

**Transfiguration Sunday**  
**February 11, 2018**  
**Listen to Him!**

2 Kings 2:1–12, Psalm 50:1–6, 2 Corinthians 4:3–6, **Mark 9: 2–9**

Been to the movies lately? I don't mean have you watched any good movies at home. I mean, when last did you go to the cinema – popcorn smell and all? One of my Christmas presents was a coupon to go to the movies – the real big screen movies! For the first time in a long while, I chose to go and see 'The Darkest Hour' – the Second World War story of Churchill and the liberation of the thousands of soldiers trapped on the beaches of Dunkirk. It is an inspiring film. Really good.

The problem was with the large number of “coming attractions” to which we were subjected. I am completely appalled by what movie-goers are seeing these days. I do not think the word depraved is too strong to describe what is coming out of the movie studios: Loud, very loud, violent, horrifying, with terrifying special effects, and psychedelic colors bombarding ones vision, non-stop action with blatant sex and wholesale murder. Our sensibilities were bombarded by sound and garish, flashing, exploding color and images moving at dizzying speeds. Nauseating!

I am certainly not drawn to see any of those coming attractions. And I am concerned about our culture if those sorts of film are what movie goers need to attract them and enthrall them and hold their attention. I for one, have plenty of inner and outer distractions to distract my attention without being bombarded like that – by noise, and violence, frightening visual effects.

So I got to wondering what attracts my attention and holds my attention. Especially in the light of this week's gospel lesson. There are many wonderful moments in the passage in fact in all the lessons for the week – but the one sentence that stands out for me and has stayed with me all week is God's voice saying to the disciples: “Listen to him!”

Listen to him. Pay attention to him. Mark his words, take them seriously; study them; live with them; learn to love by them. These are God's commands! They are worthy of heeding.

How do we know they are words spoken by God? We are told that a cloud overshadowed Jesus and the disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration. And that a voice spoke from out of the cloud. In the Hebrew Scriptures the presence of God is regularly connected with a cloud. It was in a cloud that Moses met God. It was in a cloud that God came to the Tabernacle. A cloud filled Solomon's new temple at its dedication.

The holy One says; "Listen to him!" This is important. Pay attention. Heed what he says. Do what he commands. Follow his example. Listen to him!

What are some of the ways **you** find helpful in listening to Jesus? Morton Kelsey says that the first step is learning to be alone and quite. "There is just one aim to start with: to still the tumult of activity in mind and body and center down. This means shutting out invading noises from both the outside and from the inside." (The Other Side of Silence p 94)

In the early 19th century, William Wordsworth wrote several sonnets blasting what he perceived as "the decadent material cynicism of the time. They reflect his view that humanity must get in touch with nature to progress spiritually.<sup>[1]</sup> Unlike society, Wordsworth does not see nature as a commodity. The line in the sonnet: "Little we see in Nature that is ours", shows that we should be able to appreciate beautiful events like the moon shining over the ocean and the blowing of strong winds, but it is almost as if humans are on a different wavelength from Nature. The "little we see in Nature that is ours" exemplifies the removed sentiment people have for nature, being obsessed with materialism and other worldly objects. (Wikipedia) Hear is an excerpt of his sonnet:

The world is too much with us; late and soon,  
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;—.

Little we see in Nature that is ours;  
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!  
The sea that bears her bosom to the moon;  
The winds that will be howling at all hours...  
For this and everything we are out of tune.  
The world is too much with us.

Here at Dayspring we are very blessed to have ample opportunity to find sacred places where we can get quiet and center down enough to be able to listen. We have this wonderful land, our worship services, daily prayer times, the encouragement of our smaller communities and mission groups, silent retreats, Schools of Christian Living...

What grabs your attention? On what do you feast your mind? In what ways do you listen to Jesus? How can you do more listening, be more attentive?

And when you do listen what do you hear? What do you hear about yourself? What do you hear about your worshipping community? What do you hear about our world?

This is the last Sunday of Epiphany. Wednesday is Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent.

Lent commemorates the forty days Jesus spent in the Wilderness getting ready for his ministry. There he faced severe temptations. Temptations that would allow him to escape the drastic, agonizing confrontation with the authorities and powers of his day that he knew would face him if he was determined to do what he felt God calling him to do.

This Lenten season we too face temptations of many and varied kinds. One of the main ones is to skip blithely over these next 40 days from the glorious Mount of Transfiguration to the triumphant Mount of Olives with its Palm Sunday procession and on to Easter and the Empty tomb.

There is a temptation to do too little listening to him: a temptation not to take Lent seriously, just supposing it to be like any other old time; not to get ready for the season that has the power to change us and the world.

In order to make the most of this important we could say crucial season we need to enter into it as fully as we can, we need to prepare ourselves for it. – the 40 days of Lent, Holy Week, Maundy Thursday Good Friday and Holy Saturday.

We have three days left in which to think about doing something special during Lent in order to make the most of it – Is there something you could do that will help you remember Jesus in the Wilderness, that will help you prepare yourself for Holy Week and Easter? Perhaps some new or extra discipline, maybe attend a retreat, certainly mark the dates and set aside time to attend the various offerings here at Dayspring.

In what ways can you take God's command to "Listen to him!" seriously?

Teach us to Stop and Listen; Open our ears that we might hear your voice;  
Jesus speak! Your servant listens.

Amen