

Coffee to Go | Transfiguration Sunday | Year C

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 on Transfiguration Sunday, which is, today we remember that Jesus had a transformative experience through which his glory was revealed to the disciples, and as we prepare to journey through the Lenten season with Jesus, we today lay open our own lives to the transformative power of God's presence, God's mercy and God's grace. So, as we experience this, where are we with Jesus this week? And we are climbing a mountain with Jesus, Peter, John and James, and Blake is very disappointed that I did not break into song with "Climb every mountain, swim every sea, follow every rainbow, till you find your dream." Peter, John and James, here we go.

Blake Smith 01:34

Alright, well, if you're not going to sing it. So just as a context here. We're just passing through. We, if you're reading the Gospel of Luke, the passage that comes before this is Jesus telling the disciples, if you want to be my followers, deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me. The reason I say that is because the first verse of the passage that I'm going to be reading today, the ninth chapter of the Gospel of Luke, the 28th through the 36th verse begins with. "now about eight days after these sayings." So there you go. Now you know what the sayings were. And here is the passage...

Now about eight days after these sayings, Jesus took him, took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. Suddenly, they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. They appeared in glory and were speaking about his exodus, which he was about to fulfill in Jerusalem. Now, Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep, but as they awoke, they saw his glory, and the two men who stood with him, just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us set up three tents, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah," not realizing what he was saying. While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "this is my son, my chosen. Listen to him." When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone, and they kept silent. And in those days, told no one any of the things they had seen. On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd met him. Just then, a man from the crowd shouted, "Teacher, I beg you to look at my son. He is my only child. Suddenly, a spirit

seizes him, and all at once he shrieks. It convulses him until he foams at the mouth. It mauls him and will scarcely leave him. I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not." Jesus answered, "you faithless, and perverse generation, how much longer must I be with you and put up with you? Bring your son here?" While he was being brought forward, the demon dashed him to the ground in convulsions, but Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the boy, and gave him back to his father, and all were astounded at the greatness of God.

Well, because we're coming to the end of the period of Epiphany, we're going to focus today on the transfiguration. This is Transfiguration Sunday, as Karin has already mentioned. And this is kind of the ultimate epiphany, if you will. It's at this close of the season of Revelation where Jesus' true identity is illuminated to Peter, James and John. It's described by many people in different ways, that Jesus is illuminated, perhaps he had this giant aura. He had he was sparkling, glowing, shining, all ...

Karin Peter 05:19

Sequins Blake. He was just, he was like, disco ball sequins glowing. That's what I envision.

Blake Smith 05:27

I like the idea of the disco ball. That's, I've never thought about that. That's going to give me a new image as I read this each time in the midst of that. And you can probably imagine, especially if you're waking up from a sleep, and it kind of says, implies, at least, that they were in a pretty heavy sleep. And Peter wakes up and sees this, and he is immediately just overcome, and he wants to stay in this place and kind of capture this moment, if you will, and put them in tents. And let's, let's stay here, because this place is obviously a sacred space. It is where a divine encounter has happened. That might sound familiar to many of us, because I think that we have those places that are near and dear and special to us, where we have had a sense of divine encounter. And sometimes we lead ourselves to believe that that is the place, the place where divine encounter happens, and we need to return to that place. And that's, kind of seems to be what Peter is feeling here. Let's, let's hold on to this. Let's build a memorial to this occasion, and let's dwell here on this mountain top. Let's, let's have this as that place we know God was here, and so this is where we have to return to find God. But that's not what Jesus had planned. That was a moment of illumination. It was an epiphany for them. It was a way for them to truly understand Jesus' identity. But there was still work to be done, as there is for us. And so the next day, Jesus takes them back down the mountain where the people and the other disciples were, and they are confronted by this father whose son had not been able to be healed by the disciples, he was wracked with convulsions, perhaps epileptic seizure, and Jesus kind of loses it, if you are willing to allow Jesus to be human in the moment. He didn't lose it at the boy.

Karin Peter 07:41

And we do allow that. We do allow Jesus to be human here at Coffee to Go, we understand that Jesus periodically has had enough.

Blake Smith 07:51

Yes, he, he has his road rage moments, not on the road, but so he, he kind of loses it. And you can probably imagine him kind of giving a glare to the disciples and just going, what's wrong with you guys? What's wrong with you people? They still don't believe that they can act on behalf of Jesus in Jesus'

name, even though they are capable, and they are enough, and they have the gifts. We've talked about this in a recent previous episode, that when the disciples were called in the Gospel of Luke that they left behind an abundance of fish, but what they took with them was an abundance of giftedness and personal resources that made them sufficient and enough to do the work that Jesus was calling them to. And so, of course, in his frustration, perhaps Jesus turns kind of with a sigh and takes the boy and heals him. So, we have a couple of revelations. We have this big, demonstrative, dramatic revelation on the mountain, and Jesus says, Tell no one. And they are, they, they, I don't guess he tells them to tell no one. They just tell no one. I, they probably don't even know how to describe it. And then the next day, there's a smaller, less dramatic revelation, one even mixed with perhaps a little frustration, but it's done in front of everyone. So, there is yet another revelation or epiphany here at the end of this passage. It's here, in the afterglow of the transfiguration and the mystery of God that we enter into Lent. So, this is that doorway into our next season. So, some questions that we might ask ourselves at the end of Epiphany and in this day of Transfiguration is, So, when have I had a mountaintop experience and not wanted to leave, and what ground or place do I consider sacred or holy because of what I experienced there? What is that special place that perhaps has become sacred for you because of a particular experience that you've had, and that may have become, in at least some way, thought of as the exclusive place where God can be found? It's important for us to acknowledge that, as we try to open our hearts and minds to experiencing the divine in all places.

Karin Peter 10:43

So, this week, we can experience it this way by making some temporary shelters, some tents for ourselves, we're going to make space to encounter the divine spirit. So you can do it in different ways. So Blake, I don't know if you built blanket tents when you were a kid, but I did so if you have families at home, then build a blanket tent with your kids, or find a comfy chair or snuggle up in bed, or maybe it's just when you wake up, or maybe you sit on the front porch in the morning or out on the patio, or have a pathway in a garden. Wherever it is that's your space, light a candle there or not, if you're not a candle lighter, but if you are, light a candle there. And every day this week, go there and light the candle and simply rest in that space and in whatever comes to you there and open yourself to the presence of God's mercy and love, and in that space, know this. You belong. You are enough. You are loved. That's our transfiguration experience for this week.

Blake Smith 12:03

I like that, and yes, we did make tents and forts and stuff like that with blankets when we were little. And I have to say that I still kind of enjoy doing that with my great nieces and nephews. They like to build them, and they seem to have been so much bigger when I was little, but they are still fun and precious moments happen in playing and being together.

Karin Peter 12:30

And those too are divine encounters. Are they not?

Blake Smith 12:35

Yep, absolutely, absolutely. So, our blessing today comes from Jan Richardson, and it is specifically "A Blessing for Transfiguration."

Sunday, 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 a table, chairs. 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 isn't shy, it's not afraid. It simply knows how to bide its time, to watch and wait, to discern and 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.

Thanks everybody for joining us here at Coffee to Go this week, we invite you to join us next time for the next part of our journey through the liturgical seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition.