

Epiphany on the Mount

Sermon Series for the Season of Epiphany



SERMON INFO

TITLE

The Transfiguration

PREACHER

Rev. Tim Frickenschmidt

TEXTS

Exodus 24:12-18

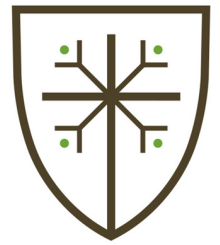
1 Corinthians 13:1-8

Matthew 17:1-9, 14-16

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What has God used in your life to wake you up in a time of spiritual slumber?
2. Tim said that "familiarity can be deadly to the spiritual life." How is this familiarity that leads us to spiritual sleep different from the intentional cultivation of habits and practices that lead to spiritual life?

SERMON NOTES



February 19, 2023

SERMON SUMMARY

This Sunday, the Season of Epiphany concluded with Transfiguration Sunday. And, as Tim said, the arc of Epiphany - from Jesus' baptism to his Transfiguration - is meant to also be the arc of the Christian life. Jesus came that we might be transfigured into those who shine with God's very image. And the two actions of the transfiguration story - unveiling and establishing - help us to see that image more fully.

Unveiling

Probably the most memorable image of this gospel story is Jesus' physical transformation. He shone with such brightness that the best comparison was the sun itself. And the disciples, heavy with sleep as the gospel says, were startled awake by the reality of Jesus' identity radiating from him. And we all need this startling awake at some point. We all become heavy with spiritual slumber and need to be woken up.

After he is startled awake, Peter suggests that they build tents on the mountain. He wants to stay. As Tim said, Peter, like all of us when we experience a "mountain-top moment" wants to use whatever he can to stay on the mountain top as long as he can. But God interrupts Peter because staying on the mountain top is not who God is. God's love is a love that always comes down the mountain to and for others. God's interrupting word declares Jesus' identity as his Son - marked by the same self-emptying love.

Establishing

God's first word unveils Jesus for who he truly is. His second word establishes him and his authority. God says, "listen to him." Moses and Elijah disappear and Jesus is all that remains. We all need one word, one authority to listen to. Peter tries to add his own word. But, contrary to what the world says, our own word is not the final authority. Don't let your voice convince you to take things into your own hands instead of waiting for God to act. If it adds to or supersedes Jesus' Word, it will keep you high, separated without Jesus' self-giving love.

This is what the love of God looks like - to come back down the mountain. To follow Jesus back down the mountain that we might radiate the very presence of God to the world.