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Reflecting God
Luke 9:28-43a

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The first time our two younger children saw mountains was on a family car trip across Canada. Their first desire was to want to climb to the top....
So the first morning in Banff, we set out to climb Sulfur Mountain.
They ran all the way and we met two glowing children at the top
They wanted to stay as long as possible on the top, seeing all they could see.
But the time came for us to go back down.
They were disappointed, but they would never see the world in the same way again
If we are open and alert, mountain top experiences can be like that,
Whether spiritual or physical, they have the power to change us
That first mountain top experience came to mind, when I read the transfiguration again this week.
One day Jesus invited James, John and Peter to pray with him
They went to the top of a mountain--To a place far from distractions, a place closer to God.
That day, as Jesus prayed his face and clothing began to shine whiter than earthly white
We call this change transfiguration, Jesus was reflecting God's glory.
This transfigured Jesus, deep in prayer with God, was joined by 2 figures, Moses and Elijah,
They spoke together about Jesus next steps, Jerusalem and the cross.
At first the disciples remained silent but as Moses and Elijah were leaving,
Peter, could not remain silent....the thought had occurred to him....
Wouldn't it be wonderful to live up on the mountain top?
To stay just as they were, far from the crowds, close to God?
He blurted out with the best of his earthly wisdom and desire to be holy, "don't leave!
Let's just stay here.
I'll make places for you, Jesus, for Moses and Elijah,
So we can stay here, so we won't have to return to the crowds, to the conflicts,
To the cross, suffering and death you told us about."
This time it was not his friend Jesus that chided him, but the Lord God.
A cloud came over them, and the disciples were terrified.
But there was no lightning strike, just a voice thundering
'this is my much loved Son, Listen to him!'
In other words, God's voice said "Stop! Stop and listen to Jesus! He reflects me in the world!
Before you act on your assumptions, wait for the Son to tell you what to do!"
It was over as quickly as it started, and Jesus and the three went down the mountain.
The disciples perspective on Jesus was changed, they would never see him in the way they once had.
They had encountered the mystery of God's presence
and witnessed the transfiguring connection between the heavenly Father and the Son,
they saw how Jesus reflected God's glory even when his face was not glowing.
And newly aware that any understanding of the Messiah that lacked death and suffering was wrong.
Any understanding of the Messiah divorced from the Law and the prophets, was wrong.
As they reached the bottom of the mountain they encountered the world's need for healing
The immediate need was a son in need of healing, and the disciples were unable to help.
Jesus, in the power of the Holy Spirit, reached out and made the boy well, Jesus reflecting God's glory.
It is a powerful story, a story that reminds us of the truth about God,
That God is bigger than our comprehension, bigger than our words and thoughts about God,
I think that we all need to hear it and be reminded of the wonder and mystery of God.
God cannot be contained or controlled by our words, manipulated by our prayers.
But there are a couple of other things that stand out to me in this passage.
The first is the need of prayer, and how hard prayer can be:

The disciples were having a hard time staying awake, dozing they almost missed what happened
I am sure they had excuses, perhaps it was a long hard climb, perhaps they were having a tough day,
Or a busy week, perhaps they were drained by the crowds and they ever present needs in the world
There would have been lots to make them tired, just as there are many reasons for us to be tired.
I wonder how many of us can be guilty of not being attentive in prayer?
Of knowing that Jesus modelled an active and transfiguring prayer life, but somehow we fall short?
How many of us are guilty of avoiding prayer unless we need something?
How many of us are guilty of falling asleep or not paying attention
rather than being open to what God is saying and doing?
How many of us need to be reminded, "Jesus is God's Loved Son, Listen to Him!"?
Jesus models the importance of prayer,
He teaches about prayer by inviting the disciples to pray with him,
Teaching them to listen to God and be changed, transformed by God in prayer,
Secondly, as Jesus prays, he is in dialogue with his spiritual forefathers,
It speaks of the continuity of Jesus ministry with the Old Testament, and the fact that Moses and Elijah
and their writings point to the truth of God's work in Jesus on the cross.
Our prayer should be informed by scripture, a dialogue with God, who speaks through scripture,
through the Holy Spirit and to us in ways that we can hear.
Thirdly: Discipleship is not just about inner peace, but about following the one who calls us,
About being changed by our relationship with God and reflecting God's glory in the world.
How often do we charge ahead into decisions and situations without listening for Christ,
How often are we guilty of acting on our own understanding,
Or wanting to stay on the mountain in peace, rather than
Denying self, and reaching out to show God's transforming presence in the world?
Perhaps we are more like Peter than we want to admit confessing Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah
but we also would rather that there was less struggle and suffering involved
We want to live faithfully, do what God desires but at minimal cost,
in other words, we want to stay on the mountain top.
But we are disciples of the Risen Christ, called to follow Christ and in the power of the Spirit,
Called to live in communion with God, reflect God's glory and bring God's healing to a hurting world.
Today we are privileged to come to worship and invited to meet Christ at the communion table.
Like a mountain top this is a place where we are invited to be close to God.
This is a place where we, as children of God, can be transfigured and our perspective transformed.
Here we are reminded that God is bigger than our understanding, bigger than our thoughts and ideas,
Here we are invited to deep communion with God, to know peace that passes understanding,
We are invited here, but not just for ourselves,
We are here to enjoy what God offers so we will be ready to live the rest of our lives..
like a mountaintop experience what we do here can change us and change how we see others
We cannot stay here, because at this table we remember
The need to pray, to be alert for what God is doing and how we are called to cooperate
And that deep communion with God can change us so we can reflect God in the world
Here we are strengthened and renewed to live for Christ
Here we are reminded to invite others to lives of prayer, to show others a better way,
Here we are transformed, our thoughts and ideas about ourselves, Christ, the world are changed,
Prepared to serve Christ by serving our neighbour
The truth should have our faces shining, our hearts glowing,
Our God who is greater than we can describe or comprehend,
Is with us, will continue transforming us so that we might reflect God's glory in the world
In word and deed, through us God will continue transforming the world, Amen