

Mark 9:2-9

We *need* transfiguration.

We need transfiguration as much as Jesus needed to be transfigured.

The transfiguration is a turning point, a transition from one way of seeing Jesus to another. It's not just about securing the Jesus of the future or holding on to the Jesus of the past but points to the real human struggle with change, with transformation.

Transformation is hard. Change is hard. Moving from one place to another, from one way of being to another? It's easier to stay the same. Stay the course. Convince yourself that what you've always known is satisfactory, good enough, even when you have glimpsed what could be.

So we just sit. We wait. For what? The right time? The right place? All of our questions answered? Everything figured out? All of our proverbial ducks in a row?

This is why the transfiguration rocks. It just shows up. There is no right time. It just happens. Now what? No amount of planning can predict the right kind of change. No amount of preparation can prepare us for this change in our reality or perspective. No amount of planning can make us ready for a transfiguration to be truly a transfiguration.

I think that Peter's issue is not so much about holding Jesus to his (Peter's) expectations. Nor is it simply capturing this special moment.

I think Peter's issue is the realization that if Jesus changes, then Peter will be changed as well. "I cannot be the same. I will also be transfigured, transformed. And maybe I don't want that. So, let's pitch some tents, keep things the way they are, hunker down, and ride it out. Maybe the whole thing will just pass by. I can come out of my tent and all will still be the same. Jesus will be the same. I will still be the same."

And that's precisely why the Transfiguration. Jesus gets this. What will it be that gets you to move, to come out of your tent, or maybe even not to want pitch one in the first place?

Rather than blame Peter for his near-sightedness, maybe we need to admit our own. I am guessing that not much about human nature has changed in the two thousand years since Jesus' earthly ministry. Transfiguration means exposure. I mean, look at Jesus. You can't miss him. Vulnerability is less than comfortable but it seems absolutely essential for life and for a life of faith. At least Jesus seems to think so. When we exchange vulnerability for certainty all we do is live the lie that authenticity does not matter. We pitch our comfortable tents with things the way we like them to be -- and secure them by pounding stake after stake into the ground; "I don't want change," "We've always done it this way," "we tried that once and it didn't work," etc.

Tents are not just about shelter. They repel the forces of nature. They keep out that which might harm. They keep as much in as they keep out.

And Transfiguration, like a bear, will rip our tents into shreds.

Transfiguration means change. We think we welcome change, but when it actually happens, we adopt stances of resistance and rejection. Or convince ourselves that the change can wait. That it really isn't necessary. That the time is not right. That the problems that will ensue are not worth the result of living into who we really are.

Transfiguration means a new way of seeing the world. And replacing the lenses of our lives is a lot more complicated than just picking out new fashionable frames.

Because at the heart of the matter is that transfiguration not only signals change, but it alters life's direction. It certainly did for Jesus. And when that happens, well, no tent in the world is going to give you the security you think you want or need. Because when we shore up the shelters that protect us from harm we also run the risk of keeping out that which is so very, very good. As people of God, we need to embrace Transfiguration, embrace Jesus Christ and be changed by Him forever.

Amen.