

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2021 – THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD

2 Kings 2: 1-12 – Elijah Ascends to Heaven, Is Succeeded by Elisha

The First Reading for January 31 was from Deuteronomy 18.

Moses has led the people out of Egypt, through the wilderness, up to the point where they are ready to enter the Promised Land. But he will not be able to lead them the rest of the way.

We talked about what it must have been like for Moses to know that he would be able to lead them this far, but no further.

Our First Reading for February 14 is from a similar perspective.

Elisha has been with Elijah up to this point. Elijah will now be taken up to heaven. Elisha is able to be with Elijah this far, but no further.

1 Kings 19: 15-16 – “You shall anoint Hazael as king over Aram. You shall anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel. And you shall anoint Elisha son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah as prophet in your place.”

1 Kings 19: 21 – Elisha took the yoke of oxen and slaughtered them; using the equipment from the oxen, he boiled their flesh, and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out and followed Elijah and became his servant.

Verses 1-6 -

When have you sensed or known that someone you love very much will soon be dying, so you did not want to leave him or her?

Have you known of a situation where someone knew that he or she was dying and/or would soon be dying, but family and friends did not want to talk about it?

Verse 8 -

Several times in the Bible when there is a life experience after which things are not the same there is a crossing of a body of water.

Other examples would be the Israelites' crossing the Red Sea as they leave slavery in Egypt, or, forty years later, when they cross the Jordan River into the Promised Land.

Cf. when we go through baptismal waters and enter into a new life. Things are no longer the same. Romans 6: 4 – 2 Corinthians 5: 17

Verse 9 -

What is something you have asked a loved one for shortly before he or she died?

Verse 11-12 –

When was a time when you were able to go with someone, but only so far, not any further?

Mark 9: 2-9 – Ten Deadly Mistakes of the Church

Beginning with the Transfiguration, everything changes in the life of Jesus. In the same way, with COVID, everything in the church is changing. We are in a Mark 9 moment.

1. Wanting to maintain the status quo

Mark 9: 5 – “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here.”

2. An over emphasis on buildings

Mark 9: 5 - “Let us make three dwellings.”

3. Speaking rather than listening

Matthew 17: 5 – While he was still speaking. / Mark 9: 6 – He did not know what to say.

4. Detaching ourselves from the overwhelming experience of the presence of God

Matthew 17: 6-7 – When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. But Jesus came and touched them.

5. Not focusing on Jesus

Matthew 17: 7-8 – Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Get up and do not be afraid.”

Mark 9: 8 – When they looked around, they saw no one with them any more but only Jesus.

6. Focusing on the mountain top experience while neglecting the needs of people in the valley

Mark 9: 9 – As they were coming down the mountain.

7. Replacing the theology of the cross with the theology of glory

Mark 9: 9 – He ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

8. Not walking and living in the hope of victory

As followers of Jesus, we know how the story ends. Jesus has been risen from the dead, so we need to speak.

9. Not knowing, and not being able to respond to, the needs of the world

Mark 9: 17-18 – “Teacher, I brought you my son; he has a spirit that makes him unable to speak. I asked your disciples to cast it out, but they could not do so.”

10. Not preaching the Gospel of Jesus with simplicity and clarity

Mark 9: 31 – “The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again.” They did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him.