

Sunday 6th August The Transfiguration of Jesus
Luke 9:28-36 and 2 Peter 1:16-19

My best friend at Primary School was Juliet and her dad Les had very dark hair and a dark beard & moustache.

One evening after I had been there for tea we were watching Generation game or It's a Knock out or.... and Les walked into the Lounge and Juliet screamed! Without telling anyone he had shaved off his beard & moustache and his face looked soooo different. White, untanned skin where, just minutes before there had been black hair.

It was a shock and both Juliet and her mum were scared when they first saw him. It was Les but it didn't look like him. A transformation had taken place.

The experience that Peter, James & John had up on the mountain this day with Jesus was even more scary and even more transformative.

As Jesus was up the mountain, praying, with his 3 closest friends, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. His appearance was transformed

Not just that but 2 men, Moses - the man to whom God had given the 10 commandments and the Law and Elijah - the greatest of all prophets, both of whom had lived on earth 100's of years before this, appeared in glory and were talking to Jesus

They appeared in glory - the awesome light that radiated from God's presence, the glory that now radiated from Jesus

Moses, who appeared here on the mountain talking with Jesus, had had a similar experience himself when he was alive on earth. We can read at the end of Exodus 24

15 Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. 16 The glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the cloud. ... 18 Moses entered the cloud, and went up on the mountain. Moses was on the mountain for forty days and forty nights.

Then in chapter 34

29 Moses came down from Mount Sinai. As he came down from the mountain with the two tablets of the covenant in his hand, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. 30 When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, the skin of his face was shining, and they were afraid to come near him.

Back in Exodus Moses face shone because he had been talking with God

Here the face of Jesus himself was transformed as he radiated the glory of God

We call this the transfiguration of Jesus and the root of the word for transfigured is the same as that for metamorphosis.

Have you ever been lucky enough to see the complete transformation that takes place when a chrysalis gently breaks open and a stunning butterfly emerges? I have only seen it once and it was incredible. It was awesome. From an caterpillar to a dry, dead looking chrysalis came a damp and weak butterfly that dried itself off in the sun and then, after a few moments, flew away.

The word we use for metamorphosis - the change from caterpillar to chrysalis to butterfly is the same root word that we use for the transformation, the transfiguration of Jesus on the mountain this day.

And then, as only Luke describes, Jesus, Moses and Elijah were talking about the departure that Jesus would shortly accomplish in Jerusalem.

And here the word used for the departure of Jesus is the same word for Exodus. Moses lead the exodus of the people out of slavery in Egypt and into their inheritance of the promised land.

Jesus 'departure' was referring to his death on the cross which would provide us all with the opportunity to be lead out of the slavery of sin and death and then into the inheritance of eternal life. This is an incredible event. A moment when the glory of heaven was tangible here on earth, where temporal met eternal

A moment to treasure and ponder upon To revel in and try to absorb the magnitude of it PAUSE

What is Peters response? to offer to make dwellings for the 3 of them - Jesus, Moses and Elijah
Forever the practical one

Maybe he was wanting to capture the moment and hold onto it

Do you ever do that?... when there is a really exciting moment, something extra special we want to try and hold onto it, keep hold to make it last and not disappear.

Maybe that was what Peter was doing?

But whatever his thinking it QUICKLY changed as the cloud overshadowed them and they became TERRIFIED

And in that split second when Peter, James & John must have been wondering what on earth could happen next they heard a voice that said '***This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him.***'

A moment that totally identifies Jesus as the son of God. IF there had been any doubt before hand there was none now. This was the son of God and they were to listen to him, the messenger, the mouth piece of God

All of this happened in the midst of their everyday lives. They had been in the midst of Jesus teaching and after this they would go on down the mountain and continue in his teaching and miracle healing. But this is a moment in time that changed the appearance of Jesus face and changed their understanding of who he was.

They saw of themselves the glory of God and heard the voice of God identify their teacher friend as the Chosen Son

What a transformative day. What a metamorphosis.

One day we too shall see the glory of God, we too shall see God face to face and what a day that shall be. But until then what does this passage mean to us?

Well - of course it identifies Jesus as the son of God to us too

But is there anything more?

Well - maybe it is a good reminder that we too can be transfigured, metamorphosed through encounters with the love of God in Christ. When we have an encounter with Him, our lives change, our understanding of who Jesus is changes and we become transformed more into his likeness.

These encounters can happen anywhere, even up a mountain. But maybe they can happen here in church too.

Jesus and his friends went up the mountain, retreating from the everyday, to pray

We gather together each Sunday, retreating from our everyday activity and we pray together

Peter, James & John were immersed in the cloud that overshadowed them

We immerse ourselves in scripture and worship

Moses, Elijah and Jesus were speaking about Jesus' departure that would be on the cross

We centre on the cross, especially as we come to share in communion together

Peter, James and John heard God speak

I pray that we too sometimes here God whether through scripture, song, prayer, communion or in the moments of silence

After they came down from the mountain they continued in their everyday life but with a new experience, sent out with a new understanding of who they were serving

I hope that we too go from here refreshed and revived and ready to serve God in our everyday

We end each service with Go in peace to love and serve the Lord

Our coming together, in retreat for a short while maybe restores and refreshes and transforms us so that we can go out renewed and refreshed

Maybe our gathering every week reminds us that we are God's beloved children, that God has in Jesus' cross and resurrection revealed just how much God loves us and that this love conquers all, and has called, commissioned, and equipped us to make a difference in the lives of those around us.