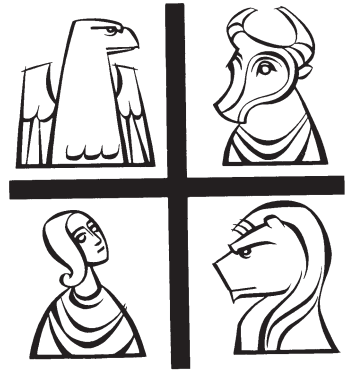


Reading Luke in Lent



Gospel of Luke 9:28–62

The Transfiguration

28 Now about eight days after these sayings
he took with him Peter and John and James
and went up on the mountain to pray.
29 And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered,
and his clothing became dazzling white.
30 And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah,
31 who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure,
which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.
32 Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep,
but when they became fully awake they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him.
33 And as the men were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus,
'Master, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents,
one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah'—not knowing what he said.
34 As he was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them,
and they were afraid as they entered the cloud.
35 And a voice came out of the cloud, saying,
'This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!'
36 And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone.
And they kept silent and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen.

Jesus Heals a Boy with an Unclean Spirit

37 On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd met him.
38 And behold, a man from the crowd cried out,
'Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child.
39 And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out.
It convulses him so that he foams at the mouth, and shatters him, and will hardly leave him.
40 And I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not.'
41 Jesus answered,
'O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you and bear with you?
Bring your son here.'
42 While he was coming, the demon threw him to the ground and convulsed him.
But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father.
43 And all were astonished at the majesty of God.

Jesus Again Foretells His Death

But while they were all marvelling at everything he was doing, Jesus said to his disciples,
44 'Let these words sink into your ears:
The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men.'
45 But they did not understand this saying, and it was concealed from them,
so that they might not perceive it. And they were afraid to ask him about this saying.

Who Is the Greatest?

⁴⁶ An argument arose among them as to which of them was the greatest.
⁴⁷ But Jesus, knowing the reasoning of their hearts, took a child and put him by his side
⁴⁸ and said to them,
'Whoever receives this child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me
receives him who sent me. For he who is least among you all is the one who is great.'

Anyone Not Against Us Is For Us

⁴⁹ John answered,
'Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him,
because he does not follow with us.'
⁵⁰ But Jesus said to him,
'Do not stop him, for the one who is not against you is for you.'

A Samaritan Village Rejects Jesus

⁵¹ When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.
⁵² And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans,
to make preparations for him.
⁵³ But the people did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem.
⁵⁴ And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said,
'Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?'
⁵⁵ But he turned and rebuked them.
⁵⁶ And they went on to another village.

The Cost of Following Jesus

⁵⁷ As they were going along the road, someone said to him,
'I will follow you wherever you go.'
⁵⁸ And Jesus said to him,
'Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests,
but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.'
⁵⁹ To another he said,
'Follow me.'
But he said,
'Lord, let me first go and bury my father.'
⁶⁰ And Jesus said to him,
'Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.'
⁶¹ Yet another said,
'I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home.'
⁶² Jesus said to him,
'No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.'

Reflection

In Luke's Gospel Jesus prays before significant events. Mountains carry the resonance of Moses' climbing Mount Sinai to speak with God where his appearance will be altered and glow. Through various small details, not only is Jesus' appearance altered his clothes are dazzling, Luke shows that Jesus is greater than Moses and Elijah, that he is the fulfilment of the Law and the Prophets, that is the scriptures. They look forward not only to his journey to Jerusalem, but his departure or exodus (his passion, death, resurrection and ascension). It is perhaps more than a coincidence that at the Resurrection and Ascension Luke refers has a similar phrase 'behold, two men...in dazzling/white robes'.

The Transfiguration is followed by a series of episodes which show that the formation of the disciples is ongoing. They lack power, they don't understand, they ask the wrong questions, they misjudge, they propose violence. Amidst all of this Jesus heals, prophesies, sets a child as an example, is inclusive and sets his face for Jerusalem. This last phrase is one of the turning points of the Gospel. Jesus begins his road to Jerusalem. In the sections leading up to this he has revealed that he knows in Jerusalem he goes to face his suffering, death and resurrection.

- Are there moments in our lives when we recognise the dazzling glory of God?
- Are there moments in our lives when, like the disciples, we seem to get everything wrong?

Prayer

God and Father of Jesus,
you transfigured your Chosen One and in heavenly light
revealed him as your Son.

Open our ears to the living Word
and our eyes to his glorious presence,
that we may be strengthened
in time of fear and uncertainty,
and one day pass over to share your glory.

Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever.
Amen.

