

When Pictures Become Windows

Mark 9: 2-9 (February 11, 2018)

Mark 9: 2-3

2Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, 3and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them.

Historical Context

Jesus led them to a *high mountain apart*. Which mountain was the mountain of the Transfiguration? Most scholars give two possibilities: Mount Tabor or Mount Hermon. It seems that Mount Tabor is the better choice. Why? Early Church Fathers such as Origen, Cyril of Jerusalem and Jerome identified "a high mountain apart" as Mount Tabor. Also, after the event of the Transfiguration, Jesus goes "on from there and passed through Galilee." (Mark 9:30) Mount Tabor is located in Galilee and so the story flows naturally and geographically from this "high mountain apart" into Galilee.

Theme: When Pictures Become Windows

There are times in our lives when we look around and wonder, "Is this all there is?" We look at our life, our circumstances, and we want more. But it is not about the circumstances of life. It's about us. The restlessness, the desire for something more, generally means that we have been living life at the shallow end of the pool. Life at the surface is easier, more efficient, and rewarded by much of the world today.

But, life on the surface keeps us judging the circumstances. We look at our circumstances as a picture. Most of us seek God in the circumstances of life. We want God to show up, be present, and do something. This is the God who does. We might think about this as the first part of the spiritual journey; the journey of discovering God in the circumstances. This is what the disciples have been doing. They have seen Jesus cast our demons, heal Peter's mother in law, and cure the sick. This is the God about whom people talk, the God that gets "likes" and "shares" on Facebook.

At some point we must, however, begin to discover the God who is beyond the circumstances. This is the God who is. This is the second part of the spiritual journey. Jesus is leading Peter, James and John, up the mountain to discover the God who is beyond circumstances. Here their pictures of life's circumstances will become windows by which they move into the depths of God's life, light, and love.

Pictures are static. On the Mount of Transfiguration our pictures of life's circumstances become windows through which we step into a new world, a new way of seeing, a new way of hearing, and new way of being. That's what happened for Peter, James, and John. The transfiguration is as much about them as it is Jesus. Whenever our picture of life's circumstances becomes a window into new life we stand in a transfigured moment. Circumstances haven't changed. We have changed and that seems to change everything.