

## Scripture Focus: Mark's Transfiguration Mark 9:2-9

My temptation is to fill you with scriptural allusions and connections made in the story of Transfiguration. I am going to give you a few details in these notes, **but** will try my best to offer a meditation on wonder (while staying out of the weeds). Along with the sermon, you get a poem and a book excerpt today – lucky you!

### Liturgical connections

Jesus and his friends go up to the "mount of Transfiguration". Jesus' next holy mount in the Gospel will be Golgotha - the site of his death. Our preparation for Lent starts on a mountain and finishes on a mountain. For my father-in-law, Lent can feel like a long tedious walk along the valleys and plains of terrible church hymns and depressing words. I too want to hit my head with a Monty python-sized bible every time I hear hymn 140 by John Donne.

Reframed however, Lent highlights our need to recapture wonder *during the valley walk*. Precious mountains can give us x-ray vision to see beautiful things as we plod one step at a time. ***If that is too fluffy for you*** – carry your high moments to help you when you are down.

### Scriptural connections

Mark's high point comes at 9:7 – "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!" This 'God call' happens three times 1) at baptism - Mk 1:1; 2) at death - 15:39; and 3) today – 9:7. When reading Mark, remember the 'Jesus secret' -- Jesus is hidden until the right time. This mountaintop experience is not the right time and literally shrouded in fog when Jesus becomes shiny white 9:3.

### OT – Moses, Elijah, the Secret, and Listening

A distinction this story makes is that Jesus is different from Moses. Moses' face shone like a reflector; Jesus shines from within. In Mark, no one else is designated "God's Son." Elijah and Moses don't make the cut. That is why the disciples (and we) should "listen to him" - 9:7. All this sets the stage for the rest of Jesus' ministry as he turns toward his next mount – Golgotha, where he will die and be vindicated as the messiah.

This is the secret, the mystery his disciples can't grasp and follow (Mark 9:31-34; 10:32-37; 14:26-31, 50, 66-72; 16:1-8). And to make things worse, transfiguration happens, it's over, and they are alone (9:8). They plod down the mountain into a valley full of suffering ahead. ***But Today, I won't focus on the details in the sermon. For better or worse, it's a meditation on wonder.***

### Poem

Malcolm Guite's Poem for Transfiguration

<https://www.google.com/amp/s/malcolmguite.wordpress.com/2012/08/04/a-sonnet-for-the-feast-of-the-transfiguration/amp/>

For that one moment, 'in and out of time',  
On that one mountain where all moments meet,  
The daily veil that covers the sublime  
In darkling glass fell dazzled at his feet.  
There were no angels full of eyes and wings  
Just living glory full of truth and grace.  
The Love that dances at the heart of things

Shone out upon us from a human face  
And to that light the light in us leaped up,  
We felt it quicken somewhere deep within,  
A sudden blaze of long-extinguished hope  
Trembled and tingled through the tender skin.  
Nor can this this blackened sky, this darkened scar  
Eclipse that glimpse of how things really are.

### Ravi Zacharias

*Recapture the wonder*

Wonder is that possession of the mind that enchants the emotions while never surrendering reason. It is a grasp on reality that does not need constant high points in order to be maintained, nor is it made vulnerable by the low points of life's struggle... Wonder interprets life through the eyes of eternity while enjoying the moment, but never lets the moment's revision exhaust the eternal. Wonder knows that while you cannot look at the light, you cannot look at anything else without it.

Have you ever had somebody ask you "Episcowhat?" Then flatfooted, you mumbled something about Catholic lite, or that we're *not* fundamentalist! This info below might help you the next time somebody asks you what an Episcopalian is. St. Timothy's has unique characteristics that you can add to the story. You may use it whenever, especially if you encounter this question at the grocery store or dinner party.

**Episcopalian - These things and characteristics define us**

**Jesus** - We are shaped by Christ in our relationship to God and others.

**Biblical** - We use the Bible to help us make sense of the world.

**Open** - We are democrats, republicans, libertarians and socialists.

**Bishops** - We are governed by bishops - that's what the word Episcopalian (derived from the Greek) means.

**Historical** - It's complicated. Ask a church nerd or <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/page/history-episcopal-church>

**Eucharistic** - We share bread and wine in worship to celebrate the gift of Jesus.

**Spiritual** - We trust the Holy Spirit to guide us.

**Global** - We are in fellowship with other Episcopalians across the world (in most countries we are called Anglican).

**Liturgical** - We follow patterns and seasons of prayer using the *Book of Common Prayer*.

**Active** - We help the disadvantaged and work for justice through systemic change for people and the earth.

**Deacons and Priests** - We are led by women and men; single and married; gay, straight and transgendered pastors.

Memory device - *Bob, He's Glad... for Jesus*