

Only a few days before the contemplative  
and often difficult season of Lent,  
we are given a peek beyond the veil—  
an image of who Jesus really is:  
resurrected, ascended, glorified.

The mysterious and dazzling light  
of Jesus,  
who loved us so much he became  
incarnate and fully human—  
Immanuel—God with us.  
As a community. As a parish family.  
As sons and daughters of God.

We pray to be empowered by the light of the  
transfigured Christ.  
That we will live out the mission  
to the Glory of God and to the building  
up of God's Kingdom.

To hold this image in our minds as we journey the  
wilderness together.

**AMEN**

**Sermon preached in Immanuel Highlands  
Episcopal Church, Wilmington, DE**  
February 14, 2021 | Last Sunday of the Epiphany  
The Rev. Curtis Kennington  
***Venite, Psalm 95:1-7; Psalm 50:1-6***  
***Deus Deorum; 2 Kings 2:1-12;***  
**Mark 9:2-9**

*Today we heard a story that tells us  
that no one goes up the mountain alone.  
It tells us that sometimes things get  
really scary  
before they get holy.*

*Above all, it tells us  
that there is someone standing  
in the center of the cloud with us,  
shining so brightly  
that we may never be able to  
wrap  
our minds around him,*

*but who is worth listening to all the same—  
because he is God's beloved,  
and we are his,  
and whatever comes next,  
we are up to it.  
Barbara Brown Taylor*

The story we just heard defies interpretation,  
although that has never stopped  
multitudes of the more scholarly folks  
from trying.  
It is the shining story of a mystical  
encounter,  
not only between God and  
God's Beloved  
but also between those at  
the center of the story;  
those who watched  
then and now.

It's the same kind of moment that happened to  
Elisha;  
    watching his mentor and friend, Elijah,  
        lifted in a whirlwind on a chariot of fire.

Peter, James, and John.  
    On a mountain top.  
        Jesus. Dazzling light.  
            The voice of God.  
                All of them enveloped in the  
                cloud of God's presence.

Today, at the end of Epiphany,  
    we conclude ordinary time with the  
    extraordinary.

And we continue in the life of our parish family.  
    With love and service and purpose.

I've said this since we arrived six months ago:

We have work to do.  
    We have people to love,  
        the hungry to feed,  
            children to raise in the love of the  
            Lord.

We have friends and neighbors to pray with.  
    We have a church to grow—  
        not just Immanuel Highlands—  
        the whole Church.

We have a variety of outreach projects.  
    According to our parochial report,  
        an average of forty-five Immanuel  
        members  
            served approximately 9,600 sisters  
            and brothers  
                in the Wilmington community.

We have a historic building to maintain,  
    and we have gifts and treasure to be good  
    stewards of.  
        We'll hear more about that in  
        the meeting.

We have sick people in our church—  
    Suffering in body, mind and spirit.

This mission work is not without its  
frustrations and failures,  
    but it is what we are called to.  
        To walk the way of light and life  
        for all  
            and bear witness to His light.

The light calls us to justice,  
    to honesty, to humility, to service,  
    and the question for each of us  
        is whether we are willing  
            to let God's light shine through  
            us  
                in the way we live,  
                here and now,  
                in our world, in  
                our time.

We have so much to offer this community.  
    And we've achieved so much.

So much that has been poured into us by the  
grace of God.  
    So let us come down the mountain,  
    and offer light in dark places.

As we approach Lent,  
    as we seek to look at ourselves  
    and our service to our neighbors and  
    our God,  
        we are called to be transfigured

So that the light in all of us, rather than the  
darkness, will shine through.  
Yes, we must be honest about our sins,  
    our failures, our doubts, and our need for  
    God's grace.

We should be honest about our darkness too,  
    but far more importantly,  
        we must let the light shine through.

We, like Jesus on the mountain top, are God's  
beloved,  
    and we know there is a claim on our lives;  
        sometimes we do not want to hear or  
        heed God's call.

We know that if Jesus' words  
    are fulfilled in our hearing today  
    then we will have to change.

We also know because we are God's beloved,  
    that, in the glory and power of our Maker,  
    we are up to it.

The resurrected Christ is with us  
throughout our journey of life,  
    whether we are in darkness,  
    or whether we are on the mountain  
    top.  
        He journeys with us.

Today we heard a story that tells us we are not  
alone,  
    and it tells us who to listen to.

It tells us that sometimes  
    things get really scary before they get holy,  
    and that it changes us.



