

Sermon Title: Don't Just Do Something – Stand There!

Text: Matthew 17:1-9; 2 Peter 1:16-21

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Place: Kingston Springs UMC

Season: Feast of Transfiguration; Scouting Sunday

Main Point: We celebrate The Transfiguration as a reminder that the One who leads us through the coming season of penitence and preparation is preparing us to participate in such glory with him.

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I learned how to shoot pool at a relatively young age. I could play 8-Ball, 9-Ball, and Straight Pool by the time I was 8. Whenever my Uncle Bill was on leave from the Army we would visit him at my Grandma's house and he would take me to the pool hall and often we would stop off in a couple of favorite bars.

I thought he was the most interesting man in the world. He was a soldier who everybody in that little West Tennessee town seemed to know and like. He was kind of a hero to me even though my parents got mad when they found out where he had taken me.

I realize now that Uncle Bill took me along so he could show me his glory. He was a small town hero – at least in the places he took me.

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Jesus took his star pupils up the mountain to a place where he was glorified. But he was a very different kind of hero from my Uncle Bill. His glory did not come from the admiration of the local boys. It was not engendered by high school mischief and pool hall antics. He was a miracle from God. And his disciples witnessed Moses – who wrote the Law of the Hebrews – and Elijah – most famous of all prophets, the one who never died but was taken straight to heaven.

The bright glowing of Jesus' face and clothes was glorious. And the Disciples saw Jesus consulting with Moses and Elijah. It was clear that Jesus had indeed come to fulfill the ancient scriptures – the Law and the Prophets. And at the end, only Jesus stood before them.

They had seen his glory revealed but Jesus instructed them not to tell anyone what they have seen until he has been raised from the dead. The story they would eventually tell would give credibility to all that Jesus instructed them. It also gave them a foretaste of the glory that Jesus promised they would have as well.

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For the past several weeks we have stood with Jesus on another mountain and have heard passages from the Sermon on the Mount. Last week you heard that you should not worry about your earthly needs - let God handle the earthly preoccupations so we can attend to spiritual needs.

Today we stand on the mountain of the Transfiguration. But we hear a second hand story of his glory witnessed on that mountain. How can we experience the transfiguration ourselves and what difference will it make?

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The significance of the story of the Transfiguration is huge for the three disciples. They had undoubtedly been told the story of his baptism in the river Jordan and of the voice from heaven proclaiming Jesus as God's own Son with whom God was well pleased. Peter had already proclaimed that he believed Jesus to be the Messiah. But they experienced God's own revelation first hand on the mountain that day. It is another Epiphany story – one that fully convinced the disciples in their souls that this was the one who the prophets foretold.

Now WE are the body of Christ, and his transfiguration points to ours, not just in the life to come, but right here in this life. All of us who seek to be disciples of Jesus are being transfigured here in this life, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Many of us have momentary revelations that happen. Some have visions where they see something of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Many testify that they come by tasting that glory in his body and blood offered to us at the Lord's Table. For some, our minds and hearts are ignited by hearing the Word sung or spoken. Or by touching or being touched with an act of mercy that comes as a divine surprise. All of these are manifestations of our transfiguration to the glory of God. God's process of perfecting us in love does not end. It is the process of God's unceasing effort to redeem the creation and to save us.

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Today I invite you to “Don't just do something – stand there”. Later this week we will move back down the mountain to the plain of our lives, perhaps even to the wilderness as we experience Ash Wednesday and start a journey through Lent. Some of us will seek to go deeper in our faith through giving up something that we hate or something we love – we will try to focus on our devotion to God when we miss that thing. Others of us may take on a new habit to try to focus our devotion to God – new prayer habits, scripture reading, rising earlier in the day, spending more time helping others. These are all signs of responding to God's transfiguring grace.

I invite you to pause and spend some time today on your mountain of Transfiguration. See your face shining as a reflection of the glory of God. Know that once you were nowhere on your journey, but now you are somewhere. Be aware of God's glory in you as you set off through Lent – a season of reflection that will take you to mountains of new heights.