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Luke 9:28-43

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Transfiguration of our Lord

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* The season of Epiphany is bookended by the Baptism and Transfiguration of our Lord.
  + In both stories, a voice comes from heaven, identifying Jesus.
    - Baptism: “You are my son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”
    - Transfiguration: “This is my Son, my Chosen, listen to him!”
  + Way back at the beginning of the season, I told you that this entire season was about revealing who Jesus is, and what God is doing through him.
    - It’s also about how deeply humanity needs that work!
    - This week is no different.
* My favorite disciple: Peter
  + He is so consistent in his humanity.
  + He is so quick to speak; often, without putting any apparent thought into what he says.
  + He loves Jesus so much and screws up so often!
    - “I will never deny you!”
    - Denies Jesus three times.
  + Peter is us. Peter is ***me***.
* Today’s example: Peter’s one of three disciples on the mountain with Jesus.
  + James and John are kind of secondary to the story. They’re mentioned, but not actively involved. They are, it seems, silent witnesses.
  + Impulsive, human, loving Peter? Not silent.
    - Nor, seemingly, surprised to see Moses and Elijah with Jesus.
    - “We can build some tents and stay put!”
      * I love that the author of the gospel points out Peter’s cluelessness, “not knowing what he was said.”
* There are two things I really want to focus on in today’s lesson.
  + One: With Jesus, you and I are claimed as sons and daughters of God. Chosen and beloved by God.
    - A promise just as true for us as it was for Jesus.
  + Two: You and I are just as clueless as Peter.
  + We are just as deeply in need of Jesus’ work.
  + We are just as impulsive.
  + We are just as faithful (or not).
* What are the experiences that have shown you the depth of God's love for you?
  + I asked this question on Facebook this week. Some of the answers were expected. Others surprised me.
    - Children.
      * Birth of a healthy baby girl, and the experience of watching her siblings interacting with her.
      * Birth of a baby girl who had to be life-flighted, with certainty of death.
        + Medical care, pastoral care, and a family surrounding them with hope.
    - Healing.
      * Finding a program that help an individual get sober.
      * A young man found an adult who accepted his confession of homosexuality without judgment or condemnation
    - Crises
      * 9/11: Seeing the entire world come together and care for individuals—and an entire nation—as we dealt with the shock and grief that came from the day’s events.
      * Family and friends surrounding an individual who was living with what felt like insurmountable grief.
* Fascinating me is this: There are as many experiences on the mountaintop as there are in the valley in the stories people told me.
  + Maybe this is because our mountaintop experiences help us find God/Jesus in the valleys.
  + Life experiences help us find God/Jesus in the valleys.
  + Jesus couldn’t stay on top of that mountain—no matter how tempting it might have been for him.
    - He had to face the cross—not for himself. For us.
  + “You faithless and perverse generation,” is Jesus’ response to the disciples’ inability to heal the child, even though he’d just given them the ability to do so.
    - But even as he insults them, he heals the child.
    - “And all were astounded at the greatness of God.”
* That’s the Gospel: Even in the face of human faithlessness and perversity—SIN—Jesus is persistent.
  + Jesus is persistent in love.
  + Jesus is persistent in healing.
  + Jesus is persistent in grace.
    - There’s the Good News whether you’re on top of a mountain wanting to stay in that positive, hopeful place; or in the valley, desperately looking for light in the darkness.