

Transfiguration 2/11/18
Mark 9:2-9 B

AND PETER SAID TO JESUS, "RABBI, IT IS GOOD THAT WE ARE HERE. LET US MAKE THREE TENTS, ONE FOR YOU AND ONE FOR MOSES AND ONE FOR ELIJAH."

The weather outside is, to wax poetically, frightful. I don't care how much positive thinking you do about not having to shovel snow, it's not fit for man or beast out there. You think about that for a moment, and you really can't blame Peter, can you? Honestly, I wouldn't have wanted to leave that mountain, either. And neither would you. Here was Jesus in His glory. Here was a true foretaste of the feast to come. Why go back down that mountain – to the cold, doing your taxes, cooking and cleaning, homework, putting up with kids and co-workers that are not always that loveable, and more cold and winter. Let's be honest -- you and I wish we could go up that mount of transfiguration with Jesus and **just stay there**.

Peter wanted to stay on that mountain because he didn't get it. Jesus couldn't stay on that mountain, because He had something to do down below. And as much as we would want to live on that mountain, we can't. We have something to do down here on the plain, as well.

When God created everything in six days, He pronounced His creation "good". That meant there was no sin. And because there was no sin, there was no death. But then sin came. And with sin, came death. Paul talks about the world cursed by sin in which we live this way,

"For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly" (Ro 8:22-23).

We know the groaning of the Father's creation because we live in it every day: opioid crisis, marriage continually under attack by the lusts and desires of the sinful flesh, mass shootings, assaults, burglaries, droughts, and floods.

We are in the world, so we hear of these every day. But, even who we are in the world have made ourselves quite comfortable here, so we become "of" the world, all too often. We watch TV and avoid teaching the Catechism to our children or praying ourselves. It is much easier to play video games than do the homework our teacher has assigned to us. It is much easier to do those things that I want rather than to discipline my children, because disciplining children takes courage, it is tough. As parents, it is easier to lament, "I can't do anything with that child," which is a political correct way of saying, "I don't want to do anything with my child." It is much easier to lust after some woman in a magazine or on the internet than honor and cherish the wife God has given you. It is much easier to argue with your husband than obey him; after all, he's a jerk anyway, right? It is much easier and much more fun to hoard material things and buy toys than put our offerings in the offering plate or the mite box. And the whole creation groans.

You really can't blame Peter, can you? It would be so much easier to stay on that mountain; avoiding doing the things here below that God wants us to do.

II. Peter wanted to build three tents, three dwellings, to stay on that mountain with Jesus, Moses, and Elijah forever. But, Jesus could not stay on that mountain in glory. His work on this earth was not to make a grand entrance into this world, walking on a red carpet, accompanied by the

angelic choir, to receive accolades and glory and praise. Jesus came to this earth to die the death of our sin.

So, Jesus didn't stay on that mountain. He came down that mountain and climbed another one called Calvary. And upon Mt Calvary something wonderful happened. Jesus was transfigured. He was stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted, such that "His no form or majesty that we should look at Him, and no beauty that we should desire Him." In other words, the beatings, the whippings, the crucifixion meant that human eyes could not even bear to look at Him. That is what He endured, because all of your sin is laid upon Him. He came down the mount of Transfiguration to climb Mount Calvary to be the atoning sacrifice for your sins, and for the sin of the all the world, and that means all of your sins are forgiven.

III. Jesus could not stay on the mountain because He had something to do here below -- go to the cross and die for us and for our salvation and rise the 3rd day to bring life and immortality to light. Peter, James, and John could not stay on that mountain because they had something to do here below. And, we cannot live on that mountain in the glory of Christ, because we something to do here below, too.

There was work for Peter to do down below. Peter preached that wonderful sermon on Pentecost and 3,000 souls are added to the kingdom of God.

John writes ¼ of the New Testament, including the words of the favorite verse of the Bible for many of you, John 3:16.

James is an eyewitness of the death and resurrection of Jesus. Then, we read in the book of Acts, "[Herod the king] killed James the brother of John with the sword (Ac 12:1)." James was the first apostle to suffer martyrdom. But even in that, God worked good. The book of Acts

tells us that the early Christians were huddled in Jerusalem, content to keep the Gospel to themselves. But, Luke tells us that the martyrdom of Stephen and James spurred them to flee Jerusalem, which resulted in the spread of the Gospel to Turkey and Egypt and to the ends of the earth.

Peter, James, and John could not stay on the mountain, because they had work to do here below. And God has work for you to do, as well.

He has transfigured you in Christ Jesus, if you will. You have been baptized in Christ, and that means you live in Christ and Christ lives in you. You are a new creation in Christ. God has transfigured you in Christ, so that He can do His work through you.

You can build someone up with an encouraging word. You can pray for someone going through a terrible time. For those of you who are Godparents, I hope that you never go to sleep at night unless you have prayed for your Godchildren that day, as you said you would do at their baptism.

You can learn God's Word in your own daily devotions and teach it to your children. Husband love your wives, wives obey your husbands. Children honor those in authority over you, doing your homework as assigned by your teachers. Speak well of everyone. So much as in lies, live at peace with everyone, even those who rub you the wrong way, even those who have hurt you grievously by their sin against you. Remember that God gave you money to buy your daily bread and for the spread of the Gospel, not to buy and hoard material things, things that will eventually rust and turn to dust.

The day is coming when Jesus will take us to be with Him in heaven, and we will see Him in all of His glory forever and ever, without end. For today, we cannot stay on the mountain because God has work for us today

here today. So, the Good News is that Jesus comes with us to the plain. Through His Word and Sacraments, He strengthens us with His grace not only to pray, “Thy will be done,” but then to do that will in our thoughts, words, and deeds, so that we can boldly say with St. Paul, “Having this ministry by the mercy of God, WE DO NOT LOSE HEART”.