

## God-Sent

TR-19, Mar. 3, 2019  
Lk 9:28-36

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There are a number of hints dropped in this Gospel reading  
that something new, something very different, something extraordinary  
is about to take place.

Our English translation loses some of the nuance of the original Greek.

Six times in nine verses the word ἐγένετο is used.

It does not come through in translation,

but it has the meaning “it so happened that...” “it came to be that...”

with the sense, “no, really, this is what happened.”

No, really, Jesus’ face changed in glory,

no, really, his clothes flashed lighting bright,

no, really, Moses and Elijah, who never died,

from ancient times have reappeared,

no, really, God spoke from a cloud.

Something new, something very different took place.

And then specifically noting the eighth day.

The eighth day symbolizes a new start, a new age, a new week.

The seventh day, the sabbath day, the day of rest in God’s creation, is Saturday.

We worship on the 8<sup>th</sup> day, a new creation, a new start.

So, on the eighth day in our gospel reading

the identity of Jesus is revealed to Peter, John and James.

It is the start of a new age in this creation.

A new thought has been introduced;

Jesus is not only a very wise teacher,

someone the wise will hear and the humble will learn.

A new reality has been revealed,

the reality of Jesus, the very Son of God who reveals God’s ways to us.

Then there is Jesus’ face changing,

somehow reflecting glory, somehow holy,

and clothes flashing like lightening, no, really!

Something different, something new is going on here.

And Moses and Elijah appearing from the past.

They speak of Jesus’ departure, his death and redemption

about to be accomplished in Jerusalem.

From now on, we listeners of this gospel story

know that Jesus will accomplish something extraordinary in Jerusalem,

from now on, this story is about Jesus pressing on to death and resurrection.

Peter is not thinking clearly.

He is a proper host and wants to make the three comfortable,

three dwellings, sort of like hurrying to find three chairs for them to sit and stay.

But then a voice, from heaven, no, really!

Something new is happening.

No longer the law of God as given to Moses,

no the word of God coming through prophets like Elijah,

but God’s word is now heard in Jesus.

Something new is going on, something extraordinary.

Just prior to this event, Jesus gave the twelve disciples

power and authority over demons,

and the power to cure diseases.

Jesus sent them to declare that God's kingdom has now come  
and evidence of this fact is the disciples healing and clearing out demons.  
It causes notice.

King Herod had a bad feeling about all this.  
Great crowds are surprised with free supper,  
5000 families, a crowd the size of all the people around Lake Nokomis.<sup>1</sup>  
People *wonder*.  
The disciples don't know *what* to think.

So Jesus takes Peter, John and James, what seems to be the Executive Committee,  
to a high mountain away from distraction—to pray.  
When we pray, when we get God's attention, *what happens next has consequences*.  
Prayer cannot be a quick comment and then forgotten.

A quick plea and then moving on is disrespectful,  
it treats God like a magic genie granting wishes.  
Our Lord Almighty *has some things to say*.  
Our God has *a few things to set straight*.  
When we come to prayer,  
the better part of our time should be *listening to what God has to say*.

Jesus took Peter, John and James up a mountain to pray.  
It was not so much going through a list of names of "people to pray for."  
It was intentionally going to a place *where God was*  
to encounter the divine and to listen for what *God* has to say.

And God had plenty to say.  
Unlike Moses and Elijah, Jesus *will die*,  
very publicly, very shamefully, very certainly.

Our Lord God Almighty is on the move.  
From Genesis 3 and God strolling through the Garden of Eden in the evening breeze  
to wrestling the Chosen from pharaoh's army,  
to taking on death itself on the cross,  
*God is on the move*.

Dwellings, shrines, temples, buildings  
are of no use to our God who is on the move in this world.

God is afoot in the world.  
This is *a dangerous time* begun.  
No longer are we free to do whatever our desires dictate.  
No longer can we continue looking out for ourselves  
and ignore the injustices crushing others.

No longer can we pretend all is well,  
pray good wishes and leave it at that.  
No longer can we keep this place to ourselves,  
save God's generosity for ourselves.

God is on the move *and will disrupt things*.  
*God will challenge and change us*.

This is *a dangerous time begun*  
and things will *not* be the same.

Our reading ends with Peter, John and James shaken up  
and telling no one of any of this.  
But our reading should not end there.  
Jesus comes down the mountain.  
God leaves the glories of the highest and enters everyday, mundane life.

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<sup>1</sup> 24,875 people in zip code 55417, American Factfinder,  
[https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community\\_facts.xhtml](https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml), accessed 3/1/2019.

So what that Jesus' image changed and clothes glowed white?  
 So what Elijah and Moses appeared in glory?  
 So what a voice declared Jesus the Son of God, chosen.  
 So what?

I read what follows.

Jesus comes down from glory and God is afoot in the world.  
*On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain,  
 a great crowd met him.  
 Just then a man from the crowd shouted,  
 "Teacher, I beg you to look at my son; he is my only child.  
 Suddenly a spirit seizes him, and all at once he shrieks.  
 It convulses him until he foams at the mouth;  
 it mauls him and will scarcely leave him.  
 I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not."  
 Jesus answered, "You faithless and perverse generation,  
 how much longer must I be with you and bear with you?  
 Bring your son here."  
 While he was coming, the demon dashed him to the ground in convulsions.  
 But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the boy,  
 and gave him back to his father.  
 And all were astounded at the greatness of God.*

God is afoot in the world.

God is bringing change.

A desperate Dad begged to have evil driven from his son.

Everyone else would not even try, didn't care.  
 They avoided the son, not wanting to get involved.  
 They dodged the dad, it is a private matter,  
 and besides, he should have been a better father.

A daughter rebels, does drugs, steals.

A son rebels, dumps his wife and doesn't see his kids.

A daughter rebels, spends all her money on clothes and tiki bars, then asks for more.

And we tsk, commiserate, think too bad she made "bad choices,"  
 and then go on our way.

A family with troubles and no one cares,

"You faithless and perverse generation," Jesus called them.

"Bring your son here."

God is afoot.

Dangerous times are at hand because God changes things,

God does things to upset our comfort,

God makes things right

and that challenges our privileged ways.

Dangerous times are at hand because God *asks us to do the same,*

asks this church to cast out demons, make right, change families.

This reading about Jesus' transfiguration teaches us some things about God in the world.

First, following Jesus means this is no

one-hour a week, Sunday morning, mountain-top good feeling.

Jesus leaves the mountain-top church

and goes into the week of the everyday world.

God's kingdom and God's realm of influence is not just church and spirituality,

but God's rule is over *all* the world, *all* of life, *all* the week.

Jesus leaves the mountain-top church

and goes to desperate people who need him,

goes to reclaim and fix what has gone wrong.

And as good disciples of Jesus, *you go too*.  
Here in this church you see Jesus for who he really is,  
stand in the midst of the glory of God and hear God declare.  
But this mountain-top church experience ends  
and you go into the work week ahead.  
And blessed surprise,  
you go with the power of Jesus!  
You go into the week  
teaching children in school,  
curing sick with Christ's healing,  
managing people so they can serve their best,  
fixing buildings and cars and computers,  
all this is Christ redeeming and reclaiming,  
fixing what is wrong in this world.  
Blessed are you,  
for you go with the power of Jesus  
revealing God's kingdom come  
in the good you do and the good you are!  
May this week bring you to places, to people, where you shall be God's blessing.  
Amen.