



grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

February 5-11, 2018

TRANSFIGURATION SUNDAY

Sermon by Rev. Kelley Lane:

"Come and See: The Gift of Mystery"

Notes from sermon on 2/4:

Prayer requests:

Family Focus Question (before sermon):

What does the story of the transfiguration tell us about God, about Jesus, and about human nature?

3 Questions for small groups (after sermon):

1. When have you encountered God and how did you feel?
2. What are other ways God's presence is described in scripture?
3. How does this passage inform us to share the Good News of the Gospel with those around us?

Monday, February 5: Read Mark 9:2-9

Some parts of the Bible are easy to understand. They have a clear message, obviously relate to our modern lives, and are next to impossible to misinterpret. Many of Christ's teachings are similarly direct and simple, giving us clear instructions we can learn as children, yet seem to need to hear again and again. We often gravitate to these scriptures and their comfortable, digestible portrayal of God, Christ, and morality.

This week's scriptures are nothing like that. They are full of mystery and ambiguity. We find ourselves reading them multiple times just to grasp what was said, for the meaning and significance aren't immediately clear; the events strange, and the writer's perspective hard to grasp. Perhaps we feel like Peter, James, and John in today's gospel reading, unable to make sense of the events we are witnessing, and most likely afraid that our seemingly simple and approachable Jesus now appears different and beyond our human understanding.

But isn't this how God and God's word is supposed to be? If the Bible was a simple instruction book, we would have stopped reading and talking about it two millennia ago. If God was easy to explain, then would God be God? Instead of turning away in fear from what we don't recognize or understand, let us embrace the mystery of God and see it as a gift.

Tuesday, February 6: Read 2 Corinthians 4:3-6

It should be clear from the very first word of today's scripture ("And") that we need to dig a little deeper in order to understand this passage at all. What is Paul talking about when he mentions the gospel being "veiled" to those who are "perishing" and our seeing the light of God through the face of Christ? We could let our confusion cause us to turn away from the Word, or we could keep searching to know God more, turning to the previous chapter, where we read Paul's description of Moses after he, like Jesus in yesterday's gospel, was transfigured after seeing God but wore a veil to conceal his appearance to others. Now today's reading makes more sense. Unlike the Hebrews from the Old Testament, we now have Christ who is the image of God on earth, lifting a "veil" that previously separated us from God. The closer we grow to Christ, the closer we can see and experience God. Does this mean we will understand everything? Quite the opposite -we may experience more mystery and majesty that defies human understanding than ever before - but we will learn to embrace being in the presence of something greater than our understanding and comfort zone.

Wednesday, February 7: Read 2 Kings 2:1-8

For the next two days, we will read about Elijah's miraculous journey to Heaven- miraculous not only in his famous ascension, but also in how Elijah approached the upcoming event of his end on Earth: with faith, obedience, trust, and assurance. The Lord called Elijah to Bethel, and then Jericho, so he went. No questions asked. Elisha also followed without drama, fear, or question. When asked if he knew his master was about to be taken from him, he simply replied, "Yes, I know; be silent." Do we approach change, the unknown, and mystery with such grace and trust? Are we content to place ourselves into God's hands and divine plan, not needing to know the what, the how, the when, and the why? Are we walking in peace knowing that God is calling us all home, so that's enough knowledge to live in joy and assurance?

Thursday, February 8: Read 2 Kings 2:9-12

Elisha never left Elijah's side, and by staying close to him and not turning away from the mystery and majesty of his ascension and departure from Earth, he was granted his one request: to inherit a "double share" of Elijah's spirit. Even if we don't understand the mechanics, science, or varying interpretations of this story, we can probably draw upon an experience when simply spending time with someone "strong in the Spirit" rubbed off on us - especially if we have had the honor to be with them through difficult situations, even death. Ask almost any pastor how affected and strengthened they have been through witnessing women and men of faith face sickness, aging, and death with grace, courage, and peace. How can we draw closer to God by drawing closer to the God in others, being faithful friends and caregivers? How will our Spirit be magnified by not turning away, even when we don't know what to say or do?

Friday, February 9: Read Psalm 50:1-6

Instead of trying to dissect today's psalm and have it "make sense" through our limited imagination and perspective, let us just say the words aloud, feeling their majesty and mystery. Let us praise God for who God is, not for what we understand or articulate about God. Let us know worry about the how or why or where or when, but simply the *Who*. Let us draw nearer to the Great I Am, YHWH. Let God be the judge, the Creator, the All-Knowing...so we don't have to be.

Saturday, February 10: SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION: 2 Corinthians 4:6

"For it is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

Sunday, February 11: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our Prayer of Common Confession: *God of all glory, beauty, and grace, we have tried to hide from you -to hide our faces, to hide our sin -yet you have never hidden your love for us. We have tried to search for you -in temples, in clouds, on mountaintops - yet you have already revealed yourself to us in the face of Jesus Christ. Forgive us, and transform us so that our lives may shine with your glory, beauty, and grace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*