

Coffee to Go | Last Sunday After Epiphany | Transfiguration Sunday

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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SPEAKERS

Blake Smith, Karin Peter

Karin Peter 00:27

Welcome to Coffee to Go, where we center ourselves in the scriptures, seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition. I'm Karin Peter, and I'm here with Blake Smith, and we welcome you on the journey. Today is the last Sunday after the Epiphany and before Ash Wednesday, which begins the Lenten season. And the last Sunday of Epiphany is the Sunday of Transfiguration, or what we call Transfiguration Sunday, and on this day, we remember that Jesus had a transformative experience through which his glory we might, I live on West Coast, we would say aura, depends on how you will look at that. But the essence of Jesus, that was his glory was revealed to the disciples in this experience on the mountaintop. So we are with Jesus, and Peter, and James and John, and we are hiking up a mountain. So Blake.

Blake Smith 01:32

All right, well, it comes from the Gospel of Mark, and it is the ninth chapter, the second through the ninth verse where we get our passage today.

Six days later, Jesus took with Him Peter, and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves, and he was transfigured before them. and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them, Elijah, with Moses, who were talking with Jesus, Then Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. Then a cloud overshadowed them. And from the cloud, there came a voice, "this is my son, the beloved, listen to him." Suddenly, when they looked around, they saw no one with him anymore. Only Jesus, as they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

Why does this matter? One of the things that sticks out for me and I wonder this question, and it's not answered in the passage, so I get to wonder about it. The disciples are terrified when they see this. And I wonder, so part of it could be a natural response would be Oh, my gosh, they're lighting up there. There's this glow. And this is something, what the heck is going on? Right. But there's another piece that I wonder, here are these disciples who have been traveling with Jesus, he's been telling them who he is. He's been telling them what he's there for. He's been instructing them. And we know from what

we read, or at least we can assume, from what we read that they just don't get it. And then all of a sudden, there is this aha moment. Like, oh, my gosh, that's what he meant. This is really happening. And then they begin to think about, Okay, what did I say? What did I say last week? What, you know, how have I been responding? You know, have I been doing what's right? And we begin to look at our past and think about, oh, my gosh, and so I wonder if that didn't have something I know that I've been in those situations, where, not specifically in this context, but for instance, in my work with racial justice, where I have this epiphany, finally, because of my work in it, and I think, oh, my gosh, what did I say the last time I was in the pulpit in front of these people who have been struggling with these issues? Did I come across as an arrogant white preacher? Or, did I have compassion? Just all of those things. So this is, I mean, this kind of comes to life for me in this passage.

Karin Peter 04:29

Yeah. It's a new way to look at what the being terrified what that experience really was all about. encompasses a lot of different things, I think.

Blake Smith 04:37

Yeah. So we know that they're terrified. And they immediately want to pitch a tent. And this is another piece that we, if we're willing to be honest, I have to admit that we all have done or know someone who has done. We have this experience with God, this God moment, and then all of a sudden, that's the place where we want to pitch our tent. We do it with campgrounds, we do it with church buildings, where all we've had this experience here. So this is where we need to go and it needs to be this way so that we can re-experience that moment.

Karin Peter 05:15

Yeah, we build dwelling places, then they'll stay here, we'll stay with them, we'll bask in the glory forever.

Blake Smith 05:21

Right but that doesn't accomplish the sending that Jesus does. As we've mentioned, I think you mentioned in our most recent episode, where we're called to take this out, this isn't, this isn't for here for this moment. Yes, we experience it in places, but the reality is God is everywhere. And so Jesus says, No, we're not going to pitch a tent here. That's not, we need to go back down off the mountain, we need to take this experience with us. We need to let it transform us, and move us ahead into what we're called to do. So mountaintop experiences are wonderful. I remember being when I was in a youth ministry, when I was a youth minister, and people would talk about all this mountaintop experience that we had at camp. And my advice, or my challenge to them was how do we make every day a mountaintop experience in the places where we are, because that's where God is. So questions that we might then ask are, what mountaintop experiences have we had, where we didn't want to leave? And I would add to that, what might we accomplish if we carried that with us every day and into the every day? Second one is, these visions of Elijah and Moses that showed up, when have you received strength or comfort from the memory of faithful disciples who have already passed away? You might not have a physical vision of them, but the memory, the legacy that they leave? How has that lifted you up, comforted you or giving you the courage in the days of calling that you have? And lastly, is there a part of you that yearns to be transformed? So it doesn't have to be just Jesus that is

transfigured. In the acknowledgement of Christ, and what Christ has done for us and what Christ calls us to do. We are to be transformed. So I wonder, and we ought to wonder, do we yearn to be transformed? And how might we open our life to the transformative nature of God?

Karin Peter 07:41

Yeah, I think about that, and then the whole idea of Jesus just like illuminated all of a sudden from within and that kind of transformation? And how do we experience that as disciples? And how do we live that for others, to continue that transformative experience and extend it into community. So I think about how we might kind of live in that this week and experience it. And I know, I can get caught up in kind of the showy transformation of this story. And when I do that, I completely forget what actually happens. And that is God offers the phrase, "this is my beloved, listen to him." So I want to try this week to move away from the flashy and the showy part of the transformation and live in those words. Listen to him. So this week, let's spend some time really listening, listening for the voice of the beloved in our interactions with others. Listen to the sounds of the Spirit in music and nature. Listen to the voice that calls to you in a new transformed way of being. And that voice might come in an idea. It might come in a prayer. It might come in a conversation. But the one who holds you beloved is always present. So let's open ourselves this week to listen. And I think I have the blessing this week. And it is from Jan Richardson's Circle of Grace and the name of this is "Dazzling." Believe me I know how tempting it is to remain inside this blessing, to linger where everything is dazzling and clear. We could build walls around this blessing put a roof over it. We could bring in a table and chairs and have the most amazing meals. We could make a home. We could stay. But this blessing is built for leaving. This blessing is made for coming down the mountain. This blessing wants to be in motion to travel with you as you return to level ground. It will seem strange how quiet this blessing becomes when it returns to Earth. It is not shy. It is not afraid. It simply knows how to bide its time, to watch, and wait, to discern, to pray until the moment comes, when it will reveal everything it knows when it will shine forth with all it has seen when it will dazzle with the unforgettable light you have carried all this way.

Blake Smith 10:41

I love that. I love that. I'm just kind of caught up in that circle of grace and yeah, as you as that, as you began with that Karin I mean that really captures, I think why we get stuck in this place because life is so crazy. And so we get that moment that encounter. And we just want to, "how do we how do we keep this? How do we get this?" But discipleship isn't about keeping it. It's about sharing it.

Karin Peter 11:16

So I love the phrase, "this blessing is made for leaving."

Blake Smith 11:20

Yeah, yeah, that's great. Well, speaking of leaving, it's time to end our episode here today. So thanks to everybody for coming and joining us today with Coffee to Go. We invite you to join us next week for the next part of our journey through the liturgical seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition.