

## The Transfiguration of Jesus: A Moment for Decision

Sermon Notes by the Rev. Arnold A. Bush, Priest in Charge of Church of the Epiphany, 2602 Gilmer Avenue, Tallahassee, AL 36078, Last Sunday of Epiphany Season, February 10, 2013

Text Luke 9:28-36; Exodus 34:29-35 (Veil over Moses face)

Summary Sentence: One interpretation of the Transfiguration states that Jesus perceived God was calling him to Jerusalem where he would be betrayed, beaten and killed like other prophets. The Transfiguration on Mt. Tabor was moment of affirmation for Jesus to continue his journey to Jerusalem as we look at the precipices in Luke 9 especially verse 51 *"Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem, the people of Samaria did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem."*

I Introduction: Moments of transition in our life we seek  
DISCERNMENT AND GUIDANCE

- A senior in high school who loves the Lord is undecided which college he is going to enroll in as a freshman. His parents, his relatives, his high school classmates are all giving him advice. What are the factors that influence his decision?
- The Airbus Corporation in Mobile is seeking to employ over a 1,000 new employees. You live within of the new Mobile plant.... and you are considering applying but this would involve leaving your job and commuting 50 miles away. You begin to weigh the pros and cons for changing jobs.
- You are approaching the age of 62, so you are considering all the advantages and limitations of drawing your social security at 62 or waiting the 65. You are uncertain about what to do?
- You have just had annual physical with several tests. You are sitting down with your primary physician, who is advising you to change your diet, adopt an exercise program, do something about the stress in your life. You are seeking the best changes to make in your lifestyle. You are a devoted follower of Christ... seeking some resolve and discernment on just what to put into practice?

EACH ONE OF US CAN FILL IN ANOTHER PERSONAL STORY ABOUT THE NEED FOR CLARIETY IN A DECISION EFFECTING THE FUTURE. A major purchase, a job change, time for retirement, a decision to assist a grown child, adopting a recreational RV or BOAT. Etc.

As we look at the context of the description of Jesus on the Mount of the Transfiguration, most bibles on Luke divide sections based on geographical basis. The Bibles have these sections: The Birth of Jesus and John the Baptist, A prelude to his earthly ministry, The Galilean Ministry (LK 4:14), The Journey to Jerusalem (9:51), the Jerusalem Ministry (19:26), The Passion and after the Resurrection. As we Jesus in the region of Galilee, NW of the Sea of Galilee, his popularity is spreading with healing and teachings in Capernaum, Calms a storm on the northern part of the sea, feeds 5,000, sends out the 12, and predicts His death. So his predicament is God is calling me to Jerusalem, south, away from his popularity. This Experience of the Transfiguration affirms his discernment to resolve to continue his journey to Jerusalem. (Lay out map of Galilee, Mt.Tarbor, Jerusalem)

II Before elaborating on The Discernment Theme I want to go over some hints, hidden meaning behind a few of the key images in this story.

Please open your bulletin to the Gospel from Luke or page 1578 In Pew Bible.

- In all three Gospels, thus very important
- Eight Days..... In early Christian circles 8th day was the Resurrection, or new Creation Day. God is doing a new thing. All early churches octagonal baptismal fonts are made with 8 sides, octagon.
- Three, seven and ten a significant numbers: Peter , James and John, inner circle, also at Garden of Gethsemane before Good Friday.
- Mountain to Pray... went often but something happened this time
- Appearance of his face changed became dazzling white, A/ Mark fuller on earth could bleach them. Jesus is changed, We are to be

changed. Greek word "metamorphosis" eg. In a tad poll or cater pillow.

- Two Men? Moses and Elijah: in OT, Moses is the Law Giver, the Torah, 10 Commandments; Elijah is the supreme prophet of Israel. Here Jesus is along side but preeminent above the Law and the Prophets
- Both fall asleep... the same three at the Garden of Gethsemane mentioned in the Passion Narrative on Palm Sunday
- Peter in his typical way speaks out as did on the evening saying he will not deny know Jesus, but does to the Maid in the outdoor char cold fire. Three booths, dwellings, tabernacles for all three were to me memorialized or let us keep this experience on this mountain.
- Cloud overshadowed them... Cloud is a symbol of God presence and in the "cloud" followed the Hebrews escaping from Egypt walking and camping across the wilderness on the Sinai Peninsular.
- A Voice from the cloud, "*This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him.*" What other occasion did Jesus hear this voice? At Baptism of John. This is the Affirmation from the Father God to Jesus.

### III What is the message for us in Tallassee, C.AL?

- They went up to a mountain to pray. They wanted to get away from the crowd, the demands, and responsibilities in their lives. Think about it certainly we can pray on the run.. But we need a place to offer our prayers, a table, a picnic table on the back porch... when warmer.... Not become a bird watcher, or spread out the morning paper or a magazine. But a place to pray... talk to God.
- God does from time to time give is mountain top, intense vivid experience with Him. Yes this is true. But sometimes as a person listens to vivid prayer experience, or vivid healing, or that miracle in the family... one may have some envy and jealousy... Why can not God give me healing experience like.....? ( a losing sports fan or athletic )

- Luke records, “they were terrified”. Other translations state they were AFRAID. Some time we are afraid to getting too close to Christ. Some times in our life we want to keep Jesus a arms length. We are afraid he may condemn us for some wrong doing, or immoral action. Or we may be afraid if we come very close to him, he may whisper in our ears.... I want to go work in an undeveloped country, or ask me to make up for someone I cannot stand. Remember this God we know in Christ is always wooing us be his friend. He is bigger and dishing our Forgiveness rather than throwing stones and condemnation on us.
- As I mentioned last Tuesday night, I have given you a schematic on how we can experience TRANSFORMATION. This is a process used by CREDO 8 day Seminar filled with lectures, individual consultations, movies, worship quiet time. In hearing address after address, IDENTITY, DISCERNMENT, PRACTICE, AND TRANSFORMATION. Arnold you need to take more time, ask the question What is God Will for me in this area of your life. I need some improvement in practicing as well as teaching the congregation about DISCERNMENT. Most of my reading and experience on discernment was for individuals to learn to skill or use the gift of discernment to know evil from good. Or to know with is from Satan or know what is from God.

In Diane Butler Ross’s book *Christianity for the Rest of Us*, we studied last fall in the adult class , she had a chapter on Discernment . This was a corporate type of discernment for the congregation.

Dr Diane Butler’s definition of DISCERNMENT came from theologian Mark McIntosh, (page 96),

” He identifies five phases of discernment: faith, distinguishing between good and evil, practical wisdom, sensitive to pursue God’s will and finally contemplation of wisdom.” These five movements is a pattern of discerning life that takes us beyond technique-driven and self-interested popular spirituality.

It is taking the initiative to pursue God's will. As we are talking to the Lord, ask the Holy Spirit.... What is you will for me in my leisure time? What is you will for me in my health? What is you will for Zoe and I in building healthy relationships in Birmingham? Where can I invest some quality time in ministering with poor and disenfranchised in Metroarea. As I said, last Tuesday, He said to me be attentive to your calendar recording in the months ahead. If you are going to be a better husband, and grandfather.... If I am going to work with the poor or attend the opportunities for continuing education... then write it on your calendar. I have had many retired folks to say, not that I am retired I do not want a Calendar.

My suggestion from my insights in discernment is of course we will pray over God Will for the BIG TICKET ITEM, the car, remodeling, appliance, expensive trip... but are we seeking God's will for our daily decisions. Keep a daily Quiet Time... Let his Grace water and message you soul and personality.

An a voice came from the Cloud: This is my beloved Son, LISTEN TO HIM. Are you and I going to improve our listening to the Holy Spirit this Lent?