

St Marc, Grenoble

27th February 2022

Sunday next before Lent (Quinquagesima)

Exodus 34: 29 - 35

2 Cor 3: 12 - 18

Luke 9: 28 - 36

‘This is my Son - Listen to Him!’

Good morning! This has been a difficult and challenging week for me, but it is good to join you even if it is by Zoom.

PRAY

Was there anything that particularly struck you about the Gospel reading this morning??

By the way, what Sunday is it today? Sunday next before Lent also Quinquagesima 50 days! (Literally 50 days before Easter Sunday - including today and Easter Day)

Today’s Gospel story of what we call ‘the Transfiguration’ is, and always has been, amazing to me – and should give us plenty to think about, and to reflect on, during the coming week.

This was an event fully charged with the mystery and majesty of God, with amazing undertones firmly linking Jesus with the God of the Exodus; the awesome and powerful God of Jewish history, which all started for the disciples - as they thought, as a walk up the mountain.

Jesus took his closest disciples, Peter, John and James on a ‘day away’ up a mountain; His objective was obviously a time of prayer.

When we’re trying to understand a complex passage like this, it’s often a good idea to look back at the previous passage – the ‘story so far’, if you like.

Does anyone know, which conversation Luke’s telling us this event was eight days after??

Yes, it was Peter’s acknowledgement, or acclamation, of Jesus as Messiah. Jesus had asked “Who do you say that I am?” Peter responded: “The Messiah of God”

So, what happened in the story we’ve heard this morning is practically an affirmation by God of that confession of faith by Peter.

I wonder why the disciples were so sleepy? Was this a vision? We don't know, but they obviously had a very spiritual experience – filled with significant events.

As Jesus was praying we're told his appearance changed (He was transfigured) He became radiant – His clothes were as bright as a flash of lightning!

He shone with glory (just as Moses had done when he came down from receiving the 10 commandments on Mt Sinai as we heard in our reading from Exodus) - this transfiguration confirmed Jesus' very close relationship - literally face to face - with God.

Then, two other men appeared also radiant! Apparently, they were instantly recognised as Moses + Elijah; two of God's most special people. They started to discuss with Jesus' his departure (lit. His *exodus*) which He was going to *fulfil* in Jerusalem.

One of the things that fascinates me is how the disciples knew the two men they saw were Moses and Elijah? But Moshe and Eli were very important – they represented (What??) the Law and the Prophets.

They'd both had major influence in the development of God's chosen people. They also both had very unusual ends to their lives.

Neither was actually buried – Moses went up a mountain into a cloud, and was never seen again; and Elijah was seen being taken away in a heavenly chariot!

Now, in today's story, hundreds of years later, they were both seen walking and talking with Jesus; talking about His own departure which was shortly to happen in Jerusalem.

Amazing happenings and yet it seems the disciples had great trouble waking up – was it a dream? If so, all three had it !

We're told they were afraid as they entered the cloud (understatement?) and then a voice came from the cloud, saying:

“This is my son, my chosen one: listen to Him!”

If they weren't afraid before, they certainly were now, because I'm sure the significance wasn't lost on them.

These simple working men - disciples, were absolutely terrified, blown away, by the presence of God and, we're told, at the time, they didn't dare breathe a word about their experience to anyone.

So, what can we take away from this Gospel story??

Well, Jesus' identity has been clarified once and for all – He is the Son of the Living God. There's plenty of evidence if we choose to look at it.

If you're still in any doubt, then spend some serious time with Him and listen to what He says. Jesus reveals himself to everyone who seriously seeks to meet Him, and who takes time alone to do it..

****When did you last spend serious time listening to Jesus? (Is your face shining??)**

Also, it is clear, the old Covenant (agreement) is finished - the new Covenant is established. The Holy Spirit brings us freedom - and now there's nothing in between us and God - He allows us to Shine (We too are transfigured - like Jesus?)

I wonder what impact this story has on you??

To me, there is no doubt that we worship a very loving and caring God; but, we should never lose an awareness of His awesomeness either. As the chorus suggests, "Our God is a great big God, and He holds us in His hands.

So, as we go off into this week, and the start of Lent, I'd encourage you to meditate or chew over in your mind the awesomeness of this experience for the disciples as they experienced God 'full – on' and as they witnessed the Father's affirmation of Jesus Sonship and His 'Glory'.

This story also challenges me as to just how much we limit our understanding of God, because of the way we try to fit Him into the restrictive box of our mindset!

Let's try to open our minds to the wonder of His power and might this week, and allow God to demonstrate His power working through our lives..

So, as I close, let's pray; and let's ask the Holy Spirit to fill us with an awareness of the wonder and awesomeness of our God, and of the wonder of the depth of His love for us ...

Come Holy Spirit and inspire us we pray **Amen**