

Sermon - 14th February 2021

Love is all around us

I am reminded of a chorus from my Sunday school days.

“Wide, wide as the ocean, High as the heaven above,

Deep, deep as the deepest sea, is my Saviour’s love.

I though, so unworthy, still I am a child of HIS care.

For HIS word teaches me; that HIS love reaches me everywhere.”

Today is a very special day. I am sure some of you would have had some surprises. Particularly those who are in love. Who doesn’t want to be in love? It is Valentine’s Day. If it’s not for the lockdown, I am sure the restaurants would be overflowing with bookings and the shops would all be full of red hearts displayed all around. Cards flying around. The florists would be busy making bouquet of red roses.

Today is a very special Sunday in our Christian calendar. It is known as the transfiguration Sunday.

Where God reveals his love in the Transfiguration of Jesus Christ.

The word transfiguration is not used very often. The word transfiguration means-- to be changed into something great or beautiful. Like the butterfly, transformed from a caterpillar.

God’s love can transform anyone who is willing to be transformed. To be great and beautiful in God’s eyes.

God created us to love one another.

There is love is around us, not only on Valentine’s Day or Transfiguration Sunday. But it is there for all of us. All the time, it is a challenge for each and every one of us, and anyone to experience it.

Jesus took three of his closest friends, with whom he has been in contact with most of the times. They were with him when he raised Jairus’s daughter from death (Mark 5:37), where they saw the love and power of God. Jesus took Peter, James and John and went up a high mountain to be alone.

Prior to this Jesus asked his disciples who do they think he is. Peter answered “you are the Christ, Son of the living God”. Jesus tells Peter he is blessed because this has been revealed to him, by HIS Father in heaven. Jesus tells Peter that he is the rock upon which HE will build HIS church.

Jesus also informs his disciples that he must suffer many things, be rejected by the elders and be killed. And on the third day be raised. Peter with a lack of understanding and deep love for Jesus, says “this shall never happen to you, Lord”. Peter was determined to protect Christ. Jesus corrects Peter and tells him, that his mind is set on the matters of man and not the matters of God.

So it is about 6 days after these two events, that, Jesus, Peter, James and John went up the mountain. Peter, James and John must have thought that it is a marvellous experience to go away with the Lord. Wouldn’t you be?

There Jesus was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun and His clothes became dazzling white as a bright light. He was changed from the appearance of an ordinary person to an image who was incredibly glowing with glory. What a sight it must have been.

Furthermore, they saw Jesus talking with Moses and Elijah.

Peter got so excited and frightened, didn't know what to say. He offered to put up three tents, one for Jesus, one for Moses and one for Elijah.

Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud "This is my Son, whom I love, Listen to him". They heard this same voice at Jesus' baptism, where it said "This is my Son, whom I love, with him I am well pleased". This time, on the mountain top, there was specific instruction to Peter, James and John saying"Listen to him". They heard the voice of God.

All three of them, they looked around, they did not see anyone else other than Jesus.

As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus asked them not to tell anyone what they had seen until after he has risen from the dead.

Disciples would have known from learning the scriptures in their youth and the readings in the synagogues that, this is the Moses who was the Law giver, who received the Ten Commandments, the tablet of Law from God. He stood before God on behalf of the people of Israel pleading for mercy when they were impatient and going their own way. He wanted desperately for them to obey God and enter into the Promised Land.

And Elijah, similarly, desperately tried to bring the people back from sin and worshiping idols, back to the 'One true God'. He was the famous prophet who put his life on the line, trying to force royalty and those in authority to acknowledge their sin and their false gods. Trying to get them to repent and turn back to the 'One true God'. Elijah was the representative of all the prophets who looked forward to the coming of the Messiah.

But why were they there talking to Jesus?

The presence of Moses and Elijah indicated that Jesus is the fulfilment of the Law and teachings.

For Jesus himself said in (Mat 5:17) "do not think that I have come to abolish the Law of Moses or the writings of the Prophets; I have **not** come to abolish them but to accomplish their purpose.

This is the story of Transfiguration.

Disciples have a beautiful, dazzling picture of Jesus in their minds. The bright light which showed the beauty of Christ.

And the voice: the same voice that they heard at the baptism of Jesus. They heard with special instruction. "**Listen to him**". God revealing his love and the presence of his love in and through Jesus.

So, Peter, James and John have this special, beautiful, and dazzling picture of Jesus. But they did not know how immense the love of God in Jesus, was for them. At this point they didn't have a complete picture of this event on the mountain and will not until they witnessed the cross and the Resurrection.

But we are lucky that we know the story. God so loved the world that he sent his only son to suffer and die on the cross for us. So that we know the completeness of God's love for us. And on Easter we know that love will never end.....**HIS love will continue.**

So, today, we can sit for a moment in quietness..... imagine the beauty of this dazzling Saviour in front of us. Transforming us, as he looks at us with compassion and love.

Knowing that we here and all the world around us is the object of his love. We are the reason for his Transfiguration. He is looking at us and shining his love on all of us.

Let us embrace the warmth, the brightness and the love of Jesus around us and walk into the world - to love one another.

May the power of the LOVE that is God, continue to transform us all, so that LOVE can continue to be in the world.

Thanks be to God.

Let us pray

Lord Jesus,

As we gaze on your kingly brightness

May our faces display your likeness.

May they be ever changing from glory to glory,

Mirrored here may **our** lives tell **Your** story.

Shine on us Lord Jesus, shine on us.

Amen.