

Sun 26th Feb 2017 Matt 17:1-9 (Ex. 24:12-end, 2 Peter 1:16-21)

Do not be afraid

TTT Lydia

What will you be doing this time tomorrow?

Where have you seen God at work this last week?

What can we pray for you?

Matt 17:1-9

Please use your imagination this morning...

Jesus has been baptised in the river and spent 40 days and nights in the desert

He had been ministering to people in many different ways

Chap 16:16 Jesus had asked 'Who do you say I am?' Peter answered 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God'

16:21 - 28 Jesus had told his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things

Now today's reading Jesus leads Peter, James and John up a high mountain - just the 4 of them  
I wonder if Jesus knew exactly what was going to happen? Was that his purpose in leading these 3 close friends up the mountain with him?

Jesus was transfigured before them

The Greek word used here for transfigured is metamorphoo

When do we use a similar word? (Caterpillar into a butterfly)

His face shines like the sun

His clothes became dazzling white

What would you have thought at this point I wonder?

THEN Moses and Elijah appear talking with Jesus !!

Moses was the one who had received the 10 commandments from God, whilst up a mountain

Exodus reading - Moses went up the mountain, a cloud covered the top, the glory of the

Lord settled on Mt Sinai and the Lord spoke to Moses out of the cloud

Hebrew word for settle means dwell, abide, nest, inhabit

Moses was representative of the law and predicted the coming of a great prophet (Deut 18:15-19)

Elijah represents the prophets who foretold of the coming Messiah (Malachi 4:5,6)

The presence of Moses and Elijah confirmed Jesus' mission - to fulfil God's law and the prophetic words that had been spoken, foretelling of his coming.

So now, there is not just Peter, James & John with Jesus, but also Moses and Elijah there, talking with him

See what Peter's reaction is

This is good Lord, if you like I can build a shelter for each of you !!!

Does that not seem a little random

Up a mountain, chatting to Jesus when Jesus is transformed, His clothes turn BRIGHT, His face shines like the sun then Moses and Elijah (who had been dead hundreds of years) appear

And Peter offers to build 3 shelters !!

It seems an odd thing to suggest but aren't some of us like that sometimes.

When there is an extraordinary moment, when something unusual or totally unexpected happens, don't we sometimes try to normalise the situation.... offer to make a cuppa, do something practical... We do something active in order to cover our confusion / shock / bewilderment  
Peter wanted to act... out of good intent... but this was a moment for awe and wonder, worship and adoration and just like us, he nearly missed the moment.

Jesus had told him that he was on his way to suffering. Here was Peter trying to build a safe sanctuary, away from the world, to try and stop the suffering happening.

He couldn't and nor can we.

While Peter was still speaking something else happens... the moment is not yet over  
A bright cloud overshadowed them... and from the cloud there is a voice  
‘This is my Son, the beloved; with him I am well pleased. LISTEN TO HIM.’

There has been a lot of talking. I imagine Jesus and his friends chatted as they climbed the mountain.

We are told that Moses & Elijah talk with Jesus

We know that Peter talks to Jesus

But then there is another voice, affirming again who Jesus is (Similar words to those heard at his baptism Matt 3:17) This is my son

And then the command to LISTEN TO HIM

All talking then ceases and the 3 disciples fall to the ground overcome by fear. Some translations say terrified.

What a moment. All activity stops. All conversation stops. Maybe their hearts even stop -for a brief moment! As a voice speaks to them, affirming who Jesus is - the Son of God and telling them to LISTEN

Is that a message that any of us need to hear? Are we too busy talking and doing that we need to be reminded to LISTEN !

What happens next?

Jesus came to them.

He touched them

He told them to get up and not to be afraid.

These are very special words to me

Priesting retreat Sam Wells spoke about these words

I was afraid, even having been deaconed a year before I was reluctant to be priested, I was fighting it inside and that wasn't helpful, to me or my ministry

There were things that I was afraid of

And I felt God saying these words to me.... Get up and do not be afraid...

What things are we afraid of?

What things are happening to us that are causing us to, in some sense, fall to the ground in fear? Maybe God wants to come to you, read out a hand and touch you and tell you to get up, you don't need to be afraid... (Pause)

NB Visitors...

Would you take a moment to turn to someone sitting beside you, gently reach out a hand and touch their arm and say to them Jesus says to you - do not be afraid

God does not want us to be afraid. He wants us all to know that He comes to you and will help & comfort us, no matter what we are afraid of.

Maybe these 4 actions of Jesus can be seen as parallels to events in his life

Jesus came to them He came to them and us in his birth

Jesus touched them He touched them and many others during his earthly ministry

Jesus told them to get up Maybe representative of what he will do on cross & resurrection

Jesus told them do not be afraid Maybe representative of the empowering of the Holy Spirit

Peter, James and John saw and heard an incredible vision that day. Something that was life changing for them. Jesus wants us to know that He loves us and that we don't need to be afraid because He is there, reaching out and touching us.

God comes into the world in different ways...the brilliant cloud of mystery, a voice thundering from heaven and also a human hand laid upon a shoulder with the words 'do not be afraid'

Know that He comes to you today, through mystery, through a voice or through a gentle human touch.

Response - Sing Open our eyes Lord we want to see Jesus