

2023-08-06 ... 10am Worship Together Sermon ... Revd Sue Armstrong

Daniel 7: 9 – 10, 13, 14; 2 Peter 1: 16 – 19; Luke 9: 28 – 36

'The Transfiguration of Christ'

I'm sure if you had asked the disciples they would have said: *'of course we know Jesus'* after all they had been with Him since the beginning of his ministry.

But here, for the first time, they see Jesus as he really is – not in his limited human form – but in the transformed, being able to be with Moses and Elijah.

I was reminded of a friend from Berkshire, lively, bright, outgoing who had begun to feel that her husband was a bit staid, reserved – possibly boring. Yet when they moved to the USA and she saw the esteem and respect he was shown by new, senior colleagues she realised that she had never seen him as he really was.

The three disciples, invited to accompany Jesus, thought He was “just” doing what he had done many times before. Taking time out to physically distance himself from the crowds and all that went with them, taking time to pray, to re-establish the link, the understanding with God his Father and the task that lay ahead.

But how wrong they were – what they were given was the confirmation of Jesus' status and that special knowledge strengthened them and enabled them to cope as Jesus explains and speaks more and more of his coming suffering and death. They may have a real understanding now that He is the Messiah but they still do not like hearing what lies ahead.

This experience does however equip them for their future ministries – they can say: *'I was there, I saw.'* As ever, Peter the impulsive, jumps straight in and offers to make shelters in the hope that Moses and Elijah may be persuaded to stay – just as in the Old Testament Yaweh was at home in the Tent before the Temple was built in Jerusalem. Once again he has displayed his impetuous nature; once again we can almost see Jesus shaking his head as He smiles understandingly at this, one of his oldest friends and disciples as he tries to understand the whole meaning of what they have seen. This experience remained deeply engraved in Peter's memory throughout his life and we hear in the Epistle the conviction it had given him as he states in **2 Peter 1 verse 18: “We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven.”**

So what of us – here we have two accounts of this happening, this time including the disciples in the immensity of it, precisely so that they could say with absolute conviction: *“This I saw, this I witnessed and this confirmed everything that I had felt and trusted about Jesus Christ through my time with Him. This is the solid truth on which I can base my teaching.”*

For us this is why 2000 years later we too can say: ***“I trust and I believe”***. That transfigured Christ went on to sacrifice everything for me in order to offer that Resurrected life – and all that we need to do is say: ***'Lord I believe – help Thou my unbelief.'***