

Sermon Note: Transformed for the Journey

Transfiguration Sunday

Introduction

We have spent the past several weeks exploring what it means to be grounded in faith while stepping forward into God's future. From recognizing God's presence in ordinary moments to embracing challenges beyond our comfort zones, this series has invited us to consider what it means to live as a people shaped by grace. Now, as we conclude *Foundations & Futures*, we come to the story of the Transfiguration—a moment of divine revelation that changes everything. On the mountaintop, the disciples glimpse Jesus in his glory, standing alongside Moses and Elijah. It is a breathtaking, overwhelming sight, one that leaves them awestruck and unsure of how to respond.

Transformation is at the heart of this passage—not just Jesus' transformation, but the disciples' as well. Their journey with Jesus has brought them to this moment, and they will not leave unchanged. The same is true for us. When we open our hearts and minds to an authentic experience of the living Christ, we cannot remain as we were before. In these moments of revelation, we are invited to consider how our own faith has been shaped through this journey—and how we will carry that transformation into the world.

Illustration Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BmFbczWrVUw>

In this scene from *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* (2018), Miles Morales finally steps into his identity as Spider-Man. Breaking free from doubt and hesitation, he embraces his powers, creates his own suit, and takes a breathtaking leap of faith across the city.

Why This Video?

This scene captures the moment when Miles bravely steps into who he is meant to be. After struggling with doubt and uncertainty, he makes the decision to break free, claim his identity, and take a literal leap of faith. His transformation is not just about gaining powers—it's about believing in himself and trusting that he is ready. Transformation often comes with a moment of decision—a point when we stop hesitating and fully embrace the future set before us. Like Miles, we may have moments of doubt, but the real change happens when we take the step forward.

Video Discussion Questions

1. What emotions do you see Miles experiencing throughout this scene? How do those emotions change by the end?
2. What do you think is the significance of him painting his own Spider-Man suit?
3. Why does this moment feel like such a turning point for Miles? What has changed?

4. Have you ever had a moment in life where you felt like you had to take a “leap of faith”? What was that experience like?
5. How does stepping into a new identity or responsibility require both trust and action?

Luke 9:28-36 (NRSVue)

²⁸Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. ²⁹And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. ³⁰Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. ³¹They appeared in glory and were speaking about his exodus, which he was about to fulfill in Jerusalem. ³²Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep, but as they awoke they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. ³³Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good for us to be here; let us set up three tents: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah,” not realizing what he was saying. ³⁴While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. ³⁵Then from the cloud came a voice that said, “This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!” ³⁶When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.

Study Questions

1. What happened to Jesus when he was in prayer on the mountain?
2. Whom did Peter, John, and James see with Jesus on the mountain?
3. What conversation did they overhear?
4. After the glorious sight of Jesus, Moses, and Elijah, Peter proposed erecting a tent for each of them on the mountain. What do you think he hoped to accomplish? What would you say was his motivation?
5. Luke 9:34-35 says, “While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. Then from the cloud came a voice that said, ‘This is my Son, my Chosen, listen to him!’” What might they be called to do in light of this revelation?
6. This passage invites us to embrace change, trust in the One who brings us through, and recognize that transformation is part of discipleship. What change will you embrace so that you may grow more like Jesus?

Additional (Optional) Questions

Read the Luke text above, and also read Exodus 34:29-35.

1. How do you see these two passages as connected?
2. Both Moses and Jesus were visibly transformed after being with God. Have you ever had an internal experience that changed you, even if it wasn't seen? How did it affect your connection with God or others? Have you ever had an experience that changed how you acted afterward or changed something that you believe?
3. How do you reconcile “mountaintop” spiritual experiences with everyday challenges? Do these moments shift your perspective on daily activities?

4. Moses veiled his face due to the Israelites' fear of his transformation, just as the disciples feared during Jesus' Transfiguration. Why do you think that powerful spiritual experiences might unsettle people? How can we muster the courage to be bold in our faith (and true to ourselves when we experience a change), despite potential discomfort for others?

Weekly Action

Over the past several weeks, we have explored what it means to be grounded in faith while stepping boldly into the future that God is shaping. Now, as we come to the end of this journey, take time to consider these questions: What has changed in your faith during this series? Where do you feel God calling you to step out boldly?

This week, prayerfully choose one action that will carry this transformation forward—whether it's a new habit, a commitment to service, or embracing a change you've resisted. Just as the disciples could not remain on the mountaintop, we are called to step forward, trusting that God goes with us.

Be sure to include God in this process of discernment! Write down this action and pray over it. Consider talking this through with a family member or trusted friend. Then take one tangible step toward this action!

Prayer

God, we come to you, releasing our hardness of hearing and our resistance to change. Please open our ears and loosen our grip on the comfortable so that we can listen to Jesus and follow him whether he leads to the mountaintops or the valleys. Amen.