

17 After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. 2 There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. 3 Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.

4 Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.”

5 While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!”

6 When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. 7 But Jesus came and touched them. “Get up,” he said. “Don’t be afraid.” 8 When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.

9 As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, “Don’t tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.”

Stop! Think!

As I grew older, not necessarily up, my parents let me out of the house but not without careful warning. They wanted to make sure that we would be safe as we rode our bikes around terrorizing the neighborhood. The advice that was given to us was to stop, look both ways, and listen. That was summarized and shorted to stop and think a mantra that we still use for our children. The idea is before you just go and do, rush head first out into traffic, stop and think. IF you have to cross a busy street, Stop. Think. Look and listen.

Jesus had the same mantra for Peter, James, and John. Some see them as the select group of elite disciples, the inner circle of friends who have excelled beyond the rest but I see them as a group of special children require remedial instruction. Peter places himself in dangerous situations, just last chapter he disagreed with Jesus and would not allow him to continue on to Jerusalem and to the cross. Later we’ll see James and John acting out by requesting positions at the right and left of Jesus. Jesus too, wants them to Stop, Look at what’s going on. Listen to his voice. Stop. Think.

But it's easier to stop thinking and just do. What I mean by that is thinking can be difficult. It takes work and careful attention and if you're like me sometimes you just have to do something. America loves Type A personalities. Someone who will take charge and lead the way even if he has no idea what he is doing. It's the "Don't just sit there - Get-R-done," mentality that can get us into the same trouble that Peter gets into this lesson. Jesus wants us to Stop, think - look and listen. He doesn't want us focused on what we are doing but on him and his work for us.

Jesus takes charge of the situation and 6 days have passed since Peter's wonderful confession, "You are the Christ. The Son of the living God." After this confession Jesus then speaks of his work as the Christ and what that will mean - *"He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life."* Jesus speaks of taking up one's cross and following him but Peter won't allow that, *"Never Lord! This shall never happen to you!"* Jesus then has to reprimand this remedial student.

Jesus takes them up a mountain and is transfigured before them. Transfigure isn't exactly a word we use in our day to day language. Transfigure means to be changed. That doesn't mean he went up a caterpillar and came down a butterfly that would be transformed. Jesus is transfigured. He reveals his true nature. The disciples are able to see Jesus in his exalted status. He is God. His appearance is changed. *"His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light."* Jesus demonstrates to them that he is in control of all that is about to happen. Then Moses and Elijah appear and talk to Jesus. Peter, James, and John are in awe when Peter (not knowing what he was saying) He had to do something so he speaks without thinking, *"Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters - one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah."* Peter knows what to do with the glory of God - you put it in a box. Get busy and do something just not the something that Jesus has in mind.

Peter rushes out head first onto the train tracks before looking both ways, puts himself into a dangerous situation of placing two humans on par with the Son of God. Jesus is greater than Moses. Jesus is greater than Elijah. Jesus is God. The tracks are rumbling, the head light comes on Jesus face and clothes are glowing. The horn bellows, "This one.." emphatically pointing to Jesus. *"This one, (The one whose face is glowing. Who has been transfigured. The one whose clothes are white as light. This glowing one, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"* Did you get that, Peter? Quit talking and doing, and for once in your life, simply pay attention. Look at what's going on

around you and listen. They're terrified, fall to the ground, probably covering their ears and closing their eyes. They've stopped but they are not looking or listening. They've stopped thinking.

Often we like to imagine we are the elite disciples of Jesus since we are here in the church, but I'd rather think of even seminary students and pastors as those who need remedial help and extra time on the mountain. Because like Peter we often feel as if we have to do more. There is more work that needs to be done. Maybe you feel the same way too. But our busyness can work against us. Our busyness can get in the way of family, friends, and faith. When pastors are portrayed as too busy - nobody bothers to come to them when they need help. If you're too busy then there is no time for church. And yet like Peter when we don't know what to do - we may just do something without thinking about it. If we fill our time with our actions and the things we have to do for God then we aren't paying attention to what God is doing.

We may even make the mistake of Peter and think less of Jesus than he really is. Such as, Jesus as the giver of a great work ethic we should all be busy bees because... Jesus points us to do more, read your bibles more, pray more, spend more time in church, more mission work, while forgetting the passages of promise pointing us toward rest for the weary and burdened. We may mistake Jesus for our co-pilot, coach, buddy, or even worse gift giving lover. In doing so we demote the Almighty God. Jesus is the Christ. The Son of God. The one we should listen to. Stop. Think about who Jesus is.

Stepping in front of God is even more dangerous than stepping in front of a movie freight train. The power that Jesus has under his control is terrifying. If we realized how sinful we really are, and how holy and powerful he really is, we too might just fall on the ground terrified. Yet God speaks to us in his word. He points us away from ourselves, our work, anything that would lead us away. He says, "Look to this one!" My Son. The one I love. My beloved. Listen to him.

When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. What does Jesus have to say? And then it's over -- the voice, the light, the heroes of the past. Jesus reaches out to them and speaks, "Get up. Don't be afraid." When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.

Jesus doesn't say, "Do more. Don't just sit there. You owe me. I've done my part now you do yours!" He doesn't point us to be more type A or type B. *But get up and don't be afraid.* Jesus was, is, and remains the Almighty God and he never changed. Jesus never

changed but he did veil glory, went down that mountain, and onto the cross. What he did there transformed the world.

Just look at what happened to Peter. He didn't want to take up a cross and follow Jesus. He didn't want to see Jesus disfigured but when he sees the cross and that he might suffer by association with Jesus he denies him even calling down curses, "*I don't know the man*" Peter wasn't thinking. Jesus just wanted him to stop, look and listen at him and his work. Jesus reached out and raised him up, and send him out again.

Jesus does the same for us. No matter how horrible the sin. No matter what you have done, you can't out-sin grace but in those dark moments when we think, "I can't be forgiven. I have to suffer for this. I have to do something." Jesus comes to us reaches out to comfort us with the same words, "Don't be afraid." He give us his word where he demonstrates his work for us.

That changes us. The Bible transfigures us so we can see our true nature and how rotten we are but then Jesus transforms us like a caterpillar into a butterfly. Like a sinner into a saint. *He transforms our bodies to be like his glorious body (Philippians 3:21)*. Jesus' work changes us. He stepped in front the train barreling toward us. The Law could not be stopped but he paid for it all. God then sends his Holy Spirit, so that we live as God's people, a people set apart to do his will. He transforms us to be like him.

Sometimes we just need to keep our mouth shut and enjoy the moment. Stop. Think. Look at his glory. Listen to his word and his work for you and realize you've been changed.

But just as the disciples so also us, no matter how close you are to Jesus you still need to stop and think. I hope you still do. Because as busy as Lent will be, I'm not too busy to visit, have a coffee, or spend time with you. As we enter Lent - slow down, stop a bit more, and add something to this season: rest for the weary and burdened. Add time with God who cares and comforts reaching out to us through his son with these words, "Get up. Don't be afraid." You are about to see is Jesus' work for you. Amen.