

The Rev. Joshua Wullenweber
Transfiguration Sunday
Mark 9:2-9
Sunday, February 11, 2024

Listen to him.

These three words are central to our gospel story this morning.

Amid the almost unimaginable occurrences of that day - the beaming lights, the prophets of old, the transformation, the voice of God from above. Each of these magnificent events can be summed up with these three words.

Listen to him.

The disciples who have up to this point followed Jesus, for almost 3 years. Have seen him perform many miracles. Have heard his many teachings. Have followed him from the beginning. And today, three of them, Peter, James, and John, are given a sign that allows them to know without a shadow of a doubt who they have been following and what they are to do.

Listen to him.

See the transfiguration of our Lord marks a turning point in the story of Jesus and his disciples and their ministry together to God's people. It is from this occurrence on that, they descend the mountain and take on a whole new role that none of them expected. Sure, Jesus knew that he would be arrested and crucified but the disciples still had no idea what truly lied ahead for them. They did not know what would happen when they entered Jerusalem for that last time nor did they know what would be expected of them after Jesus was crucified, rose from the dead, and ascended to God in heaven.

Listen to him.

These words would guide the early apostles as they embarked on what must've been the most exciting yet frightening experience of their life. Continuing the ministry of Jesus, they would be faced with trials and tribulations, as they worked to spread the good news of Jesus Christ in every land that they entered. The idea of listening to him, listening to his words, listening to his teachings, listening to his promises would become the life blood that gave them strength to take on the days ahead.

Listen to him.

These three words for us are the lifeblood that gives us direction as we too continue God's work and live our lives here in this place. Jesus left his people so many words to live by. Words that offer comfort and peace on our walks of faith. Words that give us courage and strength to take on the day ahead. Words that give us guidance as we serve our neighbors in need.

Listen to him.

In times of stress and anxiety, Jesus' words offer comfort as we hear - do not be troubled, trust in God, trust in me also - do not be anxious about tomorrow, let tomorrow be anxious for itself - come follow me and I will give you rest for my yoke is easy and my burden light - blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of God.

These are just a few examples of the words Jesus offers that give us peace in our distress and comfort in our time of need. They give us courage to take on the day ahead and the ability to not let the stresses of this world overcome us.

Listen to him.

In times of sickness, in times of loss, in times of grief Jesus' words offer hope as we hear - Blessed are those who mourn for they will be comforted - I am the resurrection and the life, whoever believes in me will live, even though they die - my peace I leave with you my peace I give to you, do not let your hearts be troubled and do not let them be afraid for I am with you - for those who grieve, I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice and no one will take your joy from you.

These and many other words from Christ give us hope amid the heartbreak. Peace amid the pain. Assurance amid uncertain times.

Listen to him.

In times when we wonder who to serve and how to serve and what it means to serve, we hear Jesus' words - my command is this: love each other as I have loved you - give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you - in the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

These and many other words from Jesus give us guidance as we answer his call and continue his work like the disciples before us. Loving our neighbor. Caring for those in need. Re-presenting Christ to all those we meet.

Listen to him.

In a world where there are so many words vying for our attention - so many words telling us what is right - so many words telling us what to believe. Jesus' words are the ones we are called to listen to. Jesus' words are the ones we are called to remember and hold onto in the good times and the bad. For it is Jesus' words that are the words of life that give hope and guidance. Peace and comfort. Strength and courage. These are the words that tell us of a promise that nothing on this earth can make. A promise of a God that is with us through thick and thin. A promise of a messiah who gave his life for us so that nothing could separate us from God's love and grace. A promise that is made known on that cross and one that we taste and see every single time we come to the table.

As we prepare to enter the Lenten Season with Ash Wednesday this coming week. We are called to a time of reflection, a time to renew and reengage with God. A time to more fully enter into service with Gods people. A time to remember the words and promises that Christ offers to all God's people. So over the next 40 days. Let us do our best to... Listen to him. Amen.