

Sunday, February 11, 2018
 Last Sunday after Epiphany / Transfiguration of Our Lord

What a View!

2 Kings 2:1-12; Psalm 50:1-6; 2 Corinthians 4:3-6; Mark 9:2-9

Delivered to St. Stephen's Lutheran Church

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What a fantastic view!

Can you see it...the view on the top of the mountain...a place of prestige and honor...the view that only a winner can see.

And by winner I mean Philadelphia of course!

So many people have their heads still in the clouds after last week's historic Super Bowl victory over the team that shall not be named...and what a view for those that waited, was it 60 years??

And trust me, I know what it is to wait...as a Cubs fan I sure do know what it is like to wait...over 100 years to get to that mountain top.

It's good to feel, even for a brief moment, what it's like being on top of the world.

Think about it...what it must be like to be on the mountain top.

Space-X must feel that way after their successful rocket test...Peter, James and John most definitely felt that way the day that Jesus brought them to the top of that very high mountain when he was transfigured and shone as brilliantly white as if he were on a Tide Ad commercial.

It is not often that the disciples say "it is good to be here..." even if they have no clue what "here" *is* and *means*.

It is not often that we say "it is good to be here or there."

We do not always get to stay on the mountain top very long...many times it is short lived. Think about it...in 1907 and 1908 the Cubs were on top of the world winning two back to back World Series...then they spent about 100 years off of the mountain dwelling in the valley of the shadow of death.

Many times in the church, we rush through Transfiguration and talk about how we cannot dwell on the mountain and must come down at once to begin Lent on Wednesday.

There is a lot of truth to that...however, acknowledging that the time is short...we need to take in every moment, every breath, every word...

We need to take in everything.

When were you last on the mountaintop...when did you have an experience that seemed to make you feel as though you were soaring high in the sky?

Can you remember that moment?

Peter, James, and Paul were there when the world seemed to stop and time stood still...when the heavens were broken open and the light that was pure and bright more so than anything they or you or I have ever seen...they were there when the heavens touched the earth...and in that moment they took in all that they could.

It was not just the sight of Jesus changing to dazzling white....

It was not just the sight of Moses and Elijah standing before them...

It was the moment when they...mere flesh and blood like you and me...literally felt, saw and heard heaven and earth meet.

In that moment, in the confusion and fear, they realized that something special was happening and knew that it was truly good to be there in the presence of these three figures of literal Biblical proportions...and if for some rational second they desired to capture that moment by building dwellings for the three.

What would you have done?

What would I have done?

Try to take a pic with our iPhone or Droid?

Go to Facebook live??

Then, to top it all off, they also hear the voice of God!!

And as fast as it happens, they are already coming down the mountain with absolutely no clue of what is going to transpire in the very near future!

So what if we do...what if we do try to savor every second on top of the mountain?

Take in every sense from smell and touch to taste and sight...what does it feel like?

Remember the excitement of the game...of winning...who knows what is to come next year...remember this year.

The Vietnamese Buddhist monk Thích Nhất Hạnh (Tick Nat Han) says this about living in the moment:

“Life is available only in the present moment. If you abandon the present moment you cannot live the moments of your daily life deeply.”

Life is only available to us in the present moment.

God is the only one that can transcend linear time thus being everything everywhere and everywhen. We, however, can only live in the moments that we have. In the split seconds...in the day...we cannot live yesterday or tomorrow...and if we try this we will miss out on today.

We would miss out on our life and the ability to live it truly and deeply.

Don't you think that is what Jesus wants from and for each of us?

Jesus so desperately wants people to live in the today...live in the present because that is all we have available to us.

Live in present...because there is truly no guarantee of the future. If you abandon what you have right here. Right now...you lose precious moments.

Look to your friends, your family, those who you love and more importantly...those that love you. That is the mountain top experience that you can never have again should you waste your time looking everywhere except in the present.

If you lift your faces from your screens, from your books and TV...look all around at what is with you in the moment.

Tolstoy even has something to remind us about how important living now is... “now is the most important time because it is the only time that we have any power.”

Imagine that...we actually have the power to remain on the mountaintop a little bit longer together. We do have to descend eventually, but what is most important is now. Living in the now so that we can become ready for tomorrow.