

## Sermon – Transfiguration

2 Kings 2.1-12; Psalm 50.1-6; 2 Corinthians 4.3-6; Mark 9.2-9

Today we see the coming together of Light and Love – the heavenly light of the world – and the worldly light of love – Transfiguration and Valentine’s Day. Light and Love - two words that capture radiant and dazzling glory and presence that warms our heart – the wow moments of God’s world – and of our lives.

What have been the wow moments of your life – have they been heavenly – or earthly experiences – or both?

The picture pointer this week asked us to recall our own wow moments – moments of memories gone by – or moments caught on the move – like the amazing photos that capture the beauty of cold weather that changes the everyday flowing water of dew and rain to freezing icicles of glistening beauty.

And that’s what happened to Jesus on that mountain as far as Peter, James and John were concerned – their teacher and friend changed from the ‘regular man’ if you could ever call Jesus that – to him glorified – dazzling whiteness – the beauty of God’s world embraced in that perfect moment of ‘heaven and earth presence’ – veil lifted and light and love personified in the God-on-earth person of Jesus.

But for all the beauty of glistening ice – dazzling Messiahs – there is a flip side that we see encountered as we speak – for us today icy, dangerous pathways compounding isolation already heightened by Covid-19 restrictions – and for the disciples in the Gospel story, the longing to keep the transfiguration moment lasting forever – forgetting that God is calling his people to have their heads in the clouds of heavenly grace but to have feet firmly on the ground in order to turn that grace into loving action.

It would take Jesus to show them back then – and followers and friends of him today - that as he climbs the heights to pray and commune with his Father, Jesus leaves the mountain, descending the heights to come back down again amidst the mess and mundane of the world to continue his mission and ministry refreshed and renewed. Indeed, the first thing Jesus does as he leaves this transfiguration space is to heal, but not before his human presence transfigured allowed the disciples to see God more clearly in that radiant light and love moment – and to have it confirmed through God’s spoken affirmation once spoken at Jesus’ Baptism of just who this amazing man is before them. Now addressed to the disciple God’s voice tells them; ‘This is my Son – listen to him.’

Setting the Transfiguration on the mountain is always an indication that something profound is about to happen – So it is no wonder that Jesus is surrounded by two other men of God – Moses and Elijah – both having been ‘lifted’ from the world, just as Jesus will be lifted at his Ascension to be with the Father – all of them encountering the dazzling presence of God on the mountain.

In the first reading from Kings – we hear the courageous prophet Elijah’s story, on his final journey in the presence of his successor, Elisha – just as the successors of Jesus – Peter, James and John – were present with Jesus...

And in Paul’s letter to the church at Corinth, we hear him exploring the image of light as a sign of God’s presence – this time drawing on the shining face of Moses to illustrate the even more dazzling presence of God in Christ – the true image – icon – of God.

And at this point we can weave in our second theme of the day – the Valentine love that some of us are sharing with loved ones – the Valentine love that some of us remember having shared with loved ones but who are now sharing the love within our hearts and memories – and the Valentine love that some of us long for but are yet to experience in a person to person relationship – and the Valentine love with our families and friends - and the Valentine love that some of us are not fussed about sharing with another – and - the Valentine love that we can share with God – a true love that transcends all the prerequisites of what we need to experience ‘love on the ground’ because God’s love is with us deeply rooted from the beginning regardless of those who will come and go in our lives along the way – a love that is constant, consistent, unconditional – pure love – for us all regardless.....

Paul continues to point out that while this perfect love of God for us is dazzlingly and totally present in Christ – and therefore dazzlingly and totally present within us through the Holy Spirit – the worldly clamour and brokenness that we live in – and that we are - veils that true light and love we can all claim for our own

– makes it cloudy as our human frailties infuse and diminish that pure love with the insecurities and conditions we carry and place upon each other in our attempts to love as God loves us...

And that is why there is that amazing-grace moment of light and love when we ‘turn’ to Christ – say to Jesus – a human friend and a heavenly King – ‘come into my heart – unveil the pure love within me so I can love others as God loves them – and love myself as God loves me – and be loved by others as God longs me to be – ‘come into my heart’ – the four words of turning that lead to the light and love wow moment above all moments – the moment when we KNOW that through Jesus God is in our hearts and of our hearts and opening our hearts to his beautiful world and beautiful love.

Today my prayer for you – and for me – is that we come to know God’s dazzling love for us and that in our longing to be loved above all loves by God - we glimpse God’s longing to be able to draw us fully into his light and love through his Son Jesus – in the power of his Holy Spirit – a love that can be received and shared at all times in all ways – a Valentine’s Day love for one and all – every day of the year....

Let us pray:

O God, thank you for showing us that through Jesus you have always been with us.

Thank you for the times when we have felt close to you.

Thank you for guiding our steps.

Thank you for being close even when we did not know it.

Thank you for the people and places that have helped us to draw close to you.

Thank you for each facet of your character that we have glimpsed.

and today we thank you for your love and light that shines down upon us and embraces us through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord.

**Amen.**