

By my count this is the 40th Ponderings with Pastor Jeff reflection. Amazing how time just rolls along. I am hoping that in a couple of weeks the temperatures around these parts of western Illinois will be rolling along in the upward direction but I digress. Welcome to another installment of PPJ. The texts assigned for this upcoming Sunday are 2Kings 2:1-12/Psalm 50:1-6/2Corinthians 4:3-6/Mark 9:2-9.

Sticking with the Gospel text again this week. This is the Sunday of the Transfiguration and this year we get it told to us from the Gospel of Mark. It is one of those texts that pretty much leaves you scratching your head after you read it through. I can usually count on something coming to mind after looking at the Greek text but nothing really jumped out at me this week from that exercise. Never-the-less I do have one observation that seemed interesting to me so maybe you all will find it interesting as well. I think this thought came from someone in one of the clergy Facebook pages that I peruse every now and then. Our gospel text states right from the beginning that after six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John up the mountain. The reason that this is interesting is because the Gospel of Mark is so fast. Everything is always “and immediately” they did this or that. In fact, there are 42 undisputed occurrences of the Greek word for “immediately” and if the one disputed occurrence is added, there are 43! All of those in just 16 short chapters of the gospel. But here at the beginning of our text in Chapter nine - there is a six-day waiting period! The brakes have been put on so to speak. If we read what went on just before our reading this Sunday maybe we can get a glimpse as to why.

Jesus is telling the disciples what is going to happen to him (Suffering and Death) at the hands of the elders and the scribes and the priests. So, Peter not quite getting it, took Jesus aside and rebuked him and then Jesus took Peter aside and rebuked him back by saying get behind me Satan! Then Jesus called the crowds over and talked about denying yourself and taking up the cross and being ashamed of folks who are ashamed of him. He then makes the statement that some will not taste death until the kingdom of God has come with power. Talk about a loaded-few-verses in the text just before we read “and after six days...”

I like to think this is just some wisdom for us here from Jesus as he allows a cooling down period for him and for Peter and the rest of the bunch. It can be instructive for us also today as sometimes we just need to stop and take a week or so and reflect so we can better engage and strengthen the relationship. Jesus does take Peter and a couple of others with him to really show them who he is and to be ready to listen to him a little closer while up on the mountain. What Jesus was trying to get across was so important that he acted rashly back to Peter who was not getting it and then after a waiting period Jesus knew the best way to help him get it. Anyway, that is my pondering for the Gospel this week – Hope you may led in some fruitful pathways in your ponderings.

Peace,

Pastor Jeff