

Have you ever felt in a fog? When you just can't think? When you know something should be happening, or you should be doing something, or some THOUGHT should come into your head, but nothing seems to come? I have had a bad cold the last three days, and believe me – I have felt like I have been in a fog – you know, the kind where it just feels like it hurts to think.

Moses is in a fog too. God has asked Him to come up to Him on the mountain, and Moses has waited six days – have you ever had that experience? I have not had my cold for six days yet, so hopefully what I am telling you is true from God! But it has seemed like its just a time where nothing is happening. Perhaps you can relate – you are in a fog, you cannot see anything around you, and all is quiet and white, and you don't know any direction, time is meaningless, all is quiet – that is what it is like for Moses right now. Sometimes it can feel you are ultimately lost, or sometimes – not lost, but just not – anywhere! Everything has stopped and all you can do is sit and wait for the experience to finish.

As we heard, on the seventh day, God called to Moses – and then Moses was given a great gift, the commandments written out on the tablets of stone – the ways that God wants the Israelites to walk if they are to be His people.

Now, lets compare that to the experience the disciples get from Jesus.

Our Gospel reading starts the same way: “Six days later...” Six days after what? The reading we had today really needs to be understood in light of what happened just previous to it. Jesus has just revealed to His disciples that He will go through great suffering, and be killed, and on the third day be raised again – and gets rebuked by Peter. Then, Jesus reveals that not only He will suffer, but that any one who wishes to follow Jesus likewise must deny their own life, take up their cross, and follow Him in that suffering, death, and resurrection. And then He promises two things:  
1.) The Son of Man (ie: the anointed one by God to usher in His promised end-kingdom) will come and repay everyone for what has been done, and 2.) some that He is speaking to will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in that manifestation.

And then, six days later. Six days of the disciples wondering “what was THAT all about?” What has He been smoking this time? We want to follow Him, yes, we think He is the Messiah yes – but this just doesn't make any sense, does it? Six days of wondering, and waiting, and thinking – SOMETHING needs to happen here. Six days of being in a fog, so to speak.

Again, after 6 days – Jesus takes Peter, John, and James up to a mountain top. Moses went up a mountain top, now they go up a mountain top. And in front of them, He appears like the Son of Man depicted in the book of the prophet Daniel. In Daniel 7, are the words:

“While I was watching, thrones were set up, and the Ancient of Days (ie: God) took his seat.

His attire was white like snow; the hair of his head was like lamb’s wool.

His throne was ablaze with fire and its wheels were all aflame.

A river of fire was streaming forth and proceeding from his presence.

Many thousands were ministering to him; Many tens of thousands stood ready to serve him.

....

“And with the clouds of the sky one like a son of man was approaching. He went up to the Ancient of Days and was escorted before him. To him was given ruling authority, honour, and sovereignty. All peoples, nations, and language groups were serving him. His authority is eternal and will not pass away. His kingdom will not be destroyed.”

Jesus was suddenly dazzlingly white, which he would appear as after His resurrection again, and Moses and Elijah, the bringer of the law and the chief of the prophets, the one who is to come back just before the coming of the Son of Man, the anointed one, are talking to Him. They disappear, as they are supplanted by the coming of Christ Himself. Peter correctly thinks that this is the inauguration of the end time, the kingdom of God, when the law and the prophets is fulfilled, and his statement to make dwellings was to make lean-to's was actually asking 'is this the anointed time? The time of the triumphal entry of God's kingdom, the re-uniting of heaven and earth?' Peter is right – he IS seeing the Son of Man coming in His kingdom. The answer is 'yes' – but also: 'but not the way you think, Peter.'

God interrupts Peter to say: ““This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!” I.e.: Yes – this is my anointed one, my Christ, my ruler for all time. This is the glorious manifestation of God Himself on earth, God's divine Son. This is a repeat of what God said in Psalm 2, which also prophesied this: 'I will tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "You are my son; today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.”'

And Jesus ends with : "Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

-- what? Haven't we just seen the reality that all people shall serve you, and that your authority shall be eternal – and now you say AGAIN that you are going to have to suffer, and die, and be raised from the dead? Why not just wave your magic wand and make your kingdom come, and end all human opposition and suffering and everything that goes with it?

Because that's not how God works. That's not love. God's kingdom is a kingdom of life and love, and forcing it on someone goes against its very capabilities. Instead, it must be shared and willingly entered into – even if in that sharing, those in the kingdom suffer for it. That is what Peter had to learn.

Peter has had a lifetime of experiencing and re-experiencing this when we get to what is written in 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter. The author writes: 'we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty.'

We did not share theory! We did not share some elaborate made-up story! We only shared what we experienced. We HEARD: "This is my Son, my Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."

Peter is saying: “it would have been so much easier if we had made up some story – but no, we have to tell you the truth, and the truth is what we experienced.” And then he continues with a warning for us: “You will do well to be attentive to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.” i.e.: hold onto the truth of Jesus being the Son of God, the ruler of all, for the time is still dark, until He fully comes in glory. And don't try to interpret things to your own purpose or your own means – seek to interpret them with God's meaning and purpose, for the prophecies were given by people moved by the Holy Spirit, not by their own purpose. Be careful! For so many people try to tell us interpretations of the Bible that are what we WANT to hear, not what God is actually saying.

You are people of Christ. You are Images of God. You have been given sight of God's kingdom. And, like Peter, like Jesus, like all of Jesus' followers, we are asked to share what we have learnt, not with fancy words, but rather, just share what we have experienced. The power comes not from us, but from God. God will, surprisingly, shine through you – for you are God's Image – even though may

realize it not. You will be hurt, you are being asked to put your own life second to God's kingdom – but you are being promised that in giving up your temporal life you receive an eternal one. This is what you did in your baptism – exchanged your temporal life of 70 or so years for an eternal one. But as part of that, you agreed to follow Christ, rebuke evil, and love God's Images – a good sorting of which are around you here, yes, but many of which are out there, beyond the walls of this building, just ignorant of the fact that they are indeed, God's images. And the only way that they will really get to know that is by being loved into it. Loved into health, loved into wholeness, loved into the kingdom of God. That's what it's all about, good people.

May you know the joy of Christ in your heart, a bright light burning ever brighter, as we walk this journey in Him together as His body, His bride. In love.

Amen.