

Welshpool & Bro Hafren Methodist Circuit

Home Worship Sheet – The Transfiguration

11th February 2024

**This short act of worship has been prepared and written
for you by John Harbron**

Call to worship

The words of Simeon when Jesus was brought to the Temple.

“Now Lord, you have kept your promise, with my own eyes I have seen your salvation which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples; A light to reveal you to the Gentiles and bring glory to your people Israel.”

This is the Authentication that Jesus, albeit he is only 40 days old, is everything he is claimed to be.

The way the Christian calendar works, we have moved swiftly on. We have now arrived at the last Sunday before Lent. It is Lent next week which leads us onto the crucifixion of Jesus, climaxing with his resurrection. Traditionally on this last Sunday before Lent, the passage set for the day confirms the Authentication of Jesus. This rightly features at the centre of our worship.

This year it comes from the lectionary gospel of Mark.

Gospel Reading

Mark Ch 9 vs 2–9

After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus. Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” (He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.) Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: “This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!” Suddenly, when they looked around, they no

longer saw anyone with them except Jesus. As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

*The key message from it is “A voice came from the cloud:-
‘This is my beloved Son – listen to him.’ ”*

*The Authentication to the 3 disciples - who Jesus was.
They may have been given hints, but now they knew.
Jesus was the “real deal”.*

Hymn StF 188 There’s a light upon the mountain

To listen to the hymn in a new tab: press Shift and Ctrl together and click [here.-](#)
Close the tab after the hymn.

- 1 There’s a light upon the mountains,
and the day is at the spring,
when our eyes shall see the beauty
and the glory of the King:
weary was our heart with waiting,
and the night-watch seemed so long,
but his triumph day is breaking,
and we hail it with a song.
- 2 There’s a hush of expectation
and a quiet in the air,
and the breath of God is moving
in the fervent breath of prayer:
for the suffering, dying Jesus
is the Christ upon the throne,
and the travail of our spirit
is the travail of his own.
- 3 Hark! We hear a distant music,
and it comes with fuller swell;
'tis the triumph-song of Jesus,
of our King, Immanuel!
Zion, go now forth to meet him!
and, my soul, be swift to bring
all thy sweetest and thy dearest
for the triumph of our King!

Henry Burton (1840-1930)

Opening Prayers

Lord, the disciples glimpsed something of your glory on the mountain top; your glory revealed to all people through the written word, through the spoken word and through your Son Jesus Christ, the Living Word.

Lord, you offer us glimpses of your glory in the world you have made, through worship and prayer and through other people. But we confess, Lord, that like those early disciples, we do not know how to react, we love the glimpses of your glory in our everyday lives on the plains and in the valleys.

Now and again we see those moments of glory, flashes of understanding, when the penny drops and we see you in all your glory.

There are those times when we need to stand on a mountain top and see the wider picture. To know that we need to look beyond our narrow vision, to be looking up, looking out to your glory revealed in this world.

But we also realise we must also look down too, and we find nothing much grows on a mountain top. It is only then we understand that it is in the valley that most growth takes place and it is there we see transformations which are an essential part of your creation.

Lord, forgive us that we don't like change and we rarely allow you to transfigure, transform our lives with the glory of your love. We ask that you fill us with the light of your spirit, that in all our dealings with our neighbours, in all that we think and do and say, your glory may be revealed.

We offer you our prayers through Jesus Christ.

AMEN

For Peter, James & John, they must have gone through a whole load of emotions during their experience on the mountain top. Something they would never forget. So it should come as no surprise to us for Peter to refer back to it in one of his letters.

Epistle Reading

2 Peter Ch 1 vs 3-9, 16-19

His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love.

For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins.

For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. He received honour and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.

We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

Reflection

This account on the mountain top, which has been given the title "The Transfiguration" is surely one of the strangest, if not the strangest event in the gospels. I go so far as to say it's unique. The stories of Jesus are very much part of this world but this event seems a convergence of fantasy with the real world. It feels surreal. A "dream" world maybe!

As I've been preparing for this Worship, it's certainly reminded me of "Alice in Wonderland". Instead of meeting the Mad Hatter and the March Hare, the disciples witness Jesus meeting Moses and Elijah!

Normality returning when they wake up!

I wonder how the 3 disciples felt when Jesus told them to join him in going to the top of this mountain. The last time they went up a hill was to escape the crowds – they followed him – and the disciples ended up feeding the crowd.

Now as they climbed, were they looking around to see if they were being followed, and seeing if there were any suitable places to stop to eat!

Nothing like that happened, fortunately. But being with Jesus, something definitely would happen, but what?

At the top, they watched Jesus as he moved away from them and then things started to happen, culminating in Jesus being joined by Moses and Elijah.

We're told the disciples were frightened – and you can't blame them. I think we'd all be terrified, stuck there on a mountain, essentially alone.

It's good to be around people like Peter who will say or do something without thinking, even if it is totally ridiculous. It can help lower the tension.

Then all the lighting effects change as a cloud covers the mountain and a voice is heard.

“This is my beloved Son – listen to him!”

They look around, and it's only Jesus standing there.

It may have taken a bit of time to register, the three of them had heard it first hand: Jesus is the Son of God.

On that mountain top it's been Authenticated.

But they are not to tell anyone yet, not until he has risen from death.

And I'm sure they didn't really understand what that was all about.

It must have been difficult not to talk about everything they had experienced.

Of course it made sense that no one knew for certain who Jesus was, otherwise the knives would be quickly out to cut him down!

What happened on that mountain top is something very precious. In the presence of God, three very special people. Two who had graced this earth: an acclaimed leader and lawmaker alongside the greatest prophet. They are joined by God's own Son. Together, the pinnacle of God's glory.

In the valley below, the people are going about their own business, and for them to thrive, they need to be better than the next person.

Self interest with all the suffering that can generate.

Self indulgence with all the suffering that can generate.

Self preservation, whether real or imaginary, with all the suffering that can generate.

But dreaming of good things, good times may not be such a bad thing.

If we dream and try to aspire to that higher goal of God's glory on the mountain, whilst we may not reach it, life in the valleys will be far better placed to be the Kingdom of God.

Mountains hold mixed messages. Places of loneliness, of frightening forces with life threatening consequences.

But the Transfiguration story concentrates on them being places of serenity and spiritually uplifting.

Peter experienced that unforgettable mountain top event.

He writes about it in his letter, telling us he was there with Jesus on the mountain.

It is true, Jesus is the Son of God, Jesus is the Messiah!

No one should be in doubt – Peter saw it and heard it with his own eyes and ears.

Next Wednesday, Lent begins. A time of reflection on our faith.

Just as Jesus did when he went into the wilderness before starting his ministry.

The story of The Transfiguration holds many different ideas to take with us into Lent. Symbols which we can focus on to.

Living here in Mid Wales, we are surrounded by hills and valleys.

We can easily appreciate the part hills and mountains have contributed in the story of mankind. And still do.

We enjoy going up hills and mountains, not only to get the view, but to experience the elation, the peace and a sense of being in God's world. A totally different feel and perspective to being in the valley.

And the journey to the top is all part of that experience, whether it is going up one of the paths to the top of Snowdon or letting the train take the strain – each is special in its own way.

But going up mountains can be dangerous.

We hear too often of people getting into difficulties in Snowdonia and the Beacons.

The constant message - It is essential to prepare for that time in the mountains.

Some fifteen ago, Irene and myself visited the French Alps with two friends. It was on the Sunday whilst we were there, we didn't go to church, but we went up a mountain by cable car to a glacier, 3200 m up – three times the height of Snowdon.

The leaflet advised us to take warm clothing as it was cold up there, sunglasses for the glare, suitable footwear – and so on.

I don't like heights and was dubious about the cable car but I was prepared to give it a go. To my surprise, I really enjoyed the cable car journey. The views of the mountain were wonderful. At the top, included in the ticket was a visit to an Ice Grotto which had been cut into the glacier.

From the cable car we went down to the path leading to the Grotto.

Then we stepped onto the glacier with the path defined by wooden posts knocked into the ice and rope linking the posts.

I hadn't gone far when I felt myself slipping – and saved myself by grabbing the rope, which in turn pulled a post out of the ice.

But I was not to be outdone, so I continued on - only to be slipping again and again. I thought I had good shoes on, but the sole was too smooth for walking on ice.

A young woman was following us. She looked the part for being on the mountain. Correct clothes, hat, sunglasses, boots and rucksack. In her hand were two folded sticks for walking on ice.

“Would you like to use these?” she asked.

She unfolded them, handed them to me and off we went.

We lost sight of her as I joined Irene and our friends in the Ice Grotto, looking at and marvelling at a wide variety of ice sculptures, taking photos and really enjoying ourselves.

Later, back outside the café on the mountain, we found the young woman, and gave her back the ice sticks.

She was Italian, her husband was out walking on the glacier and the snow covered mountain. She was enjoying the mountain in her own way.

Was she an active Christian? Was she a believer? We don't know.

There on that Sunday, on that mountain, through her she showed the love of Jesus Christ.

To offer those sticks to a total stranger – and let us walk off with them.

We weren't even of her nationality – but we were in need of help, and she gave them to us.

