

“Just a Glimpse” - Luke 9.28-36 - Rev. Jeffrey B. Childs

In our story this morning, Jesus takes his three closest companions Peter, James and John off to a mountain top to be alone and pray. But there is a hinge at the beginning of the story that will take us back to what just happened. The text begins: *About eight days after Jesus said these things*, doesn't that make you wonder about what things did Jesus say a week ago? Earlier in the chapter Jesus had fed the crowd of 5000 people. Then he asked the disciples who people thought he was and more specifically who the disciples thought he was? Peter blurted out that he was the **Messiah**. He went on to explain about his suffering and calling the followers who wished to follow to take up their crosses and follow him. And the little teaching segment ends with this in verse 27 right before this passage this morning: *“I assure you that some standing here won't die before they see God's kingdom.”* My friends I offer you those words today, for I believe some of us will also see glimpses of God's kingdom on this side of the pearly gates.

I want you to notice how all of the story unfolds, as it says here in the lesson this morning, *as he was praying, the appearance of his face changed and his clothes flashed white like lightning.* (Luke 9.29) Friends, things happen when Jesus prays! What happens when you pray? Sometimes Jesus' appearance changed like here on the mountain top, or in the garden right before he is arrested: *He was in anguish and prayed even more earnestly. His sweat became like drops of blood falling on the ground.* (Luke 22.44) Does that ever happen to you when you pray? Do you get a glow? Do you get a jolt? Do you get a connection to the Ultimate Power of the universe? Jesus gets a hotline to heaven. Some things become clear as he prays. He connects with a couple Biblical characters to whom he can relate. As he prays about his departure coming in Jerusalem, how fitting to find Moses there. Moses was the one who helped the Jews depart from Egypt. When Moses would go up on the mountain to pray and speak with God his face would glow whenever he came back down to speak to the people! And in Jesus' day, people were waiting for Elijah to return because the story was remembered that he did not die but departed before his disciple Elisha's very eyes in a blazing chariot of fire. Can you imagine what the disciples must have thought when they saw Jesus radiate with that transfiguration glow and talking with those glowing figures of their faith? Jesus' words became true; right then and there, they did see a glimpse of God's glory!

Have you ever seen anything like it? I have seen people glow. Talk to parents or grandparents and let them tell you of their children/grandchildren – especially newborns! Watch lovers and see the glow of love in their faces. What if we had that “love glow” in our faces when we talk with one another about the God of Love?!

Years ago, when I was serving a church in Minnesota, I went to see a retired pastor who was a spiritual director. And before we would have our time of prayer and discernment, he would light a candle on the table between us and invoke God's presence to be in our holy conversation. As we would talk I could see the glow of the candle in his face. Much like when we light candles for worship, lighting a candle or lamp to read by symbolically brings the glow of Christ who said, *I am the Light of the World* (John 8.12) If you are able, I invite you to light a candle and have the glow of its light be a part of your devotion time.

If you are able, I invite you to get so close to Jesus in your devotion that others might see the glow of his light and his love, glow in you.

This Wednesday is Ash Wednesday. I invite you to come join us in a time of evening prayer at 7pm at the New Market UMC as we begin the 40-day season of Lent. This year we will again be using a Lenten devotional booklet from the Society of St. Andrew to help us grow in our faith as we grow closer to Holy Week and to Jesus. As we journey towards the cross and the empty tomb, may we daily catch glimpses of God and God's kingdom. In Christian love may we reveal it to those around us as God's kingdom comes and God's will is done. Alleluia and Amen.

Jesus Was Transfigured

Jeffrey B. Childs 2/24/2025

(Tune: Dennis UMH 553)

Jesus was transfigured,
Before his close friends' eyes.
Moses and Elijah appeared,
As glory filled the skies.

Out on the mountain range,
With disciples at hand,
As Jesus prayed his face did change.
And God spoke this command.

“This is my beloved Son,
To what he says, listen.”
Then in an instant all was done,
Jesus back down led them.