then we enter the world again ready to share the love and mercy of Jesus Christ. We live a life beyond our own.

So how do others see glimpses of Christ in us? I think I'm relatively good at seeing things in people's faces (usually it's in their eyes) that tell me if they are ill, tired, angry, relaxed, excited, in love, bored, or some other emotion. I bet you are able to do that too. Where do you see Christ? Is there someone you know, or have known, that when you search their eyes Jesus shows up?

I'd like so share a story with you about someone who transfigured the lives of others.

The story of Dr. Jim Cook...

So, my fellow disciples, take stock of your own souls. Share joy everywhere. Speak kindness. Reprimand gently. And when you are tired of it all, take the hand of someone and climb that mountain, wherever that place is. When you get there, you don't need to move. You don't need to build little huts (Oh, Peter...). Take a deep, long breath and remember that life is bigger than our individual lives. You and I can live beyond ourselves. God will continually dazzle us and remind us to whom we belong. We have the capacity to share joy. We have the capacity to spot the artists of the world, whoever they are. And when when people look into our eyes, they will see Christ. And the transformation continues. Amen.