We don't know her name, but on that mountain the glory of Christ shone through her.

To most people, she must have looked a very normal young woman, prepared and dressed for the mountain. For me, that preparation transformed her spiritually to be able to offer her help.

There was a compassion in her that she was willing to pass on something she owned to a complete stranger. We may not have been in church that day, but through her, Christ was on that mountain.

For us, the mountain we have to continually climb is letting Christ transform our lives spiritually so his light and his glory shine through us. We may discover, through others, ways to let the light of Jesus shine through ourselves.

It is by the light of Jesus shining through us that others can see his presence. By doing that, we are transformed in beauty, at least in God's eyes!!

And our own transfiguration is complete.

Our role then is in transforming the valleys to let the love, peace, friendship, kindness and courage of Jesus Christ glow as we all hear these words:-

“These are my beloved sons and daughters – engage with them!”

AMEN

Hymn StF 20 Be still for the presence of the Lord

To listen to the hymn in a new tab: press Shift and Ctrl together and click [here](#).-
Close the tab after the hymn.

- 1 Be still, for the presence of the Lord,
the Holy One, is here;
come bow before him now
with reverence and fear:
in him no sin is found-
we stand on holy ground.
Be still, for the presence of the Lord,
the Holy One, is here.
- 2 Be still, for the glory of the Lord
is shining all around;
he burns with holy fire,
with splendour he is crowned:
how awesome is the sight -
our radiant King of light!
Be still, for the glory of the Lord
is shining all around.
- 3 Be still, for the power of the Lord
is moving in this place:
he comes to cleanse and heal,
to minister his grace-
no work too hard for him.
In faith receive from him.
Be still, for the power of the Lord
is moving in this place.

David J Evans (b. 1957)

Prayers of intercession

Father, we pray for the world where men and women are lost, children are unloved and afraid; for the world where people worship anyone and anything rather than their Maker; for the world in its need of hope and renewal; for the world where might is right and the weak are crushed; we pray for the world wherever there is darkness.

We bring to you Lord, all who actively seek peace and reconciliation in a very troubled hostile world; to transform fear and hate into trust and love.

We pray Lord, for the world which is in need of your transforming light and life which only your Son Jesus Christ can bring.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

We pray for the church. We pray, the Church of Jesus Christ, that our witness, our worship and our service may be worthy of Him.

We ask for wisdom, understanding, truth and sensitivity in the whole of our life together in Jesus Christ, for the joy and wonder of knowing that our fellowship here is designed for eternity.

We pray that this church is a home for all, the good and the bad; a place where all are made welcome and a place where people are made whole in Christ.

We pray for the church, that it is a transforming force through which all will glorify you Lord.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

We pray for any we know who are in need, for those who are ill, those who will never recover and those who wait with them; for those facing important decisions and for those unsure of what tomorrow will bring.

We pray for King Charles and his family after he was diagnosed with cancer. We appreciate his openness and willingness to share news of his health and hope that it will encourage more people to attend routine screening and health checks when invited by their GP surgery.

We pray for our neighbours, our family and friends and any we know who need to hear of your love for them, to feel the touch of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ upon their hearts and to experience the life-changing power of the Holy Spirit. We pray that through you, their lives are transformed with the strength and courage you give in times of struggles and difficulty.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Finally, Lord we pray for ourselves. We pray for all we must do and say and face in the coming days of this week, for the words of faith we should share and the prayers for others for which we need supporting words; for the challenges that we must face and the pressures and pain and stress of each day.

We pray for ourselves and ask for the transforming love of Christ to be with us in serving others.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

We ask these prayers in the name of our Saviour, who makes all things new.

AMEN.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory
for ever and ever. Amen.

Hymn StF 94

To God be the glory great things he has done

To listen to the hymn in a new tab: press Shift and Ctrl together and click [here](#).-
Close the tab after the hymn.

- 1 To God be the glory, great things he has done!
So loved he the world that he gave us his Son,
who yielded his life an atonement for sin,
and opened the life-gate that all may go in:

*Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord,
Let the earth hear his voice!
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!
Let the people rejoice!
O come to the Father, through Jesus the Son;
and give him the glory, great things he has done!*
- 2 O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood,
to every believer the promise of God;
and every offender who truly believes,
that moment from Jesus a pardon receives:
- 3 Great things he has taught us, great things he has done,
and great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son;
but purer, and higher, and greater will be
our wonder, our rapture, when Jesus we see:

Frances Jane van Alstyne (Fanny Crosby) (1820-1915)

Blessing

Jesus is the chosen One,
living hope of every nation,
hear and heed him, everyone,
sing, with earth and all creation;
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!