



St. Michael's Church
CHARLESTON, SC

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2018

1 CORINTHIANS 4:4-9
MARK 9:2-9

PREACHER: THE REV. AL ZADIG, JR.

HELP US LORD TO BE SO CONNECTED TO YOU THAT WE MIGHT BECOME THE SERVANTS OF OTHERS.

TAKE OUR LIPS AND SPEAK THROUGH THEM,
OUR MINDS AND THINK THROUGH THEM,
AND TAKE OUR HEARTS, AND SET THEM ON FIRE

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Do you know how much Jesus loves you?

Do you know that Jesus loves you so much he cares about every trial and suffering you encounter?

He knows that your life-my life is a mix of joy and sorrow.

So, Wherever you are on that spectrum right now, hear again Psalm 139..

Where can I go from your spirit?

Where can I flee from your presence?

- *If I go up to heaven you are there.*
- *If I make my bed in the depths you are there...*
 - *For even there your hand will guide*
 - *and hold me fast.*

Jesus loves you that much!

- Internalize that.
- Know that.
- Believe that.

I have proof.

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Go with me to Ancient Israel, Peter James and John are with Jesus, and Jesus shares with them the horrible news that He is about to:

- suffer
- face rejection
- betrayal
- and death....

Talk about the 5 stages of grief, for Peter he turns to anger saying: “not you Jesus...”

Jesus rebukes Peter and says:

“If anyone wants to follow me they must die to self, pick up the cross and follow me.

Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and the Gospel will save it.”

Can you imagine the reaction of these disciples?

- Confusion
- Fear
- Uncertainty
- Paralysis

Total pain and insecurity.

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Have you had those moments in your life?

Times when pain and uncertainty eclipsed your joy?

What I want to communicate is what Jesus does in response:

Jesus loves these men so much he takes them up a mountain to restore their hearts.

Mountains do that don't they?

Mountains have a way like steeples of literally raising your eyes from here to here to realize:

IT'S ABOUT HIM.

That yes Jesus is still in control.

Why?

Jesus loves these Disciples so much he wants to restore their hearts!

Throughout the Bible anytime God was speaking to His people, a mountain was involved!

- Mt. Sinai and the 10 Commandments
- The Sermon on the Mount
- Etc...

Scholars believe that Jesus takes the disciples up either Mt. Tabor or Mt. Hermon...

Oh I remember so well when a group of St. Michaelites worshiped on Mt. Tabor in the Church of the Transfiguration..

It happened to be the birthday of Charles Waring and we gave him a shofar horn and we worshiped from that very place in a way I will never forget.

Jesus loves these disciples so much he takes them up there and that my friends

- Is
- When
- It
- Happens.

As proof of the Love of Jesus, Jesus brings these spiritually and physically exhausted men to the mountain to do primarily one thing:

Worship!

They worship.

True worship allows us to lose ourselves to see Jesus for who He is!

As they worship:

The glory of God comes down and the veil of humanity that was Jesus, fades and what appears is His divine supernatural kingship!

They knew Him to be Fully Human

But on that mountain top during the transfiguration they are able to see Jesus fully divine!
It was an atmospheric transportation to another dimension!

It was like Jesus is saying:

“Men, let me give you a shot in the arm by showing you who I really am!”

And as Jesus is transfigured before them into dazzling white...

- Every doubt
- Every fear
- Every paralysis melts like snow

His clothes dazzling white which in the Greek means a literal blinding laser like beam from burnished brass or gold.

Like driving directly into a blinding sunset...

Can you imagine!

Imagine if you will the most powerful fireworks display you've ever seen....

Oh, as children our favorite July 4th experience was going on the shores of the Charles River in Boston, complete with not just fireworks, but the:

- Boston Pops Orchestra in full bore performing the 1812 Overture
- Coordinated with church bells all over the city!

- Cannons being fired...

- It was electric...

Yet that whole picture would have been like a dull dribble compared to the supernatural Transfiguration thriller on the Mountain!

Yet, there was to be much more.

The Bible says Elijah and Moses suddenly appear!

Why?

One simple reason, God is telling the disciples that His Son Jesus is the divine fulfillment...

The great accomplisher of everything in the Old Testament!

- About Moses—as the supreme law giver...
 - God is saying Jesus is the fulfiller of the law..
- About Elijah...the first and greatest of the prophets...
 - God is saying Jesus is the fulfiller of every prophecy!

Full stop: Just visualize that picture of love.

It's a peak behind the curtain...where

Jesus turns our ouws into wows!

Don't we long to worship like this, to lose ourselves to find ourselves in Him....

Totally saturated in His divine Shekinah Glory!

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Jesus loves these disciples so much
He gives them this glimpse of who He really is to sustain them in their valleys...

Jesus loves them so much
He's giving them a memory they could return to over and over again.

Saying: Trust your mountaintop revelation as your true North..

Your point of reference for all the days to come...

Isn't being under the Word exciting and beautiful!

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If you're Peter, James or John: How would you respond?

Just standing there wide-eyed and in awe and Holy fear would be perfectly acceptable.

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Well, we're not sure about James and John, but this is not the tact that Peter takes.

Peter says:

"Let's stay in this moment!
Never let this moment go Lord!"

I love this about Peter, who can chastise him?

Peter is in it to win it..he wants to engage in the deepest way and therefore freeze everything.

Peter wants to set up a Messianic Headquarters that would make the Amazon headquarters look like a tiny operation!

The problem is that Peter wants to make this a permanent high on earth...he wants to freeze the moment.
Yet for Jesus-

It was never meant to be permanent,

It was a glimpse, a shot in the arm to give them the strength to fight on!

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Oh this happens to us.

Lord give me a change-less life,

a change-less spiritual life-

I'm comfy where I am, in my pew, with my friends..

Don't change it Lord.

Personally,

I've been there,
in fact...
Every Alpha day away,

every Cursillo,

Lord let me stay on this high!

Even last week during Sunday worship, the powerful Global Impact Celebration:

- The worship
- The preaching by the Archbishop
- The singing

It was all so amazing I lost myself in that worship and did not want it to end!

...No Lord, keep it going! Don't stop it!

This is Peter, totally engaged in the work of Jesus.

And that's when another set of fireworks go off.

Here we go again...

The voice of the Father God thunders 3 profound statements:

This is my Son...

WHOM I LOVE...

Listen to Him.

Let's quickly unpack each one.

This is my Son!

God affirms our need to live UNDER the authority of the Bible....

That yes the Bible is true,
Jesus is God's son!!
This is my Son and we can trust Him!:

Whom I love:

The Love God has FOR His son should bring us to tears!

His only Son, a love that would endure seeing His Son die on a cross for us.

And finally God says

LISTEN TO HIM.

God is telling us that the voice of Jesus is OUR highest authority, more than Elijah or Moses...

LISTEN TO HIM....God inviting us to live a lifestyle of Discipleship, of followship!

Listen To Jesus...

Heed his words, live UNDER His Authority.

In other words... don't prolong this mountain top high:

You've got work to do...!

It's why Jesus tells the disciples in their mix of emotions..

Don't tell anyone what you just saw...

I mean if that were us, we would be instagramming it, facebooking it, letting the world know!

No, they needed the world to first know Jesus was really God's son, the Messiah....then all things would make sense.

For now, The disciples are to focus on being disciplined and discipling others.

Oswald Chambers writes:

“We can’t stay in that place of transfiguration forever basking in the light.

But we must obey the light we received there, and put it into action.

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My friends I hope this helps you love Jesus now more than you did even when you walked in here today....

Just writing this sermon brought me to tears last week, just the Goodness and love that Jesus has for His people! For you and me!

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I don't know about you, but lately I've kind of felt like the disciples.

The joys and sorrows like a roller coaster.

- The amazing joy of a wedding last night of our dear Elizabeth Scarborough
- To the death last week of our dear John G Thornill...
- To the Global Impact Mission Celebration...

Plus the ongoing litigation with the Episcopal church...

Wow!

In these roller coaster times, Jesus in the transfiguration gives us three things to anchor to and focus on.

Just three things....so let me briefly take you back up the mountain so that we leave here with our eyes squarely fixed on Jesus.

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3 Things to focus on this week:

First, with his people living in a sea of fear and uncertainty Jesus leads them in worship.

The greatest way we squash fear is to turn that worry into worship.

My friends in these uncertain times I urge you to continue making worship a non-negotiable in your life.

Sunday by Sunday worship, seeing Jesus as He Really is and leaving our fears and uncertainties at this altar.

This is God’s battle not ours and you were not meant to carry it,

therefore the moment we make worship a negotiable is the moment that that darkness eclipses our joy.

Worship and inviting others to worship, every week.

Making worship a non-negotiable, an absolute.

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Three things to focus on...worship being the first, total engagement begin the second.

What I love about Peter's response to Jesus is that he is full on! Jesus let's stay here and make three shelters...

It was unified engagement!

Yes his method was wrong, but he was engaged, he was basically saying Jesus, put me in coach, I'm all yours.

So often we chastise Peter's response, but I love it! Lord I'm in!

As a congregation....

Unified Engagement....

Everyone in! Not waiting for anything but engaging fully now!

Last week we received a faith promise offering from a member of our youth group who has committed to giving quarterly for mission...wow!

That's Unified engagement!

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Three things to focus on...

1. Worship being the first
2. Unified engagement being the second.

And finally, 3rd focus is discipleship.

God says this is my son whom I love, Listen to Him...

That's discipleship..

Listening, studying, following..for the sake of you and me looking and living like Jesus, as well as leading others to Him.

Sunday worship is our cornerstone followed by this engaged discipleship...
Through Life Groups and Holy City Connects.

The result is that WE become transfigured,

WE become transformed into His image.

- Worship
- Unified Engagement
- Discipleship.

Jesus loves you so much, allow him a deeper place in here.

Finally, I received a knock on my office door, on Tuesday morning..

And it's one of our precious St. Michaelites...

Now I never know what might come out of the mouths of our people, but this one I had never heard.

This wonderful older hero of mine said:

“Al, I need to buy one of the kneelers from the church that are in our pews.”

I was taken a bit off guard, I said buy, what do you mean?

She said, “Our Pew kneelers, they are the perfect height for my legs as I worship and pray at home.”

I could feel this abundant joy wash over me in that moment! I just praised God in my soul!

As if God through her was reminding me that

The best place to stand before God is from our knees and in doing so we become transfigured!

So I looked at her and said:

“Please consider it like a library book, take it on loan and don’t tell anybody!”

Tranfiguration...

- **Worship**
- **Unified Engagement**
- **Discipleship.**

Let us pray.