

## **CHURCH@HOME: The Transfiguration – Sunday, 7<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

*Reflection by Anne Edwards*

**Readings:** 2 Peter 1:16-19

Luke 9:28-36

Peter is alarmed! False teachers have invaded the Church and are confusing believers. His pastoral heart is churning. How can he protect the flock against this threat?

It's especially urgent as he knows his time is short ... he was martyred a few years after writing this letter. He decides to refer the Church back to the truth of Scripture, and his own eyewitness account of Jesus' life and transfiguration. These, he says, are the proofs I've staked my life on!

Peter, with James and John, had the astounding privilege of seeing Jesus transfigured as the heavenly King that he truly is. When Jesus was transformed on the mountain, God spoke 'truth' clearly to them, and they saw the Old Testament heavyweights, Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus. But, compelling as his testimony was, Peter realises that his readers have no such experience to look back on, so he reminds them of the integrity and trustworthiness of Scripture. The false teachers were bringing their own version of reality, whereas in Scripture they had God's version – as we do too. Base your life on God's Word, Peter would say to us. It's the only reliable source of truth.

After a few short years of seeing Jesus do so many wonderful deeds, and hearing his teaching, Peter, James and John finally saw who he really was and recognised him as Christ, Messiah, Son of God, and the early Church came into being through their spreading the Gospel, the good news of God's steadfast love, his grace and forgiveness as Lauryn reminded us last Sunday.

Sometimes we may only have glimpses, but there are occasions when something happens to lock those glimpses into time.

In a few minutes Mint and her children will come forward to be baptised. For them this is one such occasion. Most of us will have been baptised as babies – a decision made by our parents on our behalf, which some of us will have ratified by choosing to be confirmed, although our baptisms will not be an actual memory.

Before I could be licensed as a Reader, I had to prove I had been baptised – and I had to go to the Devon Archives in Exeter to see the Baptism Register from the Methodist Church in Tavistock. There, in permanent ink, was my name and the date of my baptism – and back a few pages the names of my father, his older brother and sister, and forward a few pages my sister's name!

After their baptisms, in a few moments Tim will write the names of Mint, Tay, Cora and Brodie in the St John's Baptism Register – the decisions made by them there in black and white. As they are baptised, we too will be challenged to take on our baptism vows once more. An occasion for our memories to be refreshed.

In fact in verse 13 just before our passage from his letter, Peter writes: I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to refresh your memory. ... I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things.”

On our journeys as Christians we frequently need our memories to be refreshed, and the best way to do that is to turn to Scripture, the Gospels, the New and Old Testaments, and the better we know them the better their ability to refresh us and our memories.

What experiences do we, you and I have to look back on? What is it that reminds us day by day, week by week, year by year, to ‘turn your eyes upon Jesus’, as the chorus I sang as a teenager puts it?

It was when the disciples were fully awake that they saw Jesus’ glory and heard God’s words: “This is my Son, my Chosen, listen to Him”! (v.39)

Like the disciples, we should find this vision overwhelming, one that fills us with love and praise. Here is our Lord, a man, a human being like us, who knows the glory of heaven but walks to his death for love of you and me.

We in the Western world have been heavily influenced by post-modern thinking, so that many construct their own version of reality. Today in these days of relative truth and distrust of authority, people will listen to one another’s stories looking for an authenticity they can’t find in society’s structures. In social media there is so much ‘fake news’ that it is up to us as Christians to tell the stories of our walk of faith.

As much as we would love for God to come and demonstrate the truth of who he is by performing miracles for each of us, God knows it wouldn’t make a difference. We all need space to discover for ourselves who Jesus is.

Faith and understanding grow from gentle revelation, questioning and a gradual realisation of who God is and how much he loves us. It is our privilege to choose to trust Jesus every day. In John’s Gospel, chapter 6, verse 68, when some were walking away, in response to Jesus’ question to his disciples, “Do you also wish to go away?” we have Peter’s reply, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God.”

Peter was concerned for the church back then and referred his readers to the integrity and trustworthiness of scripture, as well as his witness of the transfiguration. Jesus said: I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. How often do we turn to this only reliable source of truth? We have to look to him.

Let us pray:

Lord Jesus, help us to find ways to grow from being followers of you into the maturity of discipleship, so that our day by day living draws others to you. Give us the courage to tell our stories of faith.

Amen