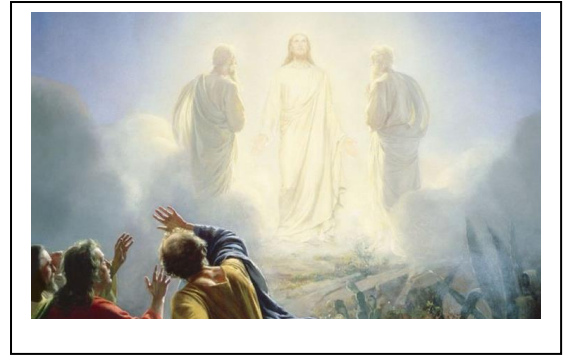


WHEN LIFE CHANGES.

Sunday 19th February 2023.

Scripture: Psalm 99; Matthew 17:1–9

We have just heard the Scripture of the Transfiguration of Jesus – such a dramatic and even frightening change.



We have all woken up to change in our lives and in the world. And we are often left wondering – what has happened and what do I do now? It could be a desired change or one we wished had never happened. It could be a positive or a negative change which have consequences or challenges.

Peter, James, and John were witnesses to an amazing change. If we go back to Chapter 16 verse 21 we read that Jesus had already told them He would suffer many terrible things at the hands of the elders, the leading priests and teachers of religious law. That He would be killed but on the third day He would be raised from the dead.

Jesus reiterated this in verse 9 where He says – don't tell anyone what you have seen until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.

So, the transfiguration happened in the middle of these 2 statements about impending change. I believe the transfiguration was also about helping the disciples prepare through the coming change.

How would you have responded. As a disciple you would have been taught about Moses who represents the Law and Elijah who represents the prophets.

Jesus has just told you He will be killed but He will be raised again on the 3rd day. And standing right in front of you is Moses and Elijah – both had been dead for many, many years. Would you rub your eyes imagining that you were “seeing things” or would you now be convinced that if they were there and had been raised, then it is a fact that Jesus will also be raised.

The first point is we are called to listen to Jesus.

Who do you listen to?

We are bombarded today by all forms of media, especially when some big change has happened. Think back to Covid. We had voices telling us to get vaccinated; voices telling us it’s all a conspiracy; voices warning of the chemicals being injected via the vaccines – and on and on it went.

Voices of judgement, second guessing, fear, self-doubt, self-criticism and all the would haves, should haves and could haves.

Even voices saying run and hide, get out into the bush or fight, resist, those in denial and those declaring it was the end of the world.

And looking back we can see that not every voice is helpful or worth listening to.

The voice of God speaks from the bright cloud overshadowing Peter, James, and John. **This is My Son, the Beloved, with Him I am well pleased, listen to Him.**

What if during change you listened to just one voice – the voice of Christ. To take the time to become fully aware and attentive to what Jesus is saying, to understand the concerns and desires that He has for the world and let His concerns and desires become our concerns and desires. This would mean that whatever change happens to us – it does not have the final word.

Jesus speaks of the words of life, hope, forgiveness, mercy, beauty, generosity, courage, love, and healing.

The second point is: “Get Up”

We often stumble and fall when we have faced change – whether it is good or bad. We need to re-establish ourselves, regain our balance and step into a new life, when we have no idea what it will look like or where it will lead.

The word “get up” may even be translated as “be raised up” or even “be resurrected.”

Jesus comes to us in whatever circumstances of change we find ourselves. Jesus touches us and says: “Get up, be raised.”

It’s His promise to us, that even though life has changed, it hasn’t ended. There is a new life hidden in the midst of change, even when we cannot see it or do not believe it.

The third point is: “Do not be afraid.”

I suspect many of us live with some level of fear – change often brings fear – the fear of losing what we love, value and desire. We

can also fear when we get what we want – how long will it last, is this right for me.

Jesus' words do not automatically eliminate our fear but it is a call to take the first step into a new and changed life, despite our fear. We are called to be courageous during change.

God told us to listen to Jesus and Jesus encourages us to be raised up and not be afraid.

These are His Holy words of wisdom for times of change. We are encouraged to step into our own transfiguration.

Maybe it wasn't Jesus who changed on the mountaintop – maybe it was Peter, James, and John who eyes were opened and their seeing changed, so that they now saw Jesus for the first time as He had always been.