

Transfiguration – A life changing experience.

Exodus 34:29-35, Psalm 99, 2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2, Luke 9:28-43

May the words that are spoken, and our thoughts, be acceptable to you O God, this day and always. Amen.

I am a very visual person.

Helen asked you last week to imagine a boat right here in church...well about ten years ago I was doing a course in alternative worship styles. Sunday morning was not the time for experimental worship, and so the experiment was conducted on a Saturday night. The theme was "sailing with Jesus". I had some friends construct a sailing boat which normally would have been seen on Lake Burley Griffin, right next to the altar. It was still there on Sunday morning, to the great surprise of...well almost everybody.

Today's readings tell of the Transfiguration of Jesus, and what I will call the Transfiguration of Moses.

There are no visuals today.

No one knows what a transfiguration looks like.

Hollywood special effects have had a go over the years, and a variety of artists have depicted a glowing halo around significant people. But ultimately it is a guess. We just don't know.

Miracle stories like the Transfiguration are hard to comprehend when we can't even imagine what it might have looked like.

It is perhaps easy to dismiss such hard to imagine stories because "that was then", or "it only happened to Jesus".

I want to reflect this morning not on the physicalities of transfiguration, for I cannot enlighten you. 😊

I want to begin to reflect on the setting for transfiguration.

Both Moses and Jesus headed up a mountain.

And what did they go up to the mountain to do? ...Yes, *to pray.*

Both Moses and Jesus were seeking the will of God. The commandments that Moses laid out before the people of Israel were confirmed as God's will by the glow that emanated from Moses' face. The people of Israel, would have been listening very carefully to every word that Moses said and very inclined to be obedient to the will of God as it was expressed in the commandments.

Jesus had a track record of taking time out to pray, to seek God's will for him.

Let me read to you Luke Chapter 4 vv42-44:

⁴²At daybreak Jesus went out to a solitary place. The people were looking for him and when they came to where he was, they tried to keep him from leaving them. ⁴³But he said, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent." ⁴⁴And he kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

And again in Luke 6:12

¹²One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. ¹³When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles.

In Luke's account of Jesus life and ministry, ALL of the significant decisions in Jesus' life were preceded by prayer.

And in today's account of the transfiguration, Jesus ministry and mission are affirmed. Jesus is seen speaking with Moses and Elijah about – in Luke's delicate euphemistic words – "Jesus' departure, which he was about to bring to fulfilment at Jerusalem". After much prayer, Jesus was aware that his ministry would express itself most fully and completely by the laying down of his life.

This was anathema to the disciples, who wanted Jesus to continue in ministry, to keep on doing what he was doing.

The voice from heaven was confirmation to Jesus' followers that he should be listened to.

It probably needed a voice from heaven and a transfiguration to impress on the disciples the idea that Jesus' ministry would not be continuing.

Change is difficult.

It is so difficult to keep changing.

To keep changing is extraordinarily difficult.

Virtually impossible.

I would put it in the category of "the camel going through the eye of a needle".

Impossible without God.

And so only possible by prayer.

The prayer that keeps us in step with God's will.

The prayer that emboldens us to change.

The prayer that opens up a different future for us.

The prayer that empowers us to be a different, better person.

If I may, a reflection on God's will.

Somewhere in the next few months, we as a clergy family will be moving to begin ministry in another place.

I do not know when that will be; I do not know where that will be.

There is a great opportunity here for everyone in the parish to take some time out, to spend some time in prayer, seeking God's will for the parish.

The radical, life changing decisions for Jesus were all preceded by prayer.

I would say to you that the radical, life changing decisions for Jesus were all caused by prayer.

If, as individuals, and as a parish, you commit yourself to prayer – to seeking God's will for your life, then there is no doubt whatsoever, that you will indeed find God's will for you...

I feel it only right that this caution be given:

God's will is NEVER to keep things going as they always have.

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Jesus was doing a great job teaching, preaching and healing in his home town. Jesus prayed, and realised that he had to expand his ministry to other places.

Jesus was doing a great job ministering all over the place. Then Jesus prayed, and realised he needed a dedicated, committed team to work with him, and he called the twelve disciples to be his team.

Jesus and his disciples were doing a great job ministering to many. Then Jesus prayed, and realised that his ministry (which was going great) would end, and would be taken up by his disciples.

Pray if you will, but be aware-

Some things will need to expand.

Some things will need more than just individuals.

Some things will need to put down; and others will take things forward in a new way.

Let us spend some time in prayer.

Taking a little time to be still.

Being aware to stop, and in quietness feel the presence of God.

Listening to God.

And being open to God.

Welcoming the future with God.

Embracing change, embracing life.

Amen